

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍA INGLESA Y ALEMANA

“HOW TO MAKE A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL”: A
CORPUS-BASED PRAGMATIC AND CONVERSATIONAL
ANALYSIS STUDY OF HYPERBOLE IN INTERACTION

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UNIVERSITAT DE VALENCIA
Servei de Publicacions
2006

Aquesta Tesi Doctoral va ser presentada a València el dia 30 de Gener de 2006 davant un tribunal format per:

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Depòsit legal:

I.S.B.N.:84-370-6503-8

Edita: Universitat de València
Servei de Publicacions
C/ Artes Gráficas, 13 bajo
46010 València
Spain
Telèfon: 963864115

UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA

Facultat de Filologia

Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Alemanya



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TESIS DOCTORAL

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Valencia 2005

To the memory of Francisco and Pedro, beloved grandfathers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all who have directly or indirectly contributed to this dissertation. First and foremost, I would like to thank both my supervisors, Dr. Antonia Sánchez Macarro and Dr. Michael John McCarthy for their insightful criticism and valuable advice throughout all the stages of this work. Without their help I would not have been able to take on the task of writing this dissertation. I am also personally indebted to them for their constant interest, moral support, encouragement, and above all, unconditional understanding.

I should also like to acknowledge the help, advice and encouragement from the members of the English Language Unit at the *Universitat de València*, with special mention of Dr. Milagros del Saz, Dr. Carmina Gregori, Dr. Barry Pennock and Dr. Juan José Calvo. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Carlos Hernández for his critical comments on an earlier version of this dissertation, and for suggesting interesting fields of research. Thanks also I owe to John Hall and Dr. Luis Pérez for their stimulating ideas and advice at the very early stages of the study, and to Dr. Juan José Nebreda for his statistical insights, which made chapter seven possible.

My thanks must also go to the many friends who have encouraged my work, in particular Jose María Contreras, Veronica Conesa, Concepción Revilla, David Andrés, Juan Carlos Prima and Amparo Alós. The latter two also contributed translations from Italian and French, respectively. I am also greatly indebted to Liz, John and Ben Stopani, for offering me their love, kindness and home during my stays in London. Thanks to their hospitality my research was more enjoyable, not to mention their priceless help in deciphering what was going on in some of the transcripts. Also my thanks to Frankie and Daryl Shorter, Sam Clarkson and Charlotte Newsome, for making me feel at home too.

The greatest thanks are all due to my family. To my parents, Juan and M^a Dolores, and to my boyfriend, David, I owe more than words can say. Their love, patience, understanding, support and especially their great sacrifice allowed me to complete this research. Certainly, without them this would have never been possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

BNC: British National Corpus

CA: Conversational Analysis

CANCODE: Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English

DA: Discourse Analysis

FTA: Face-threatening act

G: Genre

H: Hearer

I: Interactional

IFID: Illocutionary force indicator device

IIA: Indirect illocutionary act

M: Mode

NPP: Non-present person or party

MP: Model Person

PIA: Primary illocutionary act

R: Response

RF: Rhetorical function

S: Speaker

SA: Speech act

SF: Semantic field

SIA: Secondary illocutionary act

T: Transactional

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of figure has been sidetracked since the classical rhetoricians, with the surprising and humbling result that the study of figure, one of the oldest bodies of knowledge in the human sciences, remains in our age still in its infancy. (Turner 1998: 83)

1.1. Introduction to figurative language: literal vs. non-literal divide

Despite Gibbs' (1994a: 18) claim that the distinction between figurative and literal language is more apparent than real and that "there may not be a principled distinction between literal and nonliteral meanings" (1999b: 468), figures have traditionally been treated as part of a general theory of deviation from ordinary language. However, as Blair (1817: 273) correctly notes, though figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the most simple form of speech, we are not thence to conclude that they imply anything uncommon or unnatural. This apparent contradiction between the notion of figure as deviation from ordinary language while typical of everyday speech goes back to Aristotle and features throughout all rhetoric.

This inconsistency has led some scholars to question the utility of a literal-figurative divide in language. In this vein, Arduini (2000: 81) arguably notes that "si el habla cotidiana está llena de figuras no podemos considerarla un punto de partida con respecto al cual se realiza el desvío". Indeed, a prevailing view among figurative language researchers is that cognition is inherently figurative (e.g. Pollio *et al.* 1977, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Gibbs 1993, 1994a, 1994b, Turner 1998, Arduini 2000). The ubiquity of tropes throughout everyday speech, says Gibbs (1993: 275), testifies to the idea that "much of our thinking is based on figurative processes that include not only metaphor but a vast array of tropes". In addition, the bulk of evidence from reaction time studies is nearly unanimous on the point

that non-literal utterances do not require special forms of processing (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 163).

Although both literal and non-literal meanings are rather complex and elusive concepts, and although the usefulness of a literal-figurative distinction in language is questionable in terms of cognitive processing, “speakers seem to have strong intuitions about the difference between them” (Giora 1999: 919). As Turner (1998: 60) clearly points:

There is no doubt that some products of thought and language seem literal while others seem figurative. We have reactions, and they are motivated, but these motivations do not come from fundamental differences of cognitive operations. “Literal” and “figurative” are labels that serve as efficient shorthand announcements of our integrated reactions to the products of thought and language; they do not refer to fundamentally different cognitive operations.

1.2. Figurative language studies

The study of figurative language has always been at the heart of scholarly interest in rhetoric and literature. Since antiquity, figures have been widely studied within the general framework of rhetoric, which for many centuries formed along with grammar the only approach to the study of language. Within this framework, the emphasis was first laid on the argumentative uses of figures, and only later, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, on their aesthetic value. Contemporary rhetoric, however, has tended to neglect or minimise the importance of figures and consequently, as a result of this process of marginalisation, their study has either been relegated to the domains of literary criticism and linguistics or to an ancillary position.

Since the 1980s, there has been a renewed interest in figurative language. This interest has been on the rise and constantly expanded throughout the 1990s and up to the present. In fact, research on figuration has emerged as a new and distinct discipline, namely figurative language studies. This attention has grown not only in literary studies, but also in other fields of research such as linguistics, pragmatics and psycholinguistics or cognitive psychology. For the most part, though, these studies have primarily (if not exclusively) focused on the reception process of figures, in terms of the cognitive or psychological processes operated on their understanding.

Language comprehension theories have always been concerned with the literal-figurative divide as a factor in determining what is meant. All forms of language require the listener to go beyond the literal meaning of what is explicitly said (Dews and Winner 1997: 379). The relation between what is said and meant plays a central role in determining whether utterances are to be interpreted literally or figuratively. Because both literal and non-literal utterances illustrate that much of the meaning people intend to convey goes beyond the meaning of the words uttered (Grice 1975, Sperber and Wilson 1995), Winner and Gardner (1993: 425) argue that “the distinction between literal and nonliteral usage cannot rest on whether the speaker says what is meant”. Rather, they claim, what enables us to maintain this distinction is the relation between what is said and what is meant. In literal language, because speakers mean what they say and more (Searle 1979), the relation is one of “consonance”, while in figurative utterances, since speakers do not mean what they say, but instead mean something else, the relation is one of “dissonance” (Dews and Gardner 1993: 425-6, Dews and Winner 1997: 378-9, Dews and Winner 1999: 1581). Even this is a suspect distinction, since the nature and definition of “literal meaning” still remains to be elucidated¹. Gibbs (1994a: 26), who has extensively studied the relation between literal and figurative meaning, has shown that “the idealized, mythical view of literal meaning as being well specified and easily identifiable in thought and language is incorrect. It is, in fact, quite difficult to specify the literal definitions of concepts and the words that refer to these concepts”.

One of the most hotly debated issues in theories of figurative language comprehension is the role that literal meaning plays in the understanding of figures and the priority of literal over non-literal meanings in the reception process. Until two decades ago, language comprehension models, known as *Standard Pragmatic Models*, assumed the priority of literal over non-literal meanings (e.g. Grice 1975, Searle 1979, Fraser 1983). Such models postulate that listeners understand figurative forms by first analysing the literal meaning of a word or expression before inferring the intended figurative meaning. The assumption is that processing of literal meaning is obligatory and always computed first while non-literal meaning is only activated whenever the literal reading is defective or if there are cues

¹ Gibbs *et al.* (1993: 388-9) provide five different definitions of literal meaning, namely: conventional literality, subject-matter literality, nonmetaphorical literality, truth-conditional literality and context-free literality.

signalling that the utterance is intended to be taken figuratively. Thus, Fraser (1983: 35), for example, claims:

The hearer ... initially assumes that the speaker is speaking literally and, therefore, attempts to determine what the speaker is literally saying – the literal operational meaning of the utterance. If this fails, either because no reasonable literal interpretation can be made or there are clues that the utterance is intended to be taken figuratively, then the hearer must consider both the semantic interpretation of the sentence as well as his theory of figurative language interpretation to then determine the operational meaning of the utterance, but in this case, what the speaker has figuratively said.

Under this view, as Glucksberg (1991: 146) notes, figurative language requires additional cognitive effort to the processing of literal language.

The assumptions of traditional theories have been contested theoretically and empirically, mainly by exponents of relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) and by psycholinguists (e.g. Gibbs 1994a, Giora 1997). They have shown that people can understand non-literal expressions as rapidly and easily as comparable literal expressions. Consequently, the sequential model assumed by traditional pragmaticians has begun to be replaced by the *Direct Access Model*. According to this model, literal language has no priority over non-literal language. The assumption is that figurative language does not necessarily involve processing the surface literal meaning first. Literal meanings can be bypassed and non-literal meanings can be accessed directly (Gibbs 1982, 1984, 1986, Giora 1997, 1999, Giora and Fein 1999).

Exponents of this model are, for example, the *Conventional Meaning Model* (Gibbs 1982) and Giora's (1997) *Graded Salience Hypothesis*. The former theory contends that during comprehension "people are biased towards the conventional interpretation of sentences and tend to process these meaning first" (Gibbs 1982: 23). In a similar vein, Giora (1997: 183) claims that figurative and literal language use is governed by a general principle of salience in which "salient meanings (e.g. conventional, frequent, familiar, enhanced by prior context)", whether literal or non-literal, have priority over less salient ones. Thus, the salient meaning is always processed first and accessed directly, before less salient meanings are activated (Giora 1999: 927).

1.3. Introductory notes to the present study

This dissertation focuses on the notion of hyperbole, which will also be referred to as exaggeration or overstatement throughout the present study, and in doing so offers itself as a tentative contribution to the field of figurative language.

Over the last twenty years or so, there has been an explosion of interest in figurative language theories, but within this framework, metaphor and verbal irony have received the greatest amount of attention. These two non-literal forms have acquired such a prominence that figurative language researchers have almost exclusively focused on them. In fact, some scholars seem to equate metaphor (e.g. Mayoral 1994), and to a lesser extent, irony (e.g. Gibbs 1994a, 2000, Leggitt and Gibbs 2000) with all forms of figuration, but arguably “this tendency only serves to blur important distinctions between the tropes” (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 155). There is such an extensive literature on these two figures of speech that some researchers have even suggested these themes are inexhaustible (e.g. Black 1993: 19-20). Naturally, as a result of such intensive research effort on the so-called “master” tropes, other figurative language forms have been largely ignored or overlooked.

Research on hyperbole is not nearly so extensive as that on verbal irony or metaphor. Exaggeration is one of those figures of speech whose study has been relatively neglected by figurative language researchers, despite its pervasive frequency of use. Kreuz *et al.* (1996: 91), for example, have demonstrated in a corpus of American short stories that, after metaphor, exaggeration is the most recurrent figurative language form. In this study, irony only accounted for 3% of figurative occurrences, whereas the frequencies for metaphor and hyperbole were 29% and 27%, respectively. But even though overstatement proved to be a ubiquitous non-literal form, very little is known about this trope. Most of the empirical work on hyperbole has involved comparisons of its frequency and use in different cultures (e.g. Prothro 1970, Cohen 1987, Edelman *et al.* 1989). The remaining studies on the topic are usually subsumed within theories of humour or verbal irony. Interest in hyperbole is also commonly found in contrastive studies, where different figures of speech are compared along the same variable.

Notwithstanding, researchers are not unaware of the lack of studies on the topic of hyperbole and some have already voiced the need to cover this area of research (e.g. Ravazzoli 1978, 1979, Kreuz and Roberts 1993). Thus, Kreuz *et al.* (1996: 91) claim: “In

terms of sheer occurrence, hyperbole seems to deserve more notice than it has received to date. It may be helpful, for example, to examine the discourse goals of hyperbole in order to understand why it is employed so frequently". The lack of studies addressing this trope together with its high frequency of use prompted me to investigate this figure among the wide repertoire of figurative or indirect language forms.

On the other hand, not all aspects of figuration have aroused equal interest among researchers. Although figurative language has received considerable attention from linguists, philosophers, cognitive psychologists, rhetoricians and other scholars, most of this interest, with a few exceptions, has been primarily directed at explaining how figures of speech are comprehended, given their non-literal nature. In contrast to understanding, the question of figurative language production has been largely ignored. Thus, a crucial limitation in figurative language theories nowadays is the production process of figures of speech.

Although the bulk of research has almost exclusively concentrated on the comprehension process, the production of figures and tropes seems at least equally important, since it may account for the existence of figuration in human communication by addressing the discourse goals fulfilled by indirect forms. Only in the last fifteen years have cognitive psychologists become interested in the pragmatic functioning of figures of speech, but although the literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of verbal irony is extensive, the study of other figures, such as hyperbole, has been disregarded to a large extent. Most notable exceptions are, for example, Roberts and Kreuz (1994) or Colston and O'Brien (2000a, 2000b).

Similarly, although the reception process of figurative language forms has been widely studied in terms of understanding, almost no attention has been devoted to listeners' verbal reactions to figuration and their collaboration in a joint construction of figurative frames. This is a fairly new area of research and the scarce literature that exists has mainly focused on metaphor and verbal irony. The only exception is McCarthy and Carter's (2004: 149) study of the interactive nature of overstatement as "indispensable for its proper understanding".

Rather than focusing on the theme of comprehension, this dissertation will concentrate on the production process and usage of exaggeration, since these fields of research have been largely ignored in the literature on the subject. Comprehension, which has been

thoroughly discussed within several disciplines, will only be dealt with inasmuch as it is reflected by listeners' verbal responses to hyperbole. Only in exploring the interactive nature of the trope will the reception process be examined, but mainly from a verbal or linguistic rather than cognitive dimension.

Underlying this dissertation is an attempt to provide a general framework for the description and understanding of hyperbole in interaction. It aims at exploring the ways in which this figure is used in everyday conversation, mainly from a production viewpoint but without totally discarding the reception process, since special emphasis is devoted to the interactive dimension of exaggerative devices. This aim is formulated in terms of the following objectives:

Objective 1: to provide an adequate definition of the notion of hyperbole, one which clearly distinguishes exaggeration from other related tropes such as understatement and verbal irony; and to list the criteria for identifying and labelling hyperbole, so that non-exaggerated uses of expressions can be excluded.

Objective 2: to set up a typology of hyperbolic items according to different dimensions or variables: semantic field, grammatical category, extreme of the continuum, interactivity with other figures of speech, etc.

Objective 3: to explore the long neglected production process of hyperbole, both in terms of usage (interactional genres and text forms) and functions (rhetorical and speech acts).

Objective 4: to examine the interactive nature of the trope, as an activity collaboratively constructed by speaker and hearer, by focusing on listeners' verbal responses and further contributions to overstatement.

Naturally, these objectives broadly correspond to the research questions to be answered in this study, namely:

1. What is hyperbole? How can this figure be recognised and identified? What cues can be used in order to distinguish between hyperbolic and non-hyperbolic uses of words and expressions?
2. In which grammatical categories can hyperbole be realised, and which one is most productive? Is this trope more frequently used to amplify or to minimise? Into what semantic fields can it be classified and which one is most often exaggerated? Is hyperbole a productive strategy in the creation of other figures of speech?

3. What kinds of speech acts can be exaggerated? Which illocutionary force is most often assigned to overstated utterances? Why are some hyperbolic speech acts performed indirectly?
4. What pragmatic functions does overstatement fulfil in discourse? Which communicative goals are more recurrent? Why should speakers prefer to express their thoughts indirectly or hyperbolically instead of literally? What is the relationship between neighbouring exaggerated and literal expressions?
5. In what types of interactional genre and text form does hyperbole feature? Which are more hyperbole-prone? What kind of conversational goal, language use and participant relation exhibits a higher frequency of overstatement?
6. How do listeners normally react to the speaker's exaggeration? What kind of verbal response predominates? Why is hyperbole so frequently employed in narratives?

The data examined in order to explore the ways in which hyperbole is used consists of naturally-occurring spoken texts extracted from the British National Corpus (BNC). In other words, this is a corpus-based study. The BNC can be defined as a sample collection, totalling over 100 million words, of modern British English, both spoken and written, stored in electronic form and “selected so as to reflect the widest possible variety of users and uses of language” (Aston and Burnard 1998: 3). Ten percent of the BNC is made up of transcribed spoken material (transcriptions of naturalistic speech), totalling about 10 million words.

The focus is on oral discourse, since not a great amount of research exists into everyday spoken hyperbole. This choice is aimed at counterbalancing the lack of studies addressing this figure in “authentic” everyday speech. The bulk of research has been conducted in written language, specially literary texts, or relies on artificial and elicited data. To my knowledge, there exist only two published studies of hyperbole in naturally-occurring speech, namely Sell *et al.* (1997) and McCarthy and Carter (2004). The former focuses on parents' use of non-literal language with pre-school children. The latter concentrates on hyperbole and examines this figure in naturally-occurring conversations from CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English). This is also the first corpus-based study of exaggeration. Because of the predominance of lexicography in earlier corpus linguistics, literal meaning remained in the fore of corpus studies. Only recently

have corpus linguists turned their attention to areas such as pragmatics, conversational analysis and figurative speech.

By studying exaggeration in everyday speech, I also aim to demonstrate that although hyperboles have traditionally been associated with the field of literary criticism, they are by no means confined to the literary text. Rather, they are ubiquitous strategies in oral discourse. Surprisingly, most people still think of hyperbole as a literary or ornamental device solely. Rarely, if ever, do they realise that we constantly make use of this trope in our daily lives.

What remains in this introduction consists of an outline of the structure and content of this dissertation, which has been organised in nine chapters.

The objective of chapter two is to provide a detailed review of the literature on the subject. It traces the interest in hyperbole that is found in a variety of research traditions, from rhetoric to lexico-grammatical studies, via pragmatic approaches to the more cognitively and experimentally oriented studies of exaggeration.

I assess the treatment and characterisation that exaggeration has been given from different perspectives or disciplines, starting with Greek grammar and rhetoric (after a brief introduction to the history of rhetoric in general). Within this framework, the argumentative and ornamental or aesthetic use of the trope will be clearly distinguished.

Then, hyperbole is discussed within the field of linguistics, where the interest has been placed on the grammatical process of intensification and categorisation according to lexico-grammatical configuration and semantic field. Since “figurative language is one of the most productive sources of linguistic change” (Sadock 1993: 44), this section makes reference to the semantic changes brought about by this figure too.

The next set of contributions adopt a pragmatic view of communication. Since hyperbole can only be understood in context, it is a purely pragmatic phenomenon, and so this approach will be the point of departure for this dissertation. Within this view, exaggeration is discussed in the philosophy of language, as a violation of the maxim of quality; in politeness theory, as a strategy to mitigate face-threatening acts; in cross-cultural studies, as a culturally-bound phenomenon and in cross-gender research, as a feature of women’s language.

Psycholinguistic studies have been extraordinarily fruitful for figurative language theories, and indeed, much useful insight into hyperbole comes from this field of research.

The focus has been primarily laid on the reception process, in terms of comprehension, of figures of speech but without totally disregarding their pragmatic functioning. In this section, special attention is devoted to the notion of contrast, crucial for the understanding of the trope.

This chapter also explores the connection between hyperbole and related figures of speech, namely verbal irony and understatement, and the use of exaggeration as an ironic cue. It also examines its use as a comic strategy in theories of humour and the tradition of the tall tale.

Finally, I consider McCarthy and Carter's (2004) study, the most recent contribution to the study of overstatement, by which this dissertation has been largely inspired.

Chapter three is devoted to the theoretical and analytical framework of analysis. It describes the research objectives underlying the study, the data or corpus examined and the methodology or procedure followed for the individual analysis in each chapter. The present study tries to combine pragmatic and conversational-analytical methods with corpus-based studies.

Chapter four can be considered a bridge between the survey or review of the literature and the corpus analysis. This chapter is divided into two main sections. First of all, I attempt to provide a sound definition of exaggeration, by outlining the defining characteristics of this figure, as a starting point for my analysis. The aim is to offer a definition of the phenomenon that clearly distinguishes it from other related tropes such as verbal irony and understatement. This definition constitutes a point of departure for the recognition of overstatement in our data. However, other criteria are often needed in order to identify and label this figure. Thus, those cues that signal the presence of an exaggeration in discourse will be examined.

In the second part of chapter four, once the hyperbolic items in our data have been identified, I proceed to classify them according to different criteria: their word class or grammatical category (lexico-grammatical taxonomy); their semantic field (semantic-etymological typology); the extreme of the scale they occupy (auxesis vs. meiosis) and whether or not they interact with other figures of speech (complex vs. simple hyperbole).

Chapter five focuses on speech act theory as one approach to the study of language functions. It aims to arrive at a typology of the different acts that overstatement may perform in conversation. It is primarily concerned with the identification, characterisation

and classification of hyperbolic speech acts and their distribution over illocutionary forces. A second object of study points to the notion of indirection. The traditional distinction between direct and indirect realisations of speech acts leads us to inquire about the motives that may prompt speakers to express their communicative intent indirectly, via other illocutionary acts, when they can do it in a direct and straightforward way. The preference for indirection is explained in terms of politeness theory and the notion of face-threatening acts.

Chapter six also addresses the production process of hyperboles, but in terms of the pragmatic functions they fulfil in discourse. It explores the wide range of communicative goals, other than purely aesthetic or ornamental, accomplished by the trope, often simultaneously. The aim is to define, explain and exemplify these propositional and affective functions, since the existing literature has been restricted to their identification. The question of why do not speakers simply say what they mean directly rather than hiding their meanings in the indirect form of hyperbole? will lead us to discuss the rewards or advantages of overstatement over literal remarks. Finally, this chapter also explores the complementary relationship between literal and exaggerated expressions.

Chapter seven concentrates on the correlation between text forms, interactional genres and hyperbole. It explores the way contextual factors influence over the use and frequency of overstatement. Firstly, it explores which text form or mode the utterance or textual segment where hyperbole occurs belongs to. Secondly, speech genres are addressed to determine the environments or contexts of use for the trope. These genres will be defined and their main features described according to purpose, lexico-grammatical dimension and “situative structure” (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 13). Finally, three defining generic dimensions, namely goal orientation, participant framework and transactional/interpersonal language use will be examined in isolation to discover more specific patterns of hyperbolic use.

In chapter eight, the interactional character of this figure of speech will be examined. Rather than regarding figures as acts by the speaker alone, the aim is to show the interactive or collaborative nature of hyperbole, as a joint activity between addresser and addressee. In order to explore the active role that listeners play in both the construction and understanding of hyperbole, special attention will be devoted to their responses and further

contributions to the trope. Eventually, I examine the use of this figure as a performance feature in narratives.

In chapter nine, by way of conclusion, the significance of the present study is critically assessed in the light of the results obtained from the analysis. Possible limitations in the study in terms of aims, research questions, corpus and methodology are discussed. I also point up further areas of research that could be investigated in order to complete our knowledge and understanding of hyperbole in particular and of figurative language in general.

Finally, I include an appendix containing the entirety of the BNC data examined, the items selected for analysis, that is, all the exaggerations present in those texts and their individual analysis according to the variables discussed.

2. STATE OF THE ART: REVIEW OF STUDIES ON HYPERBOLE

In this chapter, I will trace the interest in hyperbole that is found in a variety of research traditions, from rhetoric to literary criticism, via linguistic and pragmatic approaches to the more cognitively and experimentally oriented studies of exaggeration.

2.1. Greek grammar and rhetoric

In the rhetoric of antiquity, the practice of verbal composition is treated under five headings: invention, disposition, elocution, action and memory. Action was understood as “the use of gesture, tone of voice and general physical deportment in the delivery of a speech”, while “the cultivation of memory was prescribed to insure that one could speak without notes or a written text” (Levin 1982: 112). Since action and memory primarily belong to oratory, their importance decreased as rhetoric gradually became associated with the study of written texts. The three other components, invention, disposition and elocution have been broadly defined as the starting of ideas, the arrangement and organisation of ideas into a coherent whole and the artistic use of language, respectively.

For centuries, rhetoric together with grammar was the only approach to the study of language. From antiquity through the present, lists of figures have generally been the standard components of general treatises on rhetoric or grammar or have been the subject of specifically figural handbooks.

During late antiquity and the Middle Ages, period in which figural rhetoric is said to have flourished, rhetoric was equated with persuasive discourse and the exercise of power. Treatments of figures proliferate through most genres of medieval writing instruction, including grammar books, *artes poetriae* and *artes dictandi*. The Renaissance, however, marks a change in emphasis from the canon of argumentation to the canon of invention, with rhetoric becoming primarily figural. In this period, ornamentation acquires unprecedented importance and so rhetoric is restricted to elocution, the use of tropes and figures, commonly considered forms of verbal ornament (Poster 2000: 120). Some scholars even define style as the proper and unique province of rhetoric. The Renaissance marks a flowering of treatises concentrating primarily or exclusively on figures. Like the medieval

treatments of figures, these treatises usually provide detailed grammatical explanations of figures followed by several illustrative examples. Related and similar figures are distinguished from one another by details of arrangement of words or parts of speech, but their usage or effect, says Poster (2000: 122), is rarely discussed.

Figures continue to feature throughout rhetorical historiography during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During this period, rhetoricians typically become interested in the comprehension and usage of figures. By contrast, contemporary rhetoric has tended to denigrate or minimise the importance of figural rhetoric. In contemporary rhetoric, figures are most likely to be found in encyclopaedias, handbooks or glossaries. Such treatments normally take the form of a definition of a figure followed by one or more exempla, without any further reflection on the semiotics of rhetorical terminology (Poster 2000: 124). Scholars often list striking phrases from earlier writers, especially poets, as examples of rhetorical figures. This long-standing method responds to the tradition in which teachers use poetry to teach the art of eloquence. As a result of this process of marginalisation of figures in contemporary rhetoric, the study of figuration has either been relegated to the domains of literary criticism and linguistics (the heirs of ancient grammar) or to an ancillary position.

Reflecting on how the field of rhetoric has evolved, Poster (2000: 131) claims:

The most dramatic shifts occur in the questions that definitions of rhetorical figures answer. For classical rhetoricians, definitions of figures were often constructed to answer questions of how style could contribute to persuasive excellence in the *tria genera causarum*. For medieval and Renaissance rhetoricians, figures were often defined grammatically, described as forms of ornamentation, and learned within the context of Latin or vernacular literacy pedagogy. Seventeenth- through nineteenth-century writers were often more interested in usage and appreciation than definition, and they tended to devote more space to accounts of how figures can be assimilated into theories of psychological rhetoric, affect, or taste than in precisely defining patterns of verbal ornament.

From antiquity, rhetoricians and grammarians have devoted special attention to defining and classifying figurative language, although it has been noted that the systematic study and cataloguing of figures of speech appears to be a Hellenistic innovation. Many different classifications have been devised over the years, but an important tradition, that can be

traced back to Aristotle, is the division of figures into figures of thought (*figurae sententiarum*) and figures of speech (*figurae verborum*). It is striking to find some figures now placed in a category, then in the other, depending on whether the rhetorician is mainly concerned with invention or style. In this sense, Poster (2000: 124) notes that inventionally- or epistemically-oriented rhetoricians typically describe figures as structures of thought, characterised by patterns of logic and substance, while stylistically-oriented rhetoricians usually define figures by purely linguistic patterns.

Within the taxonomy of figures of speech falls a category that deserves special attention for the purposes of this dissertation, namely tropes. Many different classifications have been proposed to account for this variety of figurative language. As Mayoral (1994: 223) notes, the category of tropes “constituye tal vez uno de los tipos de fenómenos cuya delimitación y alcance han presentado mayores fluctuaciones en el transcurso de la transmisión de la doctrina del *Ornato*”. In classical rhetoric, tropes, from Greek *tropos* or *conversio*, meaning “turn, twist”, are defined as a transference of meaning process involving the substitution of a word or expression for another word or expression. By contrast, Dumarsais’ (1988) definition of tropes: “figures by which one gives a word a meaning which it is not precisely the proper meaning of that word”, lays the emphasis, as some scholars have pointed out, on the change of meaning. As Capt-Artaud (1995: 34) correctly notes, the substitutive conception of figures, “one word in the place of another”, vanishes here to be replaced by a semantic definition: a new sense attaches itself to the word owing to the trope. In the words of Dumarsais (1988: 69):

Les tropes sont des figures par lesquelles on fait prendre à un mot une signification qui n'est pas précisément la signification propre de ce mot. [...] Elles sont ainsi appelées, parce que, quand on prend un mot, dans le sens figuré, on le tourne, pour ainsi dire, afin de lui faire signifier ce qu'il ne signifie point dans le sens propre.

In classical rhetoric, figures have also been treated as part of a general theory of deviation from ordinary language. However, as Blair (1817: 273) has correctly noted, though figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the most simple form of speech, we are not thence to conclude that they imply anything uncommon or unnatural. This apparent contradiction between the notion of figure as deviation from ordinary

language while typical of everyday speech goes back to Aristotle and features throughout all rhetoric.

2.1.1. Hyperbole in rhetoric: definition and classification

Hyperbole has been, since late antiquity, one of the many figures of speech discussed within the general framework of rhetoric. Since rhetoric has traditionally been associated with the production of persuasive speech (Dascal and Gross 1999: 107), it has a long history of study, going back to Aristotle, as a rhetorical figure in written texts.

Within the rhetorical historiography of hyperbole, the emphasis has been primarily laid on defining and classifying this classic trope in relation to other rhetorical figures. Defining and classifying figures of speech and thought have been among the more important tasks of rhetoricians and grammarians for more than two millennia. This explains the wide diversity of definitions and typological classifications that can be found in the literature on exaggeration.

Definitions of hyperbole in rhetoric generally respond to the etymology of the term in Greek and Latin, which refers to the notions of “excess” and “exaggeration”. Thus, Herrera (1978: 346; quoted in Mayoral 1994: 234) notes that “los romanos le dieron por nombre superlación o exceso o crecimiento, que sobrepaja la verdad por causa de acrecentar o disminuir alguna cosa”. In *The Myſterie of Rhetorique Unvail'd*, Smith (1657: 54) defines hyperbole, from Greek “[*hyperballo*] [*uper*o, to exceed”, as “Exuperation, or a paſſing of meaſure or bounds” and adds “It is when the Trope is exceedingly enlarged, or when the change of ſignification is very high and lofty, or when in advancing or repreſſing one ſpeaks much more then is preciſely true, yea above all belief” (*sic*). Since hyperbole is twofold, he draws a diſtinction between auxesis and meiosis. Auxesis, ſays Smith (1657: 55-6), is “when for the increaſing and amplifying, we put a word more grave and ſubſtantial in ſtead of the proper word being leſſe”, whereas meiosis “is when leſſe is ſpoken, yet more is underſtood; or when for extenuation ſake we uſe a lighter and more eaſie word or terme then the matter requires; or when we put a leſſe word for a greater” (*sic*). Likewise, other rhetoricians have emphasised the double nature, amplifying and diminishing, of the trope. Thus, Dumarsais (1988: 333) points that “l’hyperbole eſt une exagération, ſoit en augmentat ou en diminuant”, used to represent some excess, whether

large or small, when conventional terms sound too weak to express the speaker's intended meaning. Similarly, Fontanier's (1969: 123) definition of hyperbole remarks this duality: "l'hyperbole augmente ou diminue les choses avec excès, et les présente bien au-dessus ou bien au-dessous de ce qu'elles sont".

Thus, Ravazzoli (1978: 86) has correctly emphasised an element of "quantification", which can be realised in different ways, as a defining feature of the trope. In his work, quantification has nothing to do with the quantification found in logic, but refers to a set of grammatical mechanisms, whereby an expression quantifies some dimension expressed in the utterance.

Apart from the quantitative scale, whereby reality is enlarged or diminished, Mayoral (1994) deserves special attention for making explicit reference to the qualitative or evaluative dimension of the trope. In classical rhetoric, references to the quantitative dimension pervade in definitions of the trope, but as Mayoral (1994: 243) notes:

[...] tampoco parece que sea del todo posible pensar en una dimensión estrictamente cuantitativa: "engrandecedora/empequeñecedora" de la realidad representada, que no vaya asociada a un tiempo a una actitud valorativa: "enaltecedora o degradadora" o, lo que es lo mismo, "laudatoria o vituperadora", de dicha realidad por parte del yo textual.

Following the classical etymology of the term, Mayoral defines hyperbole as a process of metaphoric change "dominado por una finalidad 'enaltecedora/degradadora', o su vertiente cuantitativa 'engrandecedora/empequeñecedora' de una determinada realidad que sobrepasa, de modo excesivamente llamativo, los límites de lo razonablemente verosímil" (p. 243). Although this aspect is latent in definitions and clearly manifest in hyperbolic examples, it has only been treated explicitly by scholars such as Gracián (1969: 197) and Mayoral (1994: 243).

In terms of categorisation, there is considerable variation within the rhetorical literature. The following classificatory attempts may serve to illustrate the fluctuation this term has undergone. Some rhetoricians opt for regarding hyperbole as a metaphorical process. For example, for Aristotle, often considered the main representative of classical rhetoric, metaphor represents the paradigm trope. He regards metaphor as an analogical process including, not only what we call metaphor, but also simile, metonymy, personification and hyperbole (*Rhetoric* 3. 10-1, *Poetics* 20-2; quoted in Dascal and Gross 1999: 122).

Similarly, in Mayoral's (1994: 243) typology of tropes, hyperbole is defined as a process of metaphoric substitution. Adopting Jakobson's (1988) bipolar notion of metaphor and metonymy as a reference point, Mayoral introduces a taxonomy comprising two main categories of tropes related to different processes of lexical substitution: similarity and contiguity. The first class, represented by metaphoric tropes, is based on similarity relations between the so-called proper and improper term, namely metaphor, hyperbole, synesthesia, irony and allegory. By contrast, the second class, based on contiguity relationships, contains metonymic tropes, such as metonymy, symbol, synecdoche, antonomasia and periphrasis. Indeed, the term metaphor often serves as a general label for every figure of speech. However, equating hyperbole with metaphor or other forms of figuration² only serves to blur important distinctions between the tropes (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 155).

By contrast, Smith (1657: 3) distinguishes two kinds of tropes, namely affections and species. The latter refers to metonymy, irony, metaphor and synecdoche, whereas the former, "which are such qualities as may put ornament upon any of the forementioned Tropes" (*sic*) are five: catachresis, hyperbole, metalepsis, litotes and allegory. Fontanier (1969: 122), on the other hand, introduces a new category to which hyperbole belongs, "figures d'expression par réflexion", thus termed because in presenting an idea or thought,

[...] nous la dirons moins que nous ne la ferons concevoir ou deviner, par le rapport des idées énoncées avec celles qui ne le sont pas, et sur lesquelles les premières vont en quelque sorte se réfléchir, sur lesquelles du moins elles appellent la réflexion, en même temps qu'elles les réveillent dans la mémoire.

In Todorov (1967: 231), hyperbole, like litotes, irony, metaphor and synecdoche, features as a kind of deviation, within anomalies of the sign-referent relation. And Ravazzoli (1978: 74), who has focused solely on this figure, argues that in collecting both ancient and modern rhetorical classifications of figurative language, "tuti i tipi iperbolicici [elecanti] si possono ricondurre a aquel processo semantico che Lausberg chiama *immutatio* (o cambiamento di senso)".

² Other scholars in psycholinguistics regard hyperbole as an ironic trope (e.g. Gibbs 1994, 2000, Leggitt and Gibbs 2000).

Hyperbole has generally been regarded as a trope within the category of figures of speech. This categorisation, however, has often been questioned since “sus formas de realización discursiva se trascienden con frecuencia de los límites de la unidad palabra, circunstancia que queda reflejada en el doble tratamiento que se le suele asignar, ya como tropo de palabra, ya como tropo de pensamiento” (Mayoral 1994: 243). Thus, in Lausberg (1969; quoted in Arduini 2000: 86), hyperbole is found within the category of tropes or *ornatus in verbis singulis* (i.e. in a single word) as a trope by limit shift, but also among figures or *ornatus in verbis coniunctis* (i.e. in multiple words) as a figure of thought per *immutationem* within tropes by limit shift. Jiménez Patón (1987: 197), by contrast, does not consider hyperbole as a trope, but as a figure of amplification within the category of figures of thought.

Modern rhetoric has correctly emphasised an aspect of this trope that somehow questions the classical trend of studying figures in straightforward taxonomies, namely the compound nature of hyperbole as a trope that may co-occur with other figures. In 1604, Jiménez Patón had already noted that “las hipérbolas se pueden hacer en cualquiera de los tropos, y así hay hipérbolas metafóricas, metonímicas y de otros tropos” (1987: 143). Smith (1657: 57) also refers to this compound nature in claiming that hyperbole is either simple or compared, whether “by equality of comparifon” or “by the comparative degree” (*sic*). However, it is only relatively recently when rhetoricians have become interested in the complex nature of overstatement. Fontanier (1969: 124), for example, remarks that hyperbole is found in the majority of similes and metaphors. Lausberg (1969; quoted in Ravazzoli 1979: 95) distinguishes two main types of hyperbole: pure and compound hyperbole. The latter falls into two categories: hyperbole of speech or in “*verbis singulis*” (e.g. metaphoric and ironic hyperbole) and hyperbole of thought or in “*verbis coniunctis*” (e.g. hyperbolic simile and amplification). Echoing Lausberg’s (1969) compound hyperbole, Ravazzoli (1978: 71) emphasises the close relationship among hyperbole, metaphor, simile, litotes and irony as a kind of codified linguistic repertoire where the overlapping of figures is a recurrent phenomenon. Without claiming comprehensiveness, his taxonomy includes: metaphoric hyperbole (which magnifies or attenuates), hyperbole with amplification, hyperbolic simile, metonymic hyperbole, hyperbolic litotes, hyperbole with antonomasia and hyperbolic irony (pp. 96-8), although in practice metaphoric hyperboles and hyperbolic similes are much more recurrent than the other combinations.

Although neo-rhetoricians have tended to disregard the study of exaggeration, nevertheless they have succeeded in stressing relevant parallelisms between this and other figures. Thus, in the Liegi group, hyperbole is considered a transition point between linguistic tropes, such as metaphor, metonymy or synecdoche, and referential tropes, such as litotes or irony, since it shares the semiotic mechanisms of the former and the extralinguistic nature of the latter.

2.1.2. Rhetorical functions: persuasion vs. ornamentation

In figural rhetoric one of the most hotly debated questions is whether the use of figurative language responds to argumentative or aesthetic purposes. Schopenhauer was the first to point out the impossibility of separating argumentative-rhetoric from ornamental-rhetoric. This explains the difficulties encountered in attempting to ascribe rhetoric treatises either to persuasion or to ornamentation. Take for example, Smith's (1657: 1) definition of rhetoric: "a faculty by which we understand what will serve our turn concerning any subject to win belief in the hearer: hereby likewise the end of the discourse is set forward, to wit, the affecting of the heart with the sense of the matter in hand" (*sic*). Accordingly, rhetoric is a synonym of persuasive speech. However, later Smith (1657: 2) adds: "*Elocution*, or the garnishing of speech, is the first and principal part of Rhetorique, whereby the speech it self is beautified and made fine" or "A Trope is an instrument of Elocution, which adorns our Speech" (*sic*).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 271), however, have managed to differentiate between the aesthetic and argumentative function of tropes:

We consider a trope to be argumentative, if it brings about a change of perspective, and its use seems normal in relation to this new situation. By contrast, if the speech does not bring about the adherence of the hearer to this argumentative form, the figure will be considered an embellishment, a figure of style. It can excite admiration, but this will be on the aesthetic plane, or in recognition of the speaker's originality. (my translation)

Pollio *et al.* (1977), by contrast, consider all other functions of figures subordinate to their ornamental quality. It is precisely because of their embellishment and beauty that they compel our attention and other discourse goals can be fulfilled. "Being compelling,

ornamental or interesting”, therefore, “is not *just* a function of figurative expression, rather it is the condition by which figures work” (p. 17).

2.1.2.1. Argumentative hyperbole

In the rhetorical tradition descending from antiquity, there is a “technique”: treatises on eloquence, intended to produce persuasive speech at a time when the mastery of language was linked to the exercise of power (Capt-Artaud 1995: 33).

As Jeanne D. Fahnestock (1996; quoted in Turner 1998: 46) notes in her *Figures of Argument: Studies in the Rhetoric of Science*, “the goal of a compendium of figures was [...] to define the formal means for achieving certain cognitive or persuasive functions”. Classical rhetoricians often observe that linguistic patterns prototypically have conceptual anchors. After the Greeks, however, rhetoric turned principally to applied tasks, chiefly the production of instructional materials, and rhetoricians started to ignore the conceptual work of figures.

In ancient Greece, classical rhetoric as represented by Plato and Aristotle, concentrates on argumentation. Within this framework, rhetoric is intimately related to Dialectics and Logic. Persuasion is the true object of study of rhetoric, as first conceptualised by Aristotle and after him, by the ancient world. Thus, rhetoric was generally defined as the art of speaking publicly in a persuasive way.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s (1994) *Tratado de la argumentación: La nueva retórica* is an attempt to restore and rehabilitate classical rhetoric. They are clearly inspired by Greek rhetoric and dialectics, which is defined in Aristotle’s terms as the art of reasoning from generally accepted opinions (p. 36). As in ancient Greece, they equate rhetoric with a theory of argumentation; theory which aims to influence listeners’ conduct or character through language (p. 41). Within this framework, persuasion and conviction are the ends of rhetoric. They set aside the aesthetic or ornamental dimension of rhetoric, and so restore the original character of the discipline, replacing ornamentation for argumentation as the true object of study of rhetoric.

As for the argumentative usage of hyperbole, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 444) claim that superlatation or superlativeness³ may be used to defend behaviour that listeners would normally tend to condemn, by placing such conduct together with actions that people praise or admire. It is also employed to devalue some state of affairs or situation, with which in general most people would be contented, but which can still be further improved. This type of reasoning, they say, is not only used to support particular ways of conduct, it is also used in philosophy to refine notions originally based on common sense. Often this technique is used to transform counterarguments into supportive or favourable arguments, to show that what had initially been viewed as an obstacle or handicap is actually a means to reach a stage of superiority (p. 445). These scholars underline that the figures through which superlativeness is realised are litotes and hyperbole, with the latter being defined as an exaggerated way of expression (p. 447).

Pomerantz' (1986) treatment of the persuasive functions of hyperbole resembles Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1994) argumentative approach. She studies the strategic role of extreme case formulations in complaining, accusing, justifying and defending, since "one practice used in legitimizing claims involves describing with hyperbole" (p. 219). She devotes special attention to three different uses of overstatement, such as defending against or countering challenges to the legitimacy of complaints, accusations, justifications or defences. In such cases, participants often "assert the strongest case in anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings" (p. 227). That is, hyperbole is used whenever speakers anticipate or expect their addressees to undermine their claims and when they are in adversarial positions. She also highlights the use of this figure to propose the cause of a phenomenon is in the object rather than a product of the interaction or circumstances (p. 219). Finally, she emphasises the way in which hyperbole serves to propose that some behaviour is not wrong, or is right, by virtue of its status as frequently occurring or commonly done (p. 220). In reporting the prevalence of a practice as a maximum case, speakers resort to frequency to speak for the rightness of such conduct.

The use of hyperbole for persuasive purposes is intimately related to political speeches. In this sense, it has been noted that the use of figurative language may sometimes serve negative discourse ends, such as to hide, to mask or mislead (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 16). Albert

³ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 447) draw a distinction between hyperbole and superlatation. Superlatation is defined as the use of hyperbole with a clearly argumentative purpose, whereas hyperbole "is neither justified, nor planned, but uttered carelessly" (my translation).

(1964), who has studied the use of figures of speech in Burundi, found a number of stylistic conventions that make statements misleading if taken literally in Rundi discourse. Apart from the use of figures in their rich tradition of oral literature, he found that people from Burundi are also keen on exaggeration in practical contexts, most notably in economic or political negotiations, claims for damages and praises (p. 51). In law cases and councils, Albert claims, “the self-interest and emotional involvements of disputants and witnesses will lead them to falsify evidence, to exaggerate accounts of damage and claims, and even to perjure themselves” (p. 45). This helps him explain that judges and experienced elders in Burundi are trained to detect lies, exaggerations and other departures from fact and to spot subtle cues to distinguish guilty from innocent nervousness or eloquence.

Similarly, Swartz (1976) in his paper “Hyperbole, Politics, and Potent Specifications: The Political Uses of a Figure of Speech”, claims that political speeches are often characterised as having a good deal of exaggeration and extravagant statement. Hyperbole, says Swartz, is a special sort of political resource used “to gain particular ends and to win or retain support for special procedures or states” (p. 101). In particular, he concentrates on the use of hyperbole in barazas, which are dispute settlement sessions, among the Bena people of Tanzania. He shows that hyperbole provides a means for focusing attention on specific aspects of reality in such a way as to bring about awareness of values and norms associated with those aspects in an emotionally charged way. In focusing attention on some aspects of reality rather than others, hyperbole structures that reality in ways open to manipulation by users (p. 101). What Swartz (1976: 111) suggests is that “hyperbole is likely to be chosen as a resource when the user feels a need to structure reality so that some aspects overshadow others”. That is, conflicting views are brought into accord or structured by emphasising one at the expense of another. Thus, hyperbole “takes one aspect of reality and inflates it so another disappears” (p. 109). Swartz also establishes the conditions under which speakers are likely to employ overstatement in the course of political activity. Hyperbole tends to occur when speakers are unsure about their ability to gain the audience’s acceptance of their construction of reality (p. 113), a situation which resembles Pomerantz’ (1986) anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings. In the words of Swartz (1976: 111):

Speakers who not only want to restructure reality but who feel that the resistance to this structuring is strong and, possibly, well founded will be more likely to use hyperbole than speakers who do not feel such resistance. Putting this somewhat differently, I would expect that hyperbole will be the resource used where the speaker feels most concerned or uneasy about his ability to get his audience to see the world as he wants them to see it.

However, there is also the danger of hyperbole as a device in which speakers try too hard and is revealed as overextended in their attempt to dominate their interlocutors (Harrawood 2003: 320). It is not surprising that figures have generally been viewed as strategies to deceive rational thought, since figurative language in the context of political discourse is often used to confuse or hide behind rather than to clarify or reveal (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 97).

2.1.2.2. Ornamental or aesthetic hyperbole

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 268) correctly note that as a result of the general trend of restraining rhetoric to stylistic aspects, figures began to be viewed as simple forms of ornamentation contributing to create an artificial and flourished style. Thus, Smith (1657: 1) notes that “Rhetorique, or the Art of eloquent and delightfull fpeaking” derives from “[*rheo*] *loquor*, to fpeak” and “[*technicôs*] *artificialiter*, artificially” (*sic*).

For Dumarsais (1988: 75), for example, “Les Tropes ornent le discours” and “donnent plus d’énergie à nos expressions”. However, he regards hyperbole as vulgar and even as a vice of style. In his own words: “Mais quand on a du génie et de l’usage du monde, on ne se sent guère de gout pour ces sortes de pensée fausses et outrées” (p. 123). Similarly, Blair (1817, vol. 2) in his *Lecciones sobre la retórica y las bellas letras* claims that figurative language dignifies the style (p. 23), calls attention to itself, adorns and beautifies (p. 6). He prescribes rules for the correct use of overstatement, warning us against its excessive use. In terms of degree of inflation, he claims that if the figure is too extreme, then it becomes extravagant and might even violent listeners (p. 81). In this sense, Longinus (1985; quoted in Harrawood 2003: 322) highlights that “the most excellent hyperboles [...] are those which escape our notice, that they are hyperboles”. Blair distinguishes two kinds of hyperbole, namely descriptive and emotional. The latter, he says, is superior to the former since passions, feelings and emotions inspire by nature a hyperbolic style; they are

inherently connected (p. 76). He also warns us about the stylistic dangers of describing the feelings of other persons through exaggeration (p. 78), despite that some of his examples are actually descriptions of the emotional state of third non-present persons.

2.2. Literary studies

Among the five components of classical rhetoric, elocution, or the artistic use of language, gradually emerged as the major focus of interest, to such an extent as to virtually become a discipline of its own. Essentially, this single division of the classical rhetoric constitutes the field that today we call stylistics (Levin 1982: 112). The literary critic, as Turner (1973: 20) has noted, has long been concerned with style and artistic creativity, so the debt of modern stylistics to rhetoric is evident and accepted as such.

Dubois *et al.* (1970: 25) have even claimed that rhetoric is the knowledge of language procedures characteristic of literature. Thus, literature is always referred to as the paragon of standards, being poets, and in general literary writers, the best guarantors of exemplary usage. Tropes, in particular, have traditionally been treated as poetic tools. Since literary texts gradually became accepted as the most appropriate arena for speaking figuratively, it is not surprising that nowadays figuration is almost exclusively associated with literature.

The assumption that figurative language is exclusively ornamental has a long history in literary criticism. It has long been assumed that figurative language adds a rich aesthetic dimension to speaking and writing. Hence, literary writers employ figures of speech, such as hyperbole, to achieve certain aesthetic effects. It is commonly believed that figurative usage is not conceptually useful, but meant to “beautify prosaic ideas” (Pollio *et al.* 1990: 142). Thus, figures of speech are generally viewed as embellishments of ordinary literal language with little cognitive value of their own (Gibbs 1994a: 4).

In literary studies, the emphasis has been primarily laid on poetic or stylistic devices, as opposed to non-literal language *per se*. Associated with each literary genre is a distinctive set of aesthetic devices that enhance the aesthetic effect, including figurative language (e.g. irony, metaphor, hyperbole), shifts in perspective (e.g. points of view of narrator and characters, flashbacks) as well as phonological patterns (e.g. rhyme, assonance, alliteration). The type and density of these literary items predict the extent to which texts are regarded as literary (Graesser *et al.* 1996: 7).

Within this framework, hyperbole primarily becomes a form of ornamentation, which lends beauty and interest to writing. Unfortunately, the idea that figurative language can be interesting or beautiful, as Pollio *et al.* (1977: 17) remark, has come perversely to suggest that such expression is only ornamental and that ornament is neither functional, nor useful. Thus, in literary criticism, hyperbole has been examined as a technique used to compel, ornament or interest, as well as a form of creativity, as the creative expression of some idea.

Literary language forces tension on the distinction between form and content. Pollio *et al.* (1977: 31) express this idea in the following terms:

For most speaking situations form remains submerged in content: we are usually aware of what is said rather than how it is said. Figurative expression calls attention to the medium itself and in this way forces the listener or reader to pay simultaneous attention to both medium and message. In good figurative usage form and content fulfil a single intention; in lesser usage one or the other dominates. In all cases, however, it is the tendency of poetic language to demand its due that makes us stop and ponder not only on content, but style, as well as style and content.

Some scholars have advocated a distinction between the literary or poetical form of hyperbole from everyday use of overstatement, but such an arbitrary separation, according to levels of style, seems irrelevant. As Spitzbardt (1963: 278) correctly notes, “Even in literary style it is possible to find side by side individual poetic forms such as *wonderful past all wondering* by Arnold Bennett and idiomatic phrases of more colloquial type as e.g. *that’s obvious to a blind cat* by Noel Coward”.

There are also some studies about the frequency of hyperbole in literature. Kreuz *et al.* (1996) examined figurative language use in a corpus of contemporary American short stories. They analysed the occurrence and co-occurrence of eight main forms of non-literal language, namely hyperbole, idiom, irony, metaphor, simile, understatement, indirect requests and rhetorical questions. Their study found considerable variability in the use of particular non-literal forms in literature. The relative frequencies of figurative language occurrences reported are as follows: metaphor (29%), hyperbole (27%), idiom (18%), rhetorical question (10%), simile (8%), irony (3%), understatement (3%) and indirect requests (1%). Although their research demonstrated that metaphor was the commonest

trope, it was shortly followed by hyperbole. By contrast, they found that understatement is relatively rare in American literature, being nine times less frequent than its logical opposite, hyperbole.

Perhaps, the most surprising figure, in terms of frequency of occurrence, is hyperbole. Hyperbolic statements account for about one quarter of figurative statements in the corpus. This form of nonliteral language, however, has received almost no attention in the psychological literature, and very little attention elsewhere (e.g. Fogelin 1988). In terms of sheer occurrence, however, hyperbole seems to deserve more notice than it has received to date. (Kreuz *et al.* 1994: 91)

The importance of hyperbole becomes even clearer after an inspection of the co-occurrence matrix in their study. Exaggeration proved to be the trope which most interacted with other non-literal forms. It was involved in almost 80% of the cases of co-occurrence and combined with every other figure, with the exception of its logical opposite, understatement (p. 93).

2.3. Linguistic studies

2.3.1. Grammatical, lexical and semantic approaches to hyperbole

For linguists, the linguistic structure of overstatement seems more interesting. Linguistic studies have focused on hyperbole as part of the grammatical process of intensification, which is intimately connected to gradability. Thus, Bolinger (1972: 285) notes that magnitude is the element most often intensified.

In drawing a distinction between emphasisers and intensifiers, Quirk *et al.* (1985) reserve the term intensifier for those elements which add force to gradable constituents. Intensifying devices, says Kirchner (1955: 114; quoted in Bolinger 1972: 17), are multifarious but mostly lexical. Manifestations of degree and intensity are commonly associated with adjectives and adverbs, but not so commonly with nouns and verbs. This explains that the area of degree adjectives and adverbs is particularly rich in the linguistic literature. However, Bolinger (1972: 15) in his *Degree Words* has demonstrated how intensification can be traced back across all four major word classes: adjectives, adverbs,

nouns and verbs. His account, though, concentrates mainly on adjectival and adverbial intensification, involving both grammaticized and ungrammaticized intensifiers. The latter class is open. “The list”, as Bolinger (1972: 60) remarks, “is potentially as large as our capacity to dress up an overstatement or an understatement”.

Bolinger (1972: 115) illustrated various figurative ways of conveying intensification: by asking a rhetorical question, by simile, by litotes and by hyperbole (i.e. by substituting a stronger for a weaker synonym). Note that he even includes hyperbole into his definition of intensification: “intensification is the linguistic expression of exaggeration and depreciation” (p. 20). Not all intensifiers are hyperbolic, though. The term intensifier refers, says Bolinger (1972: 17), to “any device that scales a quality, whether up, down or somewhere between the two” and accordingly, four types of intensifiers can be distinguished depending on the region of the scale they occupy: boosters, compromisers, diminishers and minimisers. Boosters such as *She is terribly selfish* do more than merely intensify, they add to excess, and “are by definition hyperbolic; they are forceful, and to the best of the speaker’s ability, relatively unexpected” (p. 265).

The adjectives and adverbs that are most often adapted to intensification, with a tendency to be stereotyped in this use, says Bolinger (1972: 149), are the ones that refer to extremes. He highlights that the pervasiveness of extremity in intensification can be seen in the numerous synonyms of extreme that are used in adverbial phrases, e.g. *to the limit, to the last man, to the teeth, to the nth degree, to a fare-you-well* and in playful numbers such as *umpteenth* and *zillion*. Likewise, Stoffel (1901; quoted in Bolinger 1972: 149) remarks of intensifiers of adjectives and adverbs that most of them express absolute quantities such as do not admit of variation.

Bolinger (1972: 149, 242) provides a list of intensifiers, mainly adjectival and adverbial, embodying the notions of absoluteness and extremity, some of which are clearly exaggerated. They fall into ten classes: size (e.g. *colossal, enormously*), strength (e.g. *eternal, strenuously*), impact (e.g. *incredible, impressively*), abandonment (e.g. *wild, madly*), tangibility (e.g. *palpable, remarkably*), singularity (e.g. *exceptional, extraordinarily*), consistency (e.g. *impenetrable, solidly*), evaluation (e.g. *horrible, gorgeous, magnificently, outrageously*), irremediability (e.g. *desperate, woefully*) and purity or veracity (e.g. *pure, absolutely*). The latter, says Spitzbardt (1965: 352), reflects the functional transformation of quantification into intensification. Intensives such as *all*,

wholly, entirely have undergone a process of shifting from the sphere of totality to that of intensity. Related to intensifying adjectives, Bolinger (1972: 153) notes, are those prefixes which express scaled relationships, such as *sub-*, *super-*, *hyper-*, *over-*, *ultra-*, *near-*.

But lexical intensifiers are not the only means for intensification. Bolinger also considers means for intensification by stretching, such as repetition and intonation. Indeed, repetition is enough to produce intensification (p. 149). Repetition of sense is involved to some extent in all hyperbolic intensification, but there are typical cases where it gives a complete overlap, as in *perfectly good, ghostly pale, monstrously bad*, which Bolinger (1972: 291) calls “arithmetic boosting”, while in the genitive superlative of the *king of kings* type the boosting is geometric. The outer limit of stretching, says Bolinger (1972: 292), is the form of the emphatic discourse which emphasises by accumulation of metaphorical detail, as in *I’ll break every bone in your body* or *It raised his anger to the boiling point*.

Spitzbardt (1965) examined English degree adverbs and their semantic fields. He estimates that there are about 1.000 adverbs of degree in modern English. After discussing Malcev’s (1964) semantic taxonomy of intensives, he devises his own semantic classification of degree adverbs and provides 482 examples of intensifying adverbs. Malcev (1964; quoted in Spitzbardt 1965: 354) divides the bulk of English intensives into ten semantic classes:

Class 1: Correlation to negatively valuing adjectives and participles (e.g. *abominably*)

Class 2. Correlation to adjectives/participles used as curses or taboo words (e.g. *blasted*)

Class 3. Correlation to adjectives and participles the objective-logical meaning of which may be linked with ideas of astonishment, improbability (e.g. *incredibly*)

Class 4. Positively valuing (e.g. *admirably*)

Class 5. Idea of speciality, extraordinariness, notability (e.g. *phenomenally*)

Class 6. Idea of excess, abundance, immeasurability (e.g. *enormously*)

Class 7. Idea of indescribability, unspeakably (e.g. *unspeakably*)

Class 8. Bigness, depth, strength (e.g. *hugely*)

Class 9. Thoroughness, radicality (e.g. *monumentally*)

Class 10. Fullness, absoluteness (e.g. *absolutely*)

In turn, Spitzbardt (1965: 355) divides the semantic fields of adverbs of degree into two main classes: the predominantly objective-gradational and subjective-emotional spheres. The former includes all kinds of dimensional values as well as expressions for size, magnitude, quantity, excess, abundance, totality and perfection, whereas the latter involves psychological conditions such as mood and individual feelings. This sphere is subdivided into a positive and negative evaluation group. Spitzbardt (1965: 356-8) distributes the bulk of intensive adverbs in modern English usage among the following sixteen semantic fields:

Group 1. Totality, completeness, absoluteness (e.g. *completely*)

Group 2. Extension, bigness, abundance (e.g. *abysmally*)

Group 3. Speciality, astonishment, matchlessness (e.g. *fabulously*)

Group 4. Emphasis, thoroughness, decision (e.g. *stormily*)

Group 5. Correctness, reality, clearness (e.g. *spotlessly*)

Group 6. Adequacy, plainness, smoothness (e.g. *authentically*)

All these semantic fields belong to the predominantly objective-gradational sphere. Much more numerous and complex, however, is the group of intensifying adverbs from the predominantly subjective-emotional sphere. The following semantic fields correspond to the region of positive meanings.

Group 7. Fascination, magic, wonderfulness (e.g. *fascinatingly*)

Group 8. Magnificence, brightness, beauty (e.g. *angelically*)

Group 9. Cordiality, warmth, sympathy (e.g. *fervently*)

Group 10. Keeness, courage, boldness (e.g. *ardently*)

On the threshold towards the negative and pejorative region, Spitzbardt locates the group of heart, pungency, shrillness (e.g. *deafeningly*).

Finally, markedly negative or pejorative semantic fields are:

Group 12. Badness, unpleasantness, hopelessness (e.g. *deplorably*)

Group 13. Absurdity, rage, madness (e.g. *deliriously*)

Group 14. Frightfulness, aggressiveness, painfulness (e.g. *dismally*)

Group 15. Cruelty, brutality, deadliness (e.g. *inhumanly*)

Group 16. Curses, abusiveness, taboo-words (e.g. *bleeding*)

Note that some intensifying adverbs found in Bolinger (1972), Malcev (1964) and Spitzbardt (1965) are not hyperbolic, just intensifying. There is also considerable overlap among the three taxonomies in terms of semantic fields. It also goes without saying that

there is classificatory overlapping within each typology. As Spitzbardt (1965: 354) correctly notes the classification in the semasiological field is difficult, not only for the pure reason that it is troublesome to lay hold of semantic factors, but also, because in semantics the classificatory boundaries are overlapping to an inconveniently large extent.

In terms of adverbial modifiers, House and Kasper (1981) have managed to distinguish clearly between overstaters and intensifiers. Both are modality markers of the type upgrader (as opposed to downgrader) and increase the force of the impact an utterance is likely to have on the addressee, but in different ways. Overstaters such as *absolutely*, *terribly*, *purely* and *terribly* refer to “adverbial modifiers by means of which X overrepresents the reality denoted in the proposition in the interests of increasing the force of his utterance”, whereas intensifiers such as *very*, *so*, *such*, *really*, *just*, *indeed* and *quite* are defined as adverbial modifiers used to intensify certain elements of the proposition of the utterance (p. 169).

Counterfactuality, which solely can be determined by the speaker knowledge, since “a counterfactual utterance can be made only in cases in which the speaker has full knowledge of facts contrary to the hypothesised proposition” (Ziegeler 2000: 1744), has been specifically treated in Lowenberg (1982: 198-201). She analyses three metalinguistic markers, *really*, *literally* and *actually*, and considers their ability to signal counterfactuality and hyperbole. All three, says Lowenberg, point to how the speaker wants his words to be interpreted: “they signal that what is said is not factually or actually so” (p. 198).

These adverbial expressions are, of course, not always hedges for metaphors but they may occur in that use. They are beautiful examples of how perverse language can be and yet how comprehensible, because, when hedging a metaphor, “actually”, “really”, or “literally” indicates that what is expressed is not actually, really, or literally so. They also indicate the speaker’s attitude that the situation is extreme. (Lowenberg 1982: 198)

Lowenberg provides grammatical criteria for distinguishing the literal use of *literally*, which she maintains is rare in casual speech, from the overstated use of the word. This word has come to be a characteristic conversational marker of hyperbole, along with other adverb modifiers such as *nearly* and *almost*. Although *literally* might seem the very opposite of a signal of non-factual assertion, Lowenberg explains its overstated use in terms of an assertion by the speaker that the hyperbole could not be closer to the truth in its

intense descriptive power. Using *literally* in a sentence which could be true is usually a sign that it is not quite true as expressed, but an overstatement (p. 199).

Approximators or approximating adverbs, such as *almost* or *nearly*, can also function as counterfactuals. Such adverbs have been treated either from a semantic analysis as containing a negative entailment or from a pragmatic analysis as containing a conversational implicature. They are known to carry meanings suggesting the negation of their predicates, e.g. *she almost had an accident* is taken usually to suggest that she did not have an accident (Ziegeler 2000: 1744).

Some researchers have also equated exaggeration with vagueness. In this light, Channell (1994: 89) in her chapter “Approximating quantities with round numbers” claims that “a special category of approximation is to use an exact number, with a vague reading, to exaggerate the quantity concerned, i.e. to create hyperbole”, as in her example *A million students came to see me today*. She also considers under this heading the use of a plural number to approximate a quantity, as in *I’ve told him thousands of times* (p. 90). Besides, Channell (1994: 95-118) examines approximating quantities with non-numerical vague quantifiers, another rich source of exaggeration. She devotes special attention to partitive constructions of the type *bags of, loads of, lots of, masses of, oodles of*, which respond to the structure “plural quantifier + of + noun”, as well as constructions corresponding to the “a + singular quantifier (+ of + noun)”, such as *a load of, a lot of, a mass of*. Partitive nouns work even better, she says, if there is iteration, as in *pints and pints of milk, flocks and flocks of sheep, yards and yards of material* (p. 100).

In terms of linguistic forms, the bulk of research concentrates on illustrating the most recurrent sources of hyperbole. Obviously, these studies cannot, by definition, be exhaustive, since hyperbole is a creative act and “the possibilities for linguistic creativity are infinite” (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 150).

Although typically illustrated with superlative modifiers, exaggeration is expressible in many linguistic forms. For example, for Norrick (1982: 169), hyperbole is an amplification, which says more than necessary or justified. This may be achieved either through repetition as in his example *Larry’s an endlessly tall, incredibly immense, incalculably gigantic person* or through lexical substitution as in *Larry’s a giant*. Thus, Norrick distinguishes two different types of overstatement: repetitive and lexical. Lexical overstatement is not limited to nominal expressions but can occur in any major syntactic

category. Apart from nominal overstatement, one finds hyperbolic verbs, adjectives and adverbs, as well as examples of overstated quantifiers and numbers (Norrick 1982: 169-70).

A significant contribution to the linguistics of hyperbole is offered by Spitzbardt (1963), who focuses on the lexico-grammatical repertoire for hyperbole.

Most of the devices of hyperbolic speech, as for example certain nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, or the application of metaphor and simile are of a lexical kind and belong to the field of semantics. There are, however, also certain grammatical forms and frequently the co-operation of lexical and grammatical entities that are able to bring about an overstatement. (Spitzbardt 1963: 278)

He attempts to list the most usual, lexical and grammatical, means to express an overstatement. Spitzbardt's (1963: 278-80) taxonomy includes:

1. Numerical hyperbole, e.g. *I beg a thousand pardons*.
2. Words of hyperbolic nature, including:
 - Nouns, especially quantitative expressions, e.g. *ages, miles, oceans, worlds*.
 - Hyperbolic adjectives, e.g. *colossal, terrific, killing*.
 - Intensifying adverbs, e.g. *astronomically, endlessly, immensely, gigantically*.
 - Verbs, such as *to burn, to die* and *to kill* which overstate things in various infinitive and participial constructions.
3. Simile and metaphor, e.g. *as cross as the devil, like a house on fire*.
4. Comparative and superlative degrees, e.g. *He was down is less than no time*.
5. Emphatic genitive, e.g. *the finest of fine watches*.
6. Emphatic plural, e.g. *the sands of the desert, ambitions* for the singular *strong ambition* or *loves* for *deep love*.
7. Whole sentences, the hyperbolic contents of which help to emphasise a given statement, as in *I'm hanged if he doesn't come*.

Besides, he lists other verbal and non-linguistic means that can be used to express exaggeration, such as the use of hyperbolic prefixes, suprasegmental features and paralanguage.

Linguistically there are words, word-groups, and whole sentences operating as means of overstatement. Such instances are *realler than real*, *wonderful past all wondering*, *in less than no time* beside expressions like *oceans of money*, *not an atom of wit*, *for all the world*, *no end of*, *to burn* or *to be dying to see somebody*, beside the employment of intensifying adverbs as e.g. *astronomically*, *infinitely*, *unnaturally*, or prefixed particles such as *super-*, *hyper-*, *over-* and above all, beside comparisons and metaphors of all kinds, are evidences for the close interaction between syntax and lexical elements, between morphology and rhetoric. An important, even decisive role, in both overstatement and understatement is played by phonetic means involved in every bit of human speech as there are accent, rhythm, intonation and speed, accompanied by secondary communicative forms of facial expressions and gesticulation. (Spitzbardt 1963: 281)

McCarthy and Carter (2004) also list some of the most recurrent linguistic means for this trope, but discriminating between occurrences with a hyperbolic and non-hyperbolic reading, to determine which words and expressions are more hyperbolically-prone. The categories they distinguish are: (a) expressions of number, amount and quantity, e.g. *hundreds*, *thousands*, *millions*, *dozens*, *scores*, *tons*, *heaps*, *piles*; (b) time expressions, e.g. *hours*, *years*, *minutes*, *seconds*, *days*, *weeks*, *months*; and (c) adjectives and adverbs of size, degree and intensity, e.g. *literally*, *nearly*, *almost*, *massive*, *enormous*, *endless*, *gigantic*, *huge*, *vast*. They include a group of miscellaneous expressions, such as *(be) everywhere*, *covered in/with*, *have/throw a fit*, *(nearly/almost) die (+ -ing)*, *wet oneself*, too.

It has also been noted, especially in relation to compound hyperbole, that the trope may be realised in multiple words. Recall Mayoral's (1994: 243) claim: "sus formas de realización discursiva se trascienden con frecuencia de los límites de la unidad palabra". Within this framework, common linguistic realisations are hyperbolic comparisons or similes, including the so-called stereotyped similes and chained hyperboles (Mayoral 1994: 235).

Linguists have also pointed out the semantic changes brought about by the trope. Thus, Fernández (1993: 540) remarks "la hipérbole es una tendencia natural del habla humana, que engloba bastantes modificaciones del significado de las palabras. El proceso lleva consigo, generalmente, un empobrecimiento gradual del valor o énfasis original de muchos vocablos", as in *astonish* derived from Latin *ex-tonare* whose meaning is to wound with thunder, or used metaphorically: momentary paralysis of all faculties due to an extreme

terror. In contemporary English, it is practically a synonym of *surprise*. Because of this, Fernández argues that new terms, such as *thunderstruck*, *paralysed*, *petrified* or expressions like *unutterly astonished*, will have to be employed or coined when trying to retrieve the original meaning of *astonish*. In the same line, Bolinger (1972: 18) claims that “degree words afford a picture of fevered invention and competition that would be hard to come by elsewhere, for in their nature they are unsettled. They are the chief means of emphasis for speakers for whom all means of emphasis quickly grow stale and need to be replaced”. Similarly, Stoffel (1901; quoted in Bolinger 1972: 18) notes “the process is always going on, so that new words are in constant requisition, because the old ones are felt to be inadequate to the expression of a quality to the very highest degree of which it is capable”. Finally, Spitzbardt (1965) adds to the discussion on semantic changes that such a state of things can scarcely be better demonstrated than among adverbs of degree whose developmental change, mutual exchange and fading quality belong to the most conspicuous phenomena in linguistic life. Originally, most adverbs of degree have come into existence by individual coinage which will be raised into general usage after some time, only to be gradually pushed aside and replaced by ever new and more effective adverbs after some more time (p. 349).

2.3.2. Cross-cultural studies

It has often been noted that most of the empirical work on hyperbole has involved comparisons of its relative frequency and use in different cultures. Studies on over- and understatement have tended to emphasise cultural differences in the use of these two figures. The first interest in the cultural differences affecting the use of hyperbole can be traced back to Dumarsais (1988: 133) in remarking that exaggeration is considered vulgar in Eastern cultures, being much more frequently used by youngsters than adults, and rarely found in French, where the bulk of occurrences are found in satire and sometimes poetry. By contrast, says Dumarsais, the ancient Greeks were rather fond of exaggeration, as their literature illustrates.

Similarly, Blair (1817), after noting that hyperbole is a way of speaking founded on nature, since it occurs in all human languages (vol. 2, p. 73), claims that the use of extreme figures, including hyperbole, is typical of Eastern cultures (vol. 1, p. 237). In his attempt to

trace the trope's origin, he attributes to the speaker's imaginativeness the source of exaggeration. This explains why youngsters' speech is so exaggerated and accounts for the higher frequency of hyperbolic expressions in Eastern cultures, since, in contrast to Europeans, they are more imaginative and creative (vol. 2, p. 74). He extends this argument by claiming that the trope is typical of uncivilised countries. The more civilised the country, the less hyperbolically-prone, since civilisation tends to refine the style and removes the extremity of expression. This does not mean, however, that this figure is uncommon elsewhere, and so he claims that Spanish, African, and to a lesser extent, French literary writers are also fond of hyperboles (vol. 2, p. 80). Spitzbardt (1963) too makes a cultural claim that American English is more hyperbole-prone than British English: "Overstatement occurs more extensively and intensively in the American type of English than in British English" (p. 281). In contrast to American English, where the use of overstatement seems to prevail, understatement is the British type of the English language (p. 280).

Nevertheless, the empirical cross-cultural study of hyperbole can be said to have flourished much later. For example, Cohen (1987: 29) contrasts the use of hyperbole in Egyptian and American diplomatic relations since 1955 and concludes that Egyptians tend to use hyperbole more often than Americans. He claims that difficulties in the diplomatic relations between Egypt and the United States have been partly caused by the Egyptian propensity for exaggeration. Note in vain, Shouby (1970: 700) had already pointed out, in his account of the Arabic language, its love of overassertion and exaggeration. As Cohen (1987: 33) clearly puts it: "Another cross-cultural factor that has complicated Egyptian-American relations over the years is the Arab propensity to hyperbole (or, to put it another way, the American preference for relative understatement)". This Arab proclivity for exaggeration, says Cohen (1987: 37-8), may not only offend, it may also lead to a serious loss of credibility – real warnings being overlooked as overblown rhetoric.

Prothro (1970) has also focused on American and Arab differences in the use of this figure of speech. He conducted a study comparing Arab and American students and found that Arab students are more prone to overassertion than American pupils. His account emphasises the danger of misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication that this cultural difference often brings about. The following quotation conveys succinctly that idea: "Statements which seem to Arabs to be mere statements of facts will seem to

Americans to be extreme or even violent assertions. Statements which Arabs view as showing firmness and strength on a negative or positive issue may sound to Americans as exaggerated” (p. 711).

As with hyperbole, the empirical literature on understatement has also emphasised such cultural differences. Thus, it has been suggested that understatement is more typical of British speaking and writing than of American English (Müller-Schotte 1952, Hübler 1983, Nash 1985).

Eine ganz andere Geisteshaltung als in der oben sich zeigenden Art des Engländers, niedrige Zahlen zu bevorzugen, prägt sich in dem Amerikanismus *thanks a million* aus. Während durch die Anwesenheit amerikanischer Truppen in England und durch die Sprechfilm und Rundfunk zahlreiche Amerikanismen in das Englische eingedrungen sind, ist es charakteristisch, daß diese typisch amerikanische Übertreibung meines Wissens bisher in England nirgends Fuß fassen konnte. (Müller-Schotte 1952: 258)

Edelman *et al.* (1989) analysed the extent to which embarrassment varies across cultures. They conducted an experiment comparing the reporting of embarrassing situations in five European cultures, namely Greece, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and West Germany. The results of this study indicated that there are significant cross-national differences in variables associated with the expression of embarrassment. Particularly, the amount of verbalisation shows interesting cultural differences: the U.K. subjects reported saying significantly less when embarrassed than any of the other four European samples. Spanish subjects reported saying significantly less than Italian and West German subjects, who said significantly less than the Greek subjects (pp. 364-5). Thus, they arrived at the conclusion that the English tend to understate their embarrassment, while the Greeks tend to overstate their emotions (p. 369). This culturally-bound usage of hyperbole and understatement, however, is difficult to prove empirically and goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

2.3.3. Cross-gender studies

Apart from contrastive studies of the culturally-bound usage of hyperbole, some researchers have advocated a differential use of exaggeration by male and female speakers.

These cross-gender studies generally attribute the use of the trope to female talk. Otto Jespersen (1922), for example, in a chapter entitled “The Woman”, examined the main differences between the language spoken by men and women. In this chapter, women are said to be fond of exaggeration and this is mainly reflected in the use of intensifying adverbs, such as *awfully* and *terribly*. “The fondness of women for hyperbole”, says Jespersen (1992: 250), “will very often lead the fashion with regard to adverbs of intensity, and these are often said with disregard of their proper meaning”. This exaggeration can even be noticed in the suprasegmental features of speech. Apart from the excessive use of intensive words, Jespersen remarks that another distinctive trait which is widely spread among Japanese, French and English women is the exaggeration of stress and tone-accent to mark emphasis (p. 248). Although many of his hypotheses have been contested empirically, since Jespersen adduces no real evidence (he often refers to the dialogue given to women characters in novels and plays written by men), his claims have exerted a deep influence on gender researchers. Thus, Robin Lakoff (1975: 30) also lists, among the distinctive features of female speech, the use of intensifying adjectives used figuratively or hyperbolically.

These linguistic observations, however, have not been verified empirically. Although at a cross-gender level, there is some empirical evidence that women show an inclination towards communicative involvement, including Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 102) positive politeness strategy of exaggeration, and men are more oriented to informative and referential meanings (Holmes 1990: 252), up to now there is only an empirical cross-gender analysis of hyperbole, or more specifically, hyperbolic irony. Gibbs (2000) has examined how frequently men and women use different ironic forms, including hyperbole, in oral interactions. Sixty-two ten-minute conversations between college students and their friends were recorded and analysed. It was found that forty-one percent of the hyperbolic remarks were spoken by men and fifty-nine percent by women (p. 19). Despite that Gibbs (2000: 22) finally concludes that women use hyperbole more often than men, while men speak more sarcastically than women, I believe the difference in the case of overstatement is not large enough to be truly significant. Further research focusing on simple hyperbole rather than on compound forms of the trope is needed to corroborate this or any other pattern.

2.4. Pragmatic approaches to hyperbole

Some scholars have argued that since hyperbole cannot be studied in decontextualized situations, it needs to be examined within the discipline of pragmatics, which is generally defined as the study of “meaning in interaction” (Thomas 1995: 22).

According to Dubois *et al.* (1970: 78-9) hyperbole is a logical, as opposed to a syntactic or semantic, figure. Norrick (1982: 168) too highlights that overstated sentences are syntactically and semantically flawless, they only become odd in context. However, rather than logical, he prefers the term “contextual” figure to refer to (irony, under- and) overstatement, “because hyperbolic utterances usually make contingently rather than logically false assertions” (p. 169).

Likewise, Ravazzoli (1978: 70) defines the trope as a semantic-pragmatic process. In considering the semantic process or change of meaning affecting hyperbole, he points out that one cannot exaggerate objects or concepts without confronting them with others from which a sense of extremity can be derived through lexical conversion (p. 74). Hence, for Ravazzoli, hyperbole, like litotes and irony, is typically a referential trope since it cannot be recognised without resorting to its referent. In his own words:

Un'altra peculiarità dell'iperbole: il suo carattere di figura referenziale, che l'avvicina ai troppi attenuativi (litote, ironia), per cui essa non è in ultima analisi riconoscibile come iperbole senza ricorso al criterio extra-linguistico della referenza o senza sussidi contestuali d'altro tipo. (Ravazzoli 1979: 103)

Hyperboles cannot be studied out of pragmatics, since they can only be understood in context, not in isolation. In this light, numerous scholars have emphasised that contextual information plays a central role in the perception of hyperbole.

Kreuz *et al.* (1998), for example, have stressed the importance of world knowledge to determine whether a statement should be interpreted as hyperbolic or not. This helps them explain that what is hyperbolic in one situation may be non-hyperbolic in another, so listeners must be sensitive to these differences (p. 96). Although knowledge of scripts and schemata helps listeners make sense of literal statements, this information plays an even greater role in helping to identify non-veridical or non-literal statements. World

knowledge, say Kreuz *et al.* (1998: 97), allows listeners to correctly detect statements that are meant figuratively and to have greater certainty about these interpretations.

On the other hand, Zwicky and Sadock (1975: 31) analysed as ambiguous the distinction between a literal and a hyperbolic reading, as in their example: *There are about a million people in San Antonio* and *There are about a million people in my introductory course*. In cases like this, context helps disambiguate vague hyperbolic utterances. This has also been discussed by Ravazzoli (1978: 84) in his treatment of incorrect (or insufficient) referential presuppositions, whereby utterances may be interpreted both hyperbolically or literally if listeners have no sufficient contextual information to decide between the two interpretations.

Apart from helping to determine whether utterances must be interpreted figuratively or literally, contextual information, not only linguistic but also situational and referential, says Ravazzoli (1978), allows us to measure the degree of figuration or inflation of expressions. There is a continuum of hyperbolic utterances, whose gradation depends on the semantic divergence between *posé* and *présupposé* within a disambiguating context (p. 82).

Ravazzoli (1978) provides two main reasons to talk about “hyperbolic acts” within a pragmatic perspective: (a) the polysemy of isolated hyperbolic expressions, and (b) the possible misunderstandings that may occur when using hyperboles that contain incorrect linguistic, referential or communicative presuppositions. It is only the full context or context (for the written or spoken expression, respectively) what can decipher, pointing to a unique semantic option, the vagueness or polysemy of isolated hyperbolic expressions (p. 83). Thus, if we happen to overhear his example *Jack is a monster*, that is, *Jack is monstrously X*, unless some clarifying contextual information is previously or subsequently offered, we will never know for sure what exact attribute the variable X refers to (e.g. intelligent, successful, dirty, cruel, ugly, etc.).

2.4.1. Language philosophy

Language philosophers have concentrated on the comprehension of overstatement from a pragmatic viewpoint. Within this framework, Grice’s (1975) Co-operative Principle, where understanding is a matter of inference from what is said to what is meant, has been

extremely influential. Indeed, the most influential ideas about trope understanding come from his theory of conversational implicature.

Grice noticed that participants in talk exchanges generally work on the assumption that certain conversational rules are observed. His principle of co-operative conversation runs as follows: “Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (p. 45). In turn, the principle falls into four maxims, namely quantity, quality, relation and manner, according to which speakers must speak informatively, truthfully, with relevance, clearly and unequivocally, respectively. But he noticed that there are occasions and circumstances where speakers fail to observe the maxims. One reason is to prompt hearers to seek for another level of interpretation, for the purpose of generating a conversational implicature.

In Grice, as in rhetoric, non-literal language forms represent deviations from the principle of standard communication, falling under the category of “examples that involve exploitation, that is, a procedure by which a maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting in a conversational implicature by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech” (p. 52). Hyperbole, in particular, like irony, meiosis and metaphor, flouts the first maxim of quality: “Do not say what you believe to be false” (p. 46). Grice⁴ regards the blatant violation of the maxim of quality at the level of what is said as crucial to the interpretation of hyperbole and related tropes. All these figures of speech are regarded as a matter of inference since speakers urge addressees to seek an implicature beyond the straightforward literal interpretation of what is said. This is far from being new. Aristotle, in late antiquity, claimed that metaphor, in which hyperbole was included, was an analogical process. Thus, in both Aristotle and Grice, stylistic devices involve inference for their comprehension (Dascal and Gross 1999: 122).

The Co-operative Principle has been extremely influential in different fields of language research. Sometimes slight variations have been introduced with regard to the maxims flouted in exaggerating. For example, according to Colston and O’Brien (2000b: 192), in contrasts of magnitude (i.e. hyperbole and understatement) speakers flout Grice’s maxims of quality and manner. Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987: 219) consider overstatements to be violations of the maxim of quantity (i.e. by saying more than is

⁴ Wilson and Sperber (1981) and Wilson (1993) contend that Grice’s Co-operative Principle cannot successfully explain the phenomenon of figuration. Rather, the interpretation of figures involves an element

necessary), despite their claim that in using hyperbole, speakers convey an implicature “by exaggerating or choosing a point on a scale which is higher than the actual state of affairs”. However, from this quotation it follows that in using overstatement speakers do not exaggerate the amount of information, provide more information than necessary or make their contributions over-informative. Rather, speakers exaggerate in some way the state of affairs presented in the utterance in relation to the actual state of affairs. This clearly affects the truthfulness of the proposition, not the amount of information. For example, if we compare a hyperbolic utterance, such as *There were thousand students in the seminar* with a possible literal counterpart *There were ninety students in the seminar*, the amount of information is identical, what varies is the amount of students conveyed by the utterance, and therefore, the reality of the situation. This categorisation of hyperbole as a violation of the maxim of quantity might stem from the common tendency to associate hyperbole with quantity enlargement.

Yet at other times, the maxim of quantity is actually violated in hyperbole, when speakers really say much more than necessary, as in this example taken from Colston (1997a: 45): *This is absolutely the most outrageous turn of events that anyone in their sane mind would ever even think of possibly experiencing*, or as in Norrick’s (1982: 169) aforesaid sample, *Larry’s an endlessly tall, incredibly immense, incalculably gigantic person*. In such cases, the length of the utterance is considerably beyond what is necessary. The first illustration involves complex modification, the second is an instance of repetitive overstatement. Only under these circumstances can the maxim of quantity be said to have been truly flouted. However, as stated above, overstatement is commonly achieved by lexical rather than grammatical means so the quantity maxim is actually rarely flouted.

Probably, the reason why overstatement is seen as a flout of Grice’s manner maxim (i.e. utterances should be clear and unambiguous) is because of the indeterminacy and vagueness associated with understanding hyperbolic remarks and related tropes. Channell’s (1994: 90) link between exaggeration and vagueness has already been mentioned. Gibbs (1994a: 393) too states that “with both hyperbole and understatement, the speaker’s meaning is always somewhat indeterminate because there is only a resemblance between what someone says and what that person really believes to be true”. In his example, *The queue at the theatre was miles long*, it is clear that the actual length is nowhere near as

of “indirectness, with its resulting increase in processing effort demanded and contextual effects achieved”

large as that given. The main emphasis is on the speakers' reaction to the length, which is generally that it is large and larger than expected, but hearers will never know for sure exactly how long the queue was, rather they simply understand that it was large, relative to some perception of the speaker. Thus, in using hyperbole speakers are indeterminate since hearers are given no indication of the actual state of affairs. On the other hand, Dascal and Gross (1999: 111) remark that "a particularly convoluted style can be seen as a violation of Grice's maxim of manner, a prompt to infer from his choice an intent on the part of speaker".

All these studies can be grouped into what has been termed the Mere Inconsistency Hypothesis, whereby conversational implicature underlines the comprehension of hyperbole and related tropes, since they violate Gricean maxims.

2.4.1.1. Deviation from truth in overstatement

The maxim of quality postulated by Grice (1975: 46) refers to the truthfulness of the words uttered. This is closely connected to one of the most hotly debated issues about hyperbole: whether this exaggeration must be considered or not an act of lying. This comes hand in hand with the myth that figurative language is primarily distracting or deceitful. Traditionally, beautiful and vivid language has been considered a mask or a seducer. Indeed, the assumption that figurative language is deceitful or, at least ornamental, has a long history in both philosophy and literary criticism (Pollio *et al.* 1990: 144).

Some scholars seem to equate hyperbolic utterances with lies. Colston and O'Brien (2000b: 180), for example, do so in claiming that "the relation among verbal irony, hyperbole and literal comments [...] may be depicted as lying along a continuum" (my emphasis). Similarly, although Gibbs (1999a) does not regard overstatement as an act of lying, he considers hyperbole as a type of deceptive act. He distinguishes five different types of deception, "each of which represents a different way of saying something that a speaker doesn't fully believe or directly wish to communicate", namely lies, evasions, concealments, overstatements and collusions (p. 155). Conscious, deliberate intent to deceive, says Gibbs, is the central defining characteristic of deceptive communication.

(Wilson 1993: 364), explained within their framework of Relevance Theory.

However, the most widely accepted view among figurative language researchers is that hyperbole must not be interpreted as an act of lying or as a deceptive act. This had already been pinpointed by Smith (1657: 54-5) in claiming:

Hyperbole fometimes expreffes a thing in the higheft degree of poffibility beyond the truth, that in defcending thence we may finde the truth, and fometimes in flat impoffibilities, that we may rather conceive the unfpeakableneffe then the untruth of the relation.

But though an Hyperbole may be beyond belief, yet ought it not be beyond meafure or rule; let it fuffice to advertife, that an Hyperbole feigns or resembles, not that it would by a fiction or untruth deceive; but then is the vertue and property of an *Hyperbole*, when the thing it felf, of which we fpeak, exceeds the natural rule or meafure, therefore it is granted to fpeak more largely, becaufe as much as the thing is, can not be reached unto. (*sic*)

As Grice (1975: 52) himself notes, although in figures of speech some maxim is violated at the level of what is said, the hearer is entitled to assume that that maxim, or at least the overall Co-operative Principle, is observed at the level of what is implicated. Hyperbole, therefore, may be considered an act of lying at the level of what is said, but not at the level of what is implicated.

Likewise, Gibbs (1994a: 392) remarks that although both hyperbole and understatement are traditionally viewed as violations of Grice's maxims, with hyperbole violating the maxim of quality (i.e. say what you believe to be true) and understatement violating the maxim of quantity (i.e. contribute as much to the conversation as is required), these classic tropes only violate truthfulness maxims if we assume that speakers' utterances must be identical to their beliefs. Gibbs' discussion of irony, under- and overstatement suggests that the understanding of these tropes may be explained by weakening the traditional truthfulness maxims in two ways: when making some statement, speakers want to attribute belief in the proposition they express not necessarily to themselves but to someone or some cultural norm, and speakers' statements need not be identical to their own beliefs but need only resemble their beliefs (p. 393). All in all, Gibbs suggests that it makes more sense to claim that an exaggerator's comment should resemble his or her beliefs than for the statement and the belief to be identical. Accordingly, Gibbs (1994a: 392-4) argues that Grice's maxim of quality should be broadened so that literally false but figuratively true statements can be incorporated into Grice's framework.

Another argument against counting hyperbole as an act of lying is formulated in Clark's (1996) explanation of hyperbole vis-à-vis Grice's conversational maxims: the maxim of quality enjoins speakers not to say deliberately that which they know not to be true. Hyperbole depends, says Clark, on "a kind of joint pretense in which speakers and addressees create a new layer of joint activity" (p. 143). The point about lying is that there is no joint pretense between sender and receiver. Fogelin (1988: 13) also shares the view that hyperbole fundamentally depends on a joint acceptance of a distortion of reality, in explaining that figures of speech such as irony, over- and understatement demand of the listener a kind of inward, "corrective" response which is mutually recognised by speaker and hearer.

Bhaya (1985: 53) has managed to distinguish, according to the criteria of overtness, comparison, exaggeration and acceptability, eight different types of violations of literal truth, namely lie, white lie, metaphor, paradox, hyperbole, meiosis, irony and euphemism. She distinguishes hyperbole from other violations of the Gricean maxim of quality by its quality of overtness, which is "roughly defined as immediately recognisable semantic or pragmatic violation of literal truth" (p. 55), and the fact that lying is normally socially unacceptable. Likewise, Swartz (1976: 107-8) has claimed, with regard to the criterion of acceptability, that "hyperbole is more acceptable than at least other kinds of distortion of reality".

In regard to overtness, it can be added that because in using hyperbole speakers do not try to conceal their true beliefs so that listeners will take their words literally, the utterance cannot be considered deceptive. As Bhaya (1985: 56) clearly puts it for overt maxim of quality violations (MQL):

In these cases S believes that H knows that S knows that S is representing an obvious violation of MQL, which means that S cannot have any intention of misleading H. Since these utterances therefore cannot possibly be lies, they are obviously interpreted by H as hyperbole, metaphor, paradox, meiosis, sarcasm and euphemism, collectively known as "literary violations".

There are also numerous references in rhetoric to the writers' intention not to deceive their audience in using hyperbole. In both Dumarsais (1988) and Fontanier (1969) there is

also something of a joint acceptance of a distortion of reality between addresser and addressee.

[...] nous nous servons de mots qui, à les prendre à la lettre, vont au-delà de la vérité, et représentent le plus ou le moins pour faire entendre quelque excès en grand ou en petit. Ceux qui nous entendent rabattent de notre expression ce qu'il en faut rabattre, et il se forme dans leur esprit une idée plus conforme à celle que nous voulons y exciter, que si nous nous étions servis de mots propres. (Dumarsais 1988: 131)

Fontanier (1969: 123) defines the trope as a figure of verisimilitude from a communicative perspective obtained through exceeding credibility from a semantic perspective, and regards the function of hyperbole as “non de tromper, mais d’amener à la vérité même, et de fixer, par ce qu’elle dit d’incroyable, ce qu’il faut réellement croire”. Later, he adds:

Il y a même plus, *l’Hyperbole*, pour être une beauté d’expression et pour plaire, doit porter le caractère de la bonne foi et de la franchise, et ne paraître, de la part de celui qui parle, que le langage même de la persuasion. Ce n’est pas tout, il faut que celui qui écoute puisse partager jusqu’à un certain point l’illusion, et ait besoin peut-être d’un peu de réflexion pour n’être pas dupe, c’est-à-dire, pour réduire les mots à leur juste valeur. Tout cela suppose que *l’Hyperbole*, en passant la croyance, ne doit pas passer la mesure; qu’elle ne doit pas heurter la vraisemblance, en heurtant la vérité. (Fontanier 1969: 123-4)

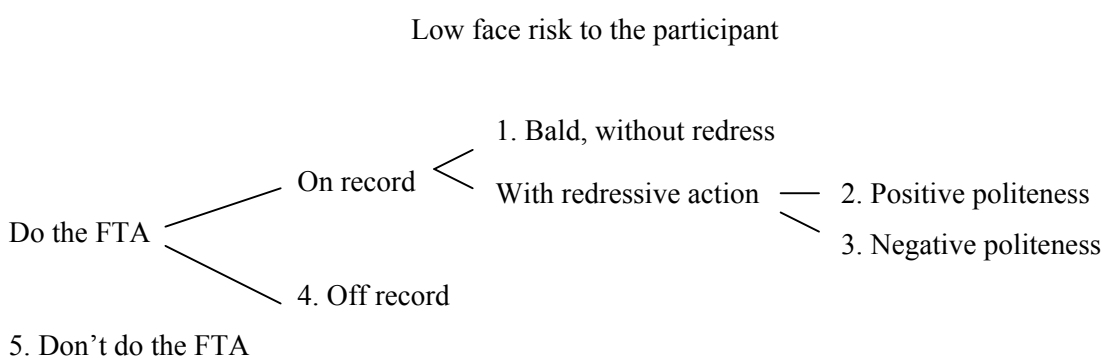
Or in other words, “hyperbole involves the conveying of a proposition that so distorts the obvious truth that the hearer recognises the non-literal intention on the speaker’s part” (Fraser 1993: 332). This implies, as Ravazzoli (1978) correctly notes, that hyperbole, in going beyond credibility, does not affect veracity but verisimilitude. It is this apparent contradiction between semantic excess and verisimilitude where the rhetoric potential of hyperbole lies, since if hyperbole was restrained to exaggerate reality, the result would be informative obscurity and loss of communicative efficiency (p. 69).

2.4.2. Politeness theory

Hyperbole has also been discussed within the general framework of politeness. The most influential politeness theory has been devised by Brown and Levinson (1987). Central to their theory is the notion of face, defined as “the public self-image that every member (of a society) wants to claim for himself”, and which can be maintained, enhanced or lost (p. 61). This notion presents a twofold dimension: positive face, which represents a desire for approval, and negative face, which basically refers to a desire for autonomy.

The organising principle for this face-saving approach to politeness is the notion of face-threatening acts (FTAs, henceforth), which refers to certain illocutionary acts that are liable to damage or threaten the face of participants in interaction. In performing a potential FTA, speakers usually adopt a series of strategies in order to maintain face and to reduce the possibility of face threat. The choice of strategy depends on the assessment of size of the FTA. Speakers calculate this size on the basis of three main parameters: power, distance and rating of imposition. When combined, these values determine the overall weightiness of the FTA, which in turn influences the choice of strategy.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 69) posit the following taxonomy of superstrategies for performing FTAs.



High face risk to the participant

Performing an act on record, baldly without redress, entails doing it in the most clear and unequivocal way, and according to Gricean maxims. In using redressive action, speakers may orient towards positive or negative politeness. Positive politeness refers to the expression of solidarity and involvement, whereas negative politeness involves the

expression of deference and restraint. Off-record politeness involves expressing FTAs ambiguously via conversational implicatures à la Grice. In these cases more than an intention is attributable to the speaker, which in turn implies the possibility of denying or cancelling the implicature.

Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce hyperboles and related tropes into a comprehensive theory of politeness, in advancing that a strong motivation for not talking strictly according to the conversational maxims, and certainly this is the case of figurative language, is to ensure politeness and save face. They point out that hyperbole is an extremely common politeness strategy used to perform FTAs on record with redressive action. As a positive politeness technique, hyperbole is oriented towards the hearer's positive face, to claim common ground, conveying that some want of the hearer is also admirable or interesting to the speaker, through exaggerating interest, approval or sympathy with the hearer or as a device for intensifying interest to the hearer (p. 102). Similarly, Scollon and Scollon (1995: 40) note that there are many ways in which involvement or solidarity can be shown through linguistic forms and that a linguistic strategy of involvement is to exaggerate. Besides, Gibbs (1999a: 149) has noted that many of the "off-record" communicative acts, such as irony, sarcasm, teasing, hyperbole, understatement and indirect speech acts, are traditionally viewed as classic tropes. Thus, Brown and Levinson (1987: 114) also regard hyperbole as an off-record politeness technique used to perform FTAs by being indirect, more concretely, by flouting Grice's maxim of quantity and so generating a conversational implicature.

2.5. Cognitive and psycholinguistic studies on hyperbole

More recently, figurative language has received considerable attention from cognitive psychologists. This interest, with a few exceptions, has been primarily directed at explaining how figures of speech are comprehended, given their non-literal nature. A large body of psycholinguistic research over the last twenty years has provided critical insights about the psychological processes that are inherent in the comprehension of figurative language, but this renewed interest has been primarily devoted to the study of verbal irony and metaphor. Hyperbole, like understatement, has received little attention and the existing literature is subsumed within studies of verbal irony or theories of humour. It is

remarkable, however, that these studies, unlike previous research, have not totally disregarded the production of figures in favour of the reception process. Apart from their concern with understanding, these studies have addressed the pragmatic functioning of hyperbole and related tropes. A major limitation, though, is the use of artificial texts as stimulus material.

2.5.1. The notion of contrast

An important notion within the field of psycholinguistics is that of contrast. Although this concept enjoys a long and rich history in many fields of psychology, especially in cognitive psychology, only in the last few years has this notion been applied to figurative language theories. Fogelin (1988: 16) was the first to hint at this contrast in the study of non-literal language:

I have spoken about meiosis [understatement], irony, and hyperbole as contrasting figures of speech. [...] In each case the speaker says something mutually understood to be in need of correction. The indirect content of these figures of speech is given by the form of the corrective judgement.

In noting that the concept of contrast is an extremely important factor in figurative language comprehension theories, Colston and O'Brien (2000a: 1559) provide the following definition:

In using the term "contrast" we do not only mean the incongruity of a remark with its referent topic. We additionally refer to the specific effect of the perception or judgement of a topic or event being changed via direct comparison with a different topic or event that varies along some relevant dimension.

The interpretation of a particular state of affairs can, therefore, be altered by direct comparison with a referred-to state of affairs that differs along some relevant dimension. As Colston and O'Brien (2000a: 1559) explain "speakers create a contrast with the encountered event by referring to some different event, and thus change the perception or judgement of the encountered event by the interpreter of the remark". For example, the

quantity or quality salient in some situation can be made to seem of greater or lesser magnitude via juxtaposition of a contrasting quantity or quality. The potential for such contrast is greatest when an event is different from what was expected. In this situation, Colston and O'Brien contend the discrepancy between reality and violated expectations enables the contrast.

In a limited form, most major theories of figurative language can be said to incorporate the idea of contrast in that they address the discrepancy between a literal and non-literal remark. This notion underlies a number of terms used in various theories of hyperbole comprehension, such as conversational implicature, discrepancy, non-veridicality, counterfactuality or incongruity, since they presume a contrast between the state of affairs portrayed in the utterance and the state of affairs in the real world. Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 25), for example, note that hyperbole and non-veridicality, defined as a discrepancy between reality and the literal meaning of an utterance, are conceptually intertwined. Similarly, Kreuz (1996) claims that counterfactuality arises from a discrepancy between the utterance and reality.

Gibbs (1994a: 431), by contrast, points to hyperbole, understatement, oxymora and irony as ways that reflect our conceptual ability to understand and speak about incongruous situations. Their presence in the way we speak about our common experiences, says Gibbs, points toward the conclusion that these figures provide part of the figurative foundation for everyday thought. They illustrate how our conceptualisation of incongruous situations motivates the need for speech that reflects these figurative schemes of thinking. The notion of incongruity is also typical of humour theories. Among the different approaches to humour, the Incongruity Theory postulates that laughter results from the perception of an incongruity. Even Freud (1976; quoted in Palmer 1996: 23) recognises that sense-in-nonsense or incongruity is a defining feature of all species of the comic.

Overall, two competing views on hyperbole comprehension have been identified: the Mere Inconsistency Hypothesis, whereby conversational implicature underlies the comprehension of hyperboles since they flout conversational maxims (e.g. Grice 1975, Brown and Levinson 1987). The most widely accepted view, however, embraces the notion of contrast as postulated in cognitive psychology. It is a broader theoretical framework, embracing the notion of conversational implicature as well, and which poses a more coherent framework for the perception and understanding of hyperbole.

In relation to hyperbole, understatement and irony comprehension, Colston and O'Brien (2000b: 195), in consistence with much data on figurative language processing, advocate the priority of the one-stage, direct access model, whereby the intended meaning of figurative or indirect language can be directly comprehended without initial processing of literal meaning, over the sequential model assumed by traditional pragmaticians, where literal or utterance meanings are primary and require initial processing prior to the final comprehension of the intended meanings of utterances. In their own words:

Our view is that people, although not necessarily doing so in all circumstances, are certainly capable of simultaneous processing of multiple meanings of utterances as well as some of the entailments of such utterances to arrive at speakers' intended meanings, and that this process need not take longer than processing of "literal" meaning. Although certainly some deconstructable components of utterance meaning (e.g. literal meaning, semantic meaning, entailments, contrast of these with the context, etc.) can influence comprehension, as we and others have shown, they need not necessarily do so sequentially. (Colston and O'Brien 2000b: 195)

2.5.1.1. Contrast of magnitude vs. contrast of kind

Modern theories of figurative language incorporate the notion of contrast as a defining feature of hyperbole and related tropes. In the case of hyperbole, this is succinctly explained by McCarthy and Carter (2004: 158) in noting that "hyperbole magnifies and upscales reality, and, naturally, upscaling produces a contrast with reality".

In applying the notion of contrast to figurative language, and specially to hyperbole, irony and understatement, Colston and O'Brien (2000a, 2000b) propose that the interpretation of the meaning intended by speakers is biased by where on a continuum usually ranging from negative to positive the literal meaning of a remark is. Literal statements about negative situations are necessarily negative, and so are hyperbolic comments. However, hyperbolic remarks would be nearer the extreme negative end of the continuum than literal utterances. Thus, hyperbolic comments present a contrast between the semantic or "utterance meaning" of the comments and the referent situation (Dascal 1987, 1989) that is not present in literal comments (Colston and O'Brien 2000b: 180).

This is consistent with studies advocating that both hyperbole and irony are comprehended via the use of a contrast between expected and ensuing events, between what is expected and what actually happens (e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1981, Jorgensen *et al.* 1984, Gibbs 1986, Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989, Colston 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O'Brien 2000a). Colston (1997b) demonstrated that the comprehension of hyperbole appears to rely upon an inflation of the discrepancy between expected and ensuing events. This is the Inflation Hypothesis of hyperbole. The comprehension of irony, on the other hand, relies upon an echo of expected events when things have not turned as expected. This Echoic Reminder Theory of irony is also widely accepted in cognitive psychology (e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1981, Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989). Colston's (1997b) study did not support a Mere Inconsistency Hypothesis that both hyperbole and irony are comprehended via conversational implicature. Similarly, Colston and Keller (1998: 511) argue that conversational implicature cannot provide the sole means for how hyperbole and irony are comprehended.

Similar comparisons have been drawn between verbal irony and understatement in their use of contrast effects. In this sense, Colston and O'Brien (2000a: 1557) remark that both irony and understatement make use of a potential contrast between expected and experienced events. This points to an important existing relation among hyperbole, irony and understatement in terms of understanding. Since they all refer to the expected event, they create a contrast with the ensuing event, that literal comments, because they genuinely reflect what happened, do not. In my opinion, however, a prior expectation is not strictly necessary to talk about hyperbole, except in cases where this trope is used to express surprise. Affirming the contrary implies attributing this function systematically to the trope.

At this point, it is important to note that the contrast created by these tropes is of a different nature. Colston and O'Brien (2000b) note that the contrast in hyperbole and understatement is one of magnitude, while irony typically produces contrasts of kind. Hyperbole uses contrasts of magnitude because very negative comments are made about moderately negative situations; understatements exhibit a contrast of magnitude too, since moderately negative comments are made about very negative situations. Verbal irony, by contrast, produces contrasts of kind because positive comments are made about negative situations.

These differing types of contrasts are better explained in McCarthy and Carter (2004: 158):

In the case of irony, there is a difference between the utterance and reality; the one negates or contradicts the other, and the corrective response is one of kind (the listener who hears *What a lovely day!* on a horrid, cold, rainy day, ‘corrects’ the assertion to *What a horrible day!*). In the case of under- and overstatement, the difference is not one of kind, but of degree; the corrective response is to up- or downscale the assertion to accord with reality (the listener who hears *I almost starved to death when I stayed at my aunts house!* ‘corrects’ it to something like *My aunt was very mean with food/did not feed me nearly enough so I was hungry*).

Although Colston and O’Brien (2000b) take negative situations as a reference point, these assumptions can also be applied to positive situations. Thus, in hyperbole, for example, the speaker would utter very positive comments to refer to moderately positive situations. In the case of irony, negative comments made to describe positive situations, the utterance would be counted as an example of asteism, a rhetorical figure, described as “genteel irony”, which Fontanier (1969: 150) defines as praising or flattering someone under pretence of blaming or criticising.

The key to distinguishing whether one is dealing with contrasts of kind or magnitude lies in determining whether the situation and the comments are of the same kind. If both situation and comment are negative (or positive), a contrast of magnitude is created; by contrast, if the situation is negative and the comment positive (or the other way round), a contrast of kind occurs.

Colston and O’Brien (2000b: 193) contend that contrasts of kind are fundamentally different from contrasts of magnitude because of the categorical difference they supply. When speakers mention a domain that provides a contrast of kind with the referent situation (e.g. describing the weather as “toasty warm” when it is, in fact, cool), the mentioned and referent domains belong to different categories (e.g. warm things and cold things). Indeed, this observation can be said to underlie the popular account of verbal irony that speakers say the opposite of what they mean. Whereas, when speakers use contrasts of magnitude (e.g. describing the weather as “totally freezing” when it is cool), the two domains belong to the same, or at least a more similar, category (e.g. cold things). This is

also consistent with the traditional belief that speakers exaggerate or upscale what they mean.

2.5.2. Hyperbole comprehension

Until now I have reviewed the basis on which the understanding of hyperbole and related tropes is explained in psycholinguistics. Somewhat surprising is, however, the scarce empirical literature on hyperbole comprehension. Although a few studies have been published, they only address exaggeration in contrast to the comprehension of other tropes. Besides, for the most part, these studies have mainly focused on children's understanding of figurative language, since the normal course of language development in children has recently become a source of interest to parents, educators and psychologists.

Recent research has found that children's speech and writing provide evidence for the occurrence of figurative language as early as 2-3 years of age, and that children well under 11 years can produce and make use of many different types of figures of speech. Somehow paradoxical is that "educationally, as elsewhere, figurative language has been viewed as the province of literature and rhetoric" (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 194). There is a general lack of concern, clearly reflected in both students' and teachers' textbooks, over the formal teaching and learning of figurative language usage in the language-arts curriculum. Thus, Pollio *et al.* (1977: 208) condemn that "Figurative language, even in the context of language education, itself, is still a neglected topic".

Winner *et al.*'s (1987) study, for example, investigated young children's understanding of hyperbole, irony and understatement. In the experiment, children viewed videotapes of characters interacting, each ending with an understatement, a sarcastic or hyperbolic remark. After each episode, children were asked questions about the truth, literalness and intent of the final statement in each scene. Overall, children had significantly more trouble understanding hyperbole and understatement than sarcasm. Sarcasm was often misunderstood as deception. Hyperbole, when misunderstood, was seen as either deception or error. Understatement, when misunderstood, was taken as sincere and true. Although older children's interpretations were more accurate than were younger children's, there was some evidence across all age groups that the children interpreted exaggerated statements as lies (p. 30). Winner *et al.* (1987: 29) argue that the reason why children

detect sarcasm more readily than either hyperbole or understatement is that the discrepancy between sentence meaning and the facts of the situation is greater.

Similarly, Demorest *et al.* (1983) conducted an experiment addressing the comprehension of five forms of figurative language in six-, eight- and eleven-year-olds. Children heard a series of brief stories each ending with a literal remark or a figurative utterance, whether sarcastic, metaphoric, understated, hyperbolic or ironic. The understanding of figurative language was assessed in terms of the logical task of recognising the statement as discrepant from the facts (i.e. appreciating that the utterance was not intended literally), and in terms of the social-cognitive task of identifying the speaker's communicative purpose. Again, older children's interpretations were more accurate than were younger children's. The youngest subjects most often failed to recognise the discrepancy of figurative utterances. Eight-year-olds noted the discrepancy but usually failed to note the speaker's purpose. When six- and eight-year-olds did refer to the speaker's purpose, two errors were made: the speaker was seen as mistaken or as misleading. Finally, eleven-year-old could both recognise the discrepancy and identify the speaker's purpose (p. 132).

The results show that irony was more difficult to recognise as discrepant, followed in order by hyperbole, understatement, metaphor and sarcasm. Thus, Demorest *et al.* (1983) argue that subjects were more likely to recognise an utterance as discrepant when the contrast was large, as in sarcasm and metaphor, than when the discrepancy was smaller, as in hyperbole, understatement and irony (p. 132). With regard to recognising communicative purpose, irony was least well understood, followed in order by metaphor, understatement, hyperbole and sarcasm (p. 121). Hence, Demorest *et al.* (1983) conclude that it is easier to understand the speaker's purpose in the case of utterances that are used primarily for social purposes (e.g. sarcasm, understatement and hyperbole) than in the case of primarily rhetorical statement (e.g. metaphor and irony). Because of this, they suggest that the social knowledge required to understand the speaker's communicative purpose develops earlier than the metalinguistic skills necessary to understand metaphor and irony (p. 133). A major limitation, in my opinion, with such an explanation is that, as attested by the large rhetorical and psycholinguistic literature, any of these figures can perform both social and rhetorical functions.

Raymond Gibbs is probably one of the most influential scholars in the study of figurative language from a cognitive perspective. Gibbs (1994a: 76) prompts us to consider figures and tropes, other than metaphor, which have been relatively ignored as a result of the intensive research effort on metaphorical language. His works mainly concentrate on verbal irony. “In this postmodern age”, Gibbs (2000: 5) says, “irony is often seen as the master trope, replacing metaphor as the king of all figurative language”. He devotes special attention to the reception or comprehension process but without totally disregarding the collaborative nature of ironic expressions, including hyperbole. “Speaker and listener”, he says, “actively collaborate to create ironic scenes in which each participant plays a specific role” (p. 11).

Gibbs (2000: 12, 1994a: 397) regards hyperbole together with sarcasm, understatement, jocularly and rhetorical questions as forms of verbal irony. Each form of irony minimally reflects the idea of a speaker providing some contrast between expectation and reality (2000: 13). In the case of hyperbole, speakers express their non-literal meaning by exaggerating the reality of the situation. In other words, hyperbole distorts the truth in that speakers assert more than is objectively warranted. He contends that the fact that people think ironically motivates our use and understanding of irony and sarcasm⁵, as well as the related tropes of hyperbole, understatement and oxymoron (1994a: 360). However, as mentioned above, equating metaphor or irony with other forms of figuration only serves to blur important distinctions between the tropes. Irony and hyperbole cannot be indiscriminately lumped together. Furthermore, a closer look at Gibbs’ (2000) hyperbolic tokens reveals that they are indeed instances of hyperbolic irony.

Gibbs *et al.* (1993) examined the perception of non-literality in hyperbole comprehension. They conducted an experiment assessing people’s intuitions about the literal meanings of seven different types of figurative language, namely literary metaphors, non-literary metaphors, indirect speech acts, idioms, tautologies, hyperbole and contextual expressions. This study examined college students’ judgements of literality for different kinds of figurative discourse, given different definitions of literal meaning: conventional, subject-matter, non-metaphorical, truth-conditional and context-free literality. The results

⁵ There is no consensus on whether sarcasm and irony are essentially the same phenomenon, with superficial differences, or if they differ significantly (Attardo 2000: 795). The most widely accepted view defines sarcasm as verbal irony directed at a victim (Kreuz *et al.* 1999: 1688). It represents a common form of ironic criticism whose target is an individual (Dews and Winner 1999: 1580). The intention is to hurt or wound and the tone is somewhat bitter than in irony (Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989: 374).

suggest that in general people see figurative language as having different degrees of literality depending on their understanding of what constitutes literal meaning. Moreover, different kinds of figuration were seen as being differentially literal depending on people's conception of literal meaning (p. 387).

The participants' literality ratings across the different definitions showed that indirect speech acts were seen as being the most literal. Tautologies were rated significantly less literal than were the indirect speech acts, but were seen as being more literal than the other figurative forms. At the other end, contextual expressions and both literary and non-literary metaphors were seen as being the least literal of all the figurative language forms (p. 394). Hyperboles, in particular, were viewed as an intermediate step between these two extremes.

Gibbs *et al.* (1993) also found that ordinary speakers have different intuitions regarding the literality of these figurative forms depending on which sense of the term literal they were given. Hyperboles, in particular, were seen as being more literal given the subject-matter definition than the truth-conditional definition. They were also treated as significantly more literal under the context-free view than for the truth-conditional viewpoint (pp. 394-5). However, when analysed in context, literality ratings for hyperboles under the truth-conditional definition were higher than under the non-metaphorical view, and more literal under the context-free view than under the conventional view (p. 397). All in all, the results demonstrated that how people conceive of the literal meaning for different kinds of figurative language depends entirely on what aspect of the complex concept of "literal" people are working with.

Leggitt and Gibbs (2000), following the Cognitive Appraisal Theory to Emotions, have analysed people's emotional reactions to verbal irony. They report the findings of three studies looking at people's emotive reactions to different kinds of ironic language, namely irony, sarcasm, overstatement, understatement, satire, rhetorical questions, as well as non-ironic statements. The first experiment, which instructed the participants to rate their own emotional reactions, showed that people responded differently to non-personal irony, understatement and satire than to sarcasm, overstatement and rhetorical questions. The former group was associated with a reduced degree of negative emotions, whereas the latter was associated with a higher degree of negative emotions (p. 19). Particularly, their analysis revealed that addressees felt more angry, irritated and mad with sarcasm,

overstatement, and rhetorical questions than with the other forms of ironic language. Sarcasm, overstatement and rhetorical questions also evoked higher ratings in the disgusted, turned off, and repulsed category than did other statements. Finally, addressees felt more scornful, disdainful and contemptuous in response to overstatement and rhetorical questions than to the other ironic forms. This is because, say Leggitt and Gibbs (2000: 7), “personal challenges evoke the strongest emotions in addressees”. With sarcasm, overstatement and rhetorical questions, “speakers choose to alert addressees by magnifying problems or by directly challenging the addressees’ interpersonal behavior” (p. 9).

The second experiment examined what addressees inferred about speakers’ emotional states when they used different forms of verbal irony. The aim was to rate the emotional state of the speaker. Again, there was a broad split between the more interpersonally challenging and less threatening figurative statements, but here overstatement was associated with less threatening statements such as understatement and satire. Irony, overstatement, understatement and satire presented less of a challenge or no direct challenge to the addressee (p. 12). The pattern with overstatement is interesting, as Leggitt and Gibbs (2000: 19) note, because speakers were not seen to be particularly hostile, but addressees reacted very negatively to the trope. Thus, comparing the first and second experiment, they concluded that overstatement had a negative effect that speakers did not intend and did not foresee.

In the third experiment, they investigated addressees’ intuitions about what speakers might have intended to communicate emotionally by their use of different kinds of verbal irony. The aim was to rate how the participants thought the speaker wished them to feel. Once more, there was a general division between two groups: irony, overstatement, understatement and satire were correlated; sarcasm and rhetorical questions were also correlated. Here, the speakers’ intentions with overstatement were seen to be much like those with the less threatening statements such as satire and understatement. This pattern was similar to how the speaker was seen to feel, but it again contrasts sharply with the strongly negative reaction experienced by the addressees and clearly indicates that the negative reaction was not intended (p. 19).

In this study, overstatement stands out because people assumed the speaker’s own feelings (experiment 2) and intentions (experiment 3) were positive, but the addressees

reported very negative and defensive emotions (experiment 1). As Leggitt and Gibbs (2000: 20-1) explain:

Overstatement provides an example of where speakers' and listeners' emotions appear to mismatch. Speakers' feelings and intentions were perceived by participants to be a mixture of positive and negative emotions, but the addressees' reactions were very negative. With overstatement, speakers make a big deal out of a problem, thus suggesting hostile intentions toward the problems in the addressees, despite what the speaker intended to communicate. The unintended negative reaction illustrates how speakers sometimes do not always correctly foresee how their statements will be taken.

2.5.3. Degree of inflation or exaggeration

Finally, Kreuz *et al.* (1998: 95) remark that a factor that distinguishes hyperbole from other non-literal or indirect forms is that when speakers choose to express themselves in an exaggerated way, they have a great deal of latitude in specifying the form of their statements. Overstated expressions may differ greatly in terms of specified magnitude or degree of inflation. This defining feature of hyperbole has been widely highlighted in the literature on overstatement. Thus, Fraser (1983: 34), after noting the existence of various non-literal forms, such as sarcasm, metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, meiosis and similes, claims:

Hyperbole (exaggeration) and meiosis (understatement) are at opposite ends of a continuum, but unlike the other tropes just mentioned, they vary in the degree to which they deviate from strict literalness. We talk of "slightly exaggerated" and "greatly exaggerated" but never the somewhat synecdochic use of language.⁶

Similarly, McCarthy and Carter (2004: 161) argue that hyperbole depends on a joint acceptance of a distortion of reality, "whether that distortion is just an upscaling of reality or pressed to the extreme of counterfactuality and sheer, wild impossibility". This implies that there is a wide range of hyperbolic utterances, but upscaling and magnifying reality to

⁶ Colston and O'Brien (2000b), however, have demonstrated that there are also weak and strong ironic utterances.

varying degrees. The degree of inflation in hyperbolic utterances depends on the divergence between utterance and referent.

In the same line, in analysing how hyperbole can express surprise, Colston and Keller (1998: 502) remark that “speakers can use a continuum of inflation ranging from slight to outlandish when describing the unexpected quantity of something” and so distinguish three levels of hyperbole: slight, moderate and extreme forms of exaggeration, also labelled realistic, possible but improbable and impossible. They found that the range of inflation or degree of exaggeration available to speakers can be used to make it more or less difficult for listeners to infer the speaker’s surprise. Although all hyperbolic utterances in their experiment served equally to express surprise, the results revealed that the more extreme the exaggeration, the easier the listener’s recognition of unexpectedness or surprise.

The results of Kreuz *et al.*’s (1998) research, however, contrast sharply with the findings of the aforementioned study. In a series of experiments conducted with undergraduate students, Kreuz *et al.* attempted to answer the following questions: Why might a speaker choose one level of exaggeration over another? and How are such statements perceived by their listeners? They distinguished six levels of inflation: (1) extremely likely, (2) unlikely, but possible, (3) very unlikely, but possible, (4) physically impossible, (5) physically impossible and extreme and (6) physically impossible and very extreme. Eight experiments using artificially devised scenarios were conducted to quantify the relationship between exaggeration and listener judgements and to determine the importance of physical impossibility as a cue for non-literal intent. However, the results of the experiments did not fulfil their expectations about the degree of inflation. Hyperbolic statements were perceived as making less sense, as being less likely to be used and as less appropriate than non-exaggerated or slightly exaggerated remarks. In addition, they found that the hyperbolic nature of such statements does not seem to provide any mnemonic advantage. Remarks with slight exaggeration were remembered better than highly exaggerated statements. They admitted these results are at odds with intuitive ideas about exaggeration (p. 108), and probably because of this, this paper has been rarely quoted in the literature, despite that this is one of the few studies focusing exclusively on exaggeration. However, further research is still needed in order to find conclusive results about the issue of degree of inflation.

2.5.4. The production process: why do people use figurative language?

Despite scattered interest, there is a general lack of concern over the pragmatic functions fulfilled by non-literal forms. Few researchers have addressed the specific discourse goals that underlie the use of figuration; a fact which explains that a crucial limitation in figurative language theories is the production process of figures of speech. Only in the last decade have cognitive psychologists become interested in their pragmatic functioning, but although the literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of irony and metaphor is extensive, the study of other figures has been relatively neglected.

It has been shown that people opt for figurative or indirect ways of speaking because these forms of language can often perform various functions that may be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil literally (e.g. Dews *et al.* 1995, Dews and Winner 1995, Kreuz *et al.* 1991, Kreuz and Roberts 1993, Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Colston 1997a, 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O'Brien 2000a), e.g. to express hostility in a socially acceptable way. In this sense, Colston and O'Brien (2000b: 192) adduce that "this advantage of figurative and indirect language warrants the greater risk of misunderstanding that speakers undertake when they speak figuratively or indirectly". Another advantage of non-literal over literal language is that the use of figuration allows speakers to satisfy multiple discourse goals simultaneously (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 164). Other studies have shown that even though literal and figurative expressions sometimes fulfil similar functions, non-literal utterances accomplish them to a greater extent or more successfully than literal comments (e.g. Jorgensen 1996, Colston 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O'Brien 2000a, 2000b).

A prevailing view among figurative language researchers is that the relationship between discourse goals and non-literal language forms is rather complex, in the sense that different pragmatic functions are satisfied to different extents or degrees of success by different figures of speech (e.g. Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Sell *et al.* 1997, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O'Brien 2000a, 2000b). In other words, several figures may serve to achieve the same indirect claims but some particular tropes will be better than others at their accomplishment.

2.5.4.1. Pragmatic functioning of hyperbole

The scarce literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of exaggeration, probably due to the intensive research effort on its comprehension, is found in the field of psycholinguistics and embedded within studies of other figures, especially irony and understatement, to contrast the strength and extent to which different tropes perform similar functions.

For example, Roberts and Kreuz (1994) examined the discourse goals satisfied by eight forms of non-literal language: hyperbole, idiom, indirect requests, irony, metaphor, rhetorical questions, simile and understatement. College students were shown instances of each form and asked to generate new examples. Finally, each participant was urged to list the reasons people might choose to express themselves in that particular way. For overstatement, the participants provided eleven discourse goals: to clarify, to emphasise, to be humorous, to add interest, to be conventional, to be eloquent, to provoke thought, to get attention, to manage the discourse, to show positive and negative emotion. But above all, the most important functions for the trope, according to Roberts and Kreuz (1994: 161), are to be humorous, to emphasise and to clarify.

Their experiment revealed that different pragmatic functions are performed to varying extents by different tropes and so provide support for theoretical claims about the relatedness of some figures.

Because each figure of speech shares certain discourse goals with other figures, the figures can be said to overlap to varying degrees. For example, every goal provided for hyperbole was also provided for understatement; however, not every goal provided for understatement was provided for hyperbole. A closer look shows that the most frequent goals for hyperbole (“to clarify”, “to emphasize”, and “to be humorous”) are only weakly shared with understatement, while the most frequent goals for understatement (“to de-emphasize” and “to show negative emotion”) are only weakly shared with hyperbole. (Roberts and Kreuz 1994: 160)

Similarly, Sell *et al.* (1997) conducted an experiment addressing parents’ use of non-literal language with pre-school children in free-play contexts. An analysis of seventeen videotaped sessions of thirty minutes each revealed hundreds of figurative utterances used

by parents, including dozens of hyperbolic statements. The use of hyperbole was slightly commoner than was the use of metaphor, although none was as common as rhetorical questions or idioms. The results of their analysis show that functions typically accomplished by hyperbole, like rhetorical questions and idioms, are clarification, emphasis, positive evaluation and maintaining the child's focus (p. 110), since parents typically used hyperbole to encourage children in their play activities. Although Sell *et al.* (1997: 112) eventually conclude that "very few of the communicative purposes identified here are also identified as reasons for using non-literal forms in adult language", the literature reviewed below and the analysis conducted in chapter six suggests something rather different.

An emerging view in theories of figurative language posits that the psychological phenomenon of contrast explains, at least in part, how some figurative language forms, such as overstatement, fulfil their functions. In this light, Colston and O'Brien (2000a, 2000b) have demonstrated that the notion of contrast helps explain many of the goals accomplished by irony, over- and understatement, and more importantly, that contrast effects offer predictions about the degree to which different tropes fulfil similar functions. This is explained by the fact that "Since different tropes create varying degrees of contrast with the target topic, they should in turn create varying contrast effects" and "These differing strengths of contrast effects would then lead to varying levels of performance of different pragmatic functions" (Colston and O'Brien 2000a: 1562). In sum, irony, under-, and overstatement can achieve similar goals but with varying degrees of success according to the degree of contrast they create.

In their study of the pragmatic functions of understatement and irony, Colston and O'Brien (2000a: 1557) show that they accomplish similar discourse goals since both make use of the contrast between expected and ensuing events. In the experiment conducted, participants were shown several scenarios describing situations where something unexpected happened. The last line of each scenario described a person making a comment, whether literal, ironic or understated, about that situation. Participants were asked to rate the strength of four pragmatic functions: to contrast differences, to be humorous, to condemn and to protect the speaker. The results demonstrated that contrast makes both irony and understatement generally funnier, more criticising, more expressive of a difference between expected and ensuing events and more protective of the speaker

than literal remarks (p. 1557). They note that, on the whole, the greater the contrast, the greater the extent to which these function are performed. Thus, since “irony uses this contrast to a greater extent than understatement” (p. 1572), ironic utterances perform the first three functions more successfully than understatement, which in turn accomplishes the latter discourse goal to a greater extent than irony, since some pragmatic functions such as speaker protection actually decrease as contrasts gets stronger (p. 1565).

Colston and Keller’s (1998) study also demonstrated that the degree of contrast that is created by various tropes appears to affect the degree to which they fulfil different functions. In three experiments, contrasting how people comprehend irony and hyperbole as expressing surprise, participants were presented with different scenarios describing people in unexpected situations. They were told to rate the degree to which they thought the speakers expected or did not expect the situation in which they found themselves, based upon what the speakers said, whether literally, hyperbolically or ironically. The results revealed that both hyperbole and irony “expressed more surprise than literal commentary” (p. 499), and that overstatement expressed more surprise than understatement, since hyperbole creates a greater contrast with the ensuing event than understatement. Finally, their study proved that the range of inflation is significant to determine that a speaker is surprised: “The more extreme the exaggeration, the easier the determination” (p. 510).

Colston (1997b) compared the extent to which irony, over- and understatement express and indicate surprise, too. In two experiments, participants were shown several scenarios where something unexpected happened. They were asked to assess the degree to which these three figures of speech express surprise when the speaker’s expectations are or aren’t explicitly stated. The results suggested that “when events turn out unexpectedly and the expectations of characters were explicit, irony was more effective than overstatement and understatement” (p. 43). When expectations were not explicit and the situation had a negative outcome, hyperbole was more effective than irony or understatement. Finally, for the positive situations, ironic and overstated comments were thought to indicate a significantly greater degree of surprise than understatement (p. 52).

In another recent study, Colston and O’Brien (2000b) have shown that contrast types, whether of magnitude (for hyperbole and understatement) or of kind (for verbal irony), play a central role in predicting the strength with which different functions are fulfilled by

these tropes. This study focuses on irony, overstatement and literal expressions, to contrast the strength with which they perform three functions, namely condemnation, humour and speaker protection. In the experiment, participants were shown scenarios describing situations where something negative happened. The last line of each scenario described a person making a comment, either literal, ironic or overstated, about that situation. Then, participants were asked to rate the extent to which the three functions were accomplished by these linguistic forms. The results revealed that since contrasts of kind are more contrasting of differences than contrasts of magnitude, irony is more successful than hyperbole in condemning, saving face and provoking laughter (p. 180).

2.6. Hyperbole and figurative language

Ravazzoli (1978: 74) has noticed that hyperbole, metaphor and simile are interrelated. He postulates these three figures share a common syntactic and semantic deep structure. Even Aristotle (1991; quoted in Harrawood 2003: 320-1) treats hyperbole as an over-extension of the elements present in simile and metaphor. This is attested, says Ravazzoli, by the fact that hyperbolic similes and metaphors are the commonest classes of compound hyperbole. Indeed, it has often been noted that hyperbole is implicit in many metaphors, idioms and similes.

However, in the literature on the subject, hyperbole has more commonly been associated with irony and understatement. Throughout this chapter the references to the close relationship among these figures have been numerous. At this point, I would like to extend further the rationale on which such connection is grounded.

2.6.1. Hyperbole, understatement and irony

Fogelin (1988: 3) noted that clustered around irony are other figures, including hyperbole and understatement, which he collectively labels “figurative predications”. These three figures relate to meaning in a way that bears upon the truth of what is asserted (p. 2). They all function by invoking mutually recognised corrective responses (p. 13). Probably because of this corrective judgement over- and understatement have sometimes been considered ironic tropes.

In classical rhetoric, hyperbole and understatement are closely related to irony in that each misrepresents the truth (Gibbs 1994a: 391). Over- and understatement distort the truth in that speakers assert more or less than is objectively warranted, respectively. With understatement, though, “the situation is described in terms that fall between the opposite and the reality of the situation” (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1563). The difference also rests on communicative function. Hyperbole is an instrument to convey emphasis, while the nature of understatement is to “de-emphasize” (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 154).

The term *litotes* refers to a particular kind of understatement whereby speakers use a negative expression where a positive one would have been more forceful and direct. Although paradoxical, like hyperbole and unlike understatement *litotes* seems to involve intensification, suggesting that the speaker's feelings are too deep for plain expression, as in *He's no Hercules* or *He's not exactly a pauper* (Gibbs 1994a: 392). Similarly, Ravazzoli (1978: 75) asserts that *litotes* are syntactically marked by negation and can be defined as “negated hyperboles”. For example, to signify that someone is rather old one can say *He is as old as Methuselah* (hyperbole), but also *He's no child* (*litotes*). Thus, hyperbolic utterances are transformed into *litotes* when they are negated. Similarly, *litotes* can be converted into irony by suppressing the negation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1994: 450). Thus, they underline that of the same misshapen man of whom one would say, using *litotes*, *He is no Adonis*, one might say ironically, *He is an Adonis*. Indeed, *litotes* are often treated as a category of irony, since they express superficial indifference and underlying commitment (Gibbs 1994a: 392). Finally, Gibbs adds that in everyday speech, hyperbole and *litotes* represent antithetical postures and correspond to contrasting philosophical attitudes: optimism and idealism in the case of hyperbole, pessimism and cynicism in the case of *litotes*.

2.6.1.1. Hyperbole as an ironic cue

Much useful insight into hyperbole can be found in the literature on irony and sarcasm. Both, hyperbole and irony, says Ravazzoli (1978: 75), are grounded on exaggeration, the former through assertion, the latter through negation. Within this framework, hyperbole is usually characterised as a powerful ironic cue that allows listeners to interpret statements ironically. In section 2.4.2., I mentioned Brown and Levinson's (1987: 220) argument that

overstatement can be used to convey off-record sarcasm, as in *Thank you, I'll always be indebted to you for so much help* uttered, for example, when the hearer has refused to give a hand to the speaker.

This connection between extremity and irony has also been noted by others (e.g. Coupland 1992: 12, 1993: 11, Haiman 1998: 33). Hyperbole plays a crucial role in the perception and identification of irony; a fact which has been verified empirically. In an experiment conducted, Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 27) demonstrated that overstated remarks are judged as being more ironic than non-hyperbolic utterances. Undergraduate students were instructed to read short scenarios where non-veridicality and exaggeration were manipulated and to decide how likely it was that the character uttering the final comment was being ironic. Similarly, non-veridical statements were considered more ironic than veridical ones.

In noting that hyperbole occurs very frequently in irony and that in some cases hyperbole suggests ironic intent by itself, Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 24) claim that there seems to be a standard frame for ironic hyperbole in English, characterised as an adverb followed by an extreme, positive adjective. They provide a list of these hyperbolic combinations, that can be used to signify irony, in the Random Irony Generator: *absolutely amazing, simply great, really lovely, just fantastic*, etc. (p. 25). Similarly, Coupland (1992: 12) writing for *The New Republic* created The Irony Board for identifying “words that can only be used 100% ironically”, e.g. *excellent, groovy, fabulous*.

To justify the presence of hyperbole in verbal irony, Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 25) argue that a discrepancy between reality and the literal meaning of an utterance is important for verbal irony and that an effective way of making this discrepancy large is through the use of exaggeration. And so even non-veridicality, a reliable cue for irony identification (Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989: 382), is conceptually intertwined with hyperbole. There is also empirical evidence suggesting a connection between these figures in terms of pragmatic functioning. Hyperbole and irony share a number of important discourse goals, such as to be humorous, to emphasise, to clarify, to add interest, to provoke thought, etc. (Roberts and Kreuz 1994: 161).

This relation between extremity and irony is so important for Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 29) that they even claim “the ironic tone of voice may be, in fact, nothing more than the use of hyperbole”. After all, they argue, hyperbolic statements are also typically realised

with heavy stress and slow speaking rate. They believe it is more accurate to characterise irony as making use of hyperbole rather than to posit a special tone of voice that is used only in verbal irony. I believe, however, that the ironic tone of voice should not be confounded with the presence of exaggeration because there is empirical evidence showing that these intonational cues can also be used for non-ironic purposes (e.g. Barbe 1995, Ward and Hirschberg 1985). Besides, it has been demonstrated that irony may be perceived with no intonation cues at all, as in written language. Thus, Cutler (1974: 117) wrote, “if cues from the context are strong enough, no intonation cues are necessary at all”.

Apart from hyperbole, speakers have at their disposal a broad array of tools they can employ to signal ironic intent. Utsumi (2000: 1787) presents a chart of possible ironic cues that include hyperbolic words/phrases and intensives, interjections, prosodic features (e.g. intonation, tone of voice, exaggerated stress and nasalisation), non-verbal cues (e.g. facial expressions and behavioural cues) and speech acts (e.g. thanking, complimenting) for expressing counterfactual emotions. In particular, Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) demonstrated that non-veridicality is essential for the perception of irony. In the experiment conducted, undergraduates were instructed to read short stories and to rate the degree of sarcasm of their final sentence. They found that “When a statement is obviously counterfactual to both speaker and listener, then this seems to be sufficiently to prompt at least a suspicion of sarcastic intent” (p. 382). In other words, there must be some discrepancy between utterance and reality and the listener must recognise such discrepancy in order to interpret the utterance as it was intended. Although all these cues contribute to ironic interpretations of utterances, hyperbole, non-veridicality or counterfactuality and especially the ironic tone of voice or intonation have been highlighted as the most reliable cues for the recognition of irony. However, although these cues often accompany ironic utterances, none of them seems infallible since irony can be and indeed is often misunderstood.

2.6.2. Hyperbole as a humorous strategy

At this point I will concentrate on hyperbole as a comic or humorous strategy. It has often been pointed out, especially in the field of psycholinguistics, that humour is a prominent goal accomplished by overstatement (e.g. Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Colston and

O'Brien 2000b). In this light, McCarthy and Carter (2004: 162) have shown that laughter often accompanies overstated utterances. Exaggeration features throughout a large body of humorous research, and indeed, much useful insight into hyperbole comprehension can be found in the literature on humour.

Psycholinguistic studies of humour, however, as Pepicello and Weisberg (1983: 78) have correctly pointed out, have been almost exclusively concerned with humour appreciation, while the production of linguistic humour has received little attention. An exception is found in the work by Long and Graesser (1988) who have devised a taxonomy of linguistic devices which can be used to elicit laughter. They distinguish two different kinds of humorous strategies: wit and jokes, and include overstatement within their taxonomy of wit, which "is categorized by intent or style" (p. 41). In other words, a witticism is seen as indicative of speakers' intention. Wit includes eleven categories: irony, satire, sarcasm and hostility, under- and overstatement, self-deprecation, teasing, replies to rhetorical questions, clever replies to serious statements, double entendres, transformations of frozen expressions and puns (p. 39). They further subdivide this taxonomy into two main groups. Irony, sarcasm, under- and overstatement are always evaluative in nature, they are all expressions of opinion, whereas the remaining categories are intended to entertain rather than to assert opinion (p. 44). In particular, Long and Graesser (1988: 42) remark about under- and overstatement that:

This type of wit changes by inflection the speaker's intended meaning. Often the last statement made is repeated with different emphasis to change the intended meaning. Wit of this type is very similar to the type of irony described by the echoic mention theory of irony (Jorgensen *et al.* 1984). In echoic mention, a previous statement (stated explicitly or implicitly) is repeated by the speaker. The speaker indicates by his tone of voice and inflection (scornful, approving, doubting, etc.) his attitude toward the statement.

Later, Graesser *et al.* (1989: 144) have claimed that humorous texts invoke a number of clever cognitive strategies and special communication devices. They conducted an experiment with college students to identify and assess the components and mechanisms of humorous texts. Participants were instructed to provide punchlines for jokes (punchline generation task) and to answer the following questions: Why is this joke funny? and Why would someone tell this joke? (question-answer task). The results support "the notion that

humor involves clever communicative devices” (p. 160). Usually, a humorous text involves some form of clever device at the linguistic, semantic or conceptual level. These communicative strategies include irony, sarcasm, puns, double entendres, overstatements, understatements and self-deprecation (pp. 148-9).

A recurrent argument in humour research is the idea that irony is often realised through under- or overstatement (e.g. Nash 1985: 152, Wright 2001: 93, Norrick 1994: 40). This has mistakenly led some scholars to regard both of them as forms of ironic or sarcastic speech.

Explaining why exaggeration is so effective in eliciting laughter requires an understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying humour. Humour has an ancient tradition of studies and interpretations. It is a complex linguistic, affective and psychological phenomenon. It has been defined as a non-bona fide act of communication (Raskin 1985), since humour depends on breaking the linguistic, pragmatic and social rules that are internalised and integrated into the individual’s view of the world (Dolitsky 1992: 37).

Many different theories have been devised over the years to account for humorous communication. It seems, however, that whatever theoretical viewpoint is adopted, the key element in humour is the importance of “the unsaid” or “the word unspoken but alluded to” (Dolitsky 1992: 33). Within the field of pragmatics, this notion, whereby speakers mean much more than what they actually say, is referred to as “implicature” (Grice 1975: 43). Although two different types of implicatures have been distinguished, namely conversational and conventional, only the former, which depends on manipulating Grice’s conversational maxims, is applied to the study of tropes. In this light, figurative language has traditionally been treated as part of a general theory of deviation from ordinary language. This deviation is concerned with failing to observe the Co-operative Principle that speakers are expected to follow in conversation. Tropes transgress the principle of conversational co-operation since they involve flouting a maxim and generating a conversational implicature. They violate the expectation that the maxims will be followed. As mentioned in section 2.4.2, hyperbole and irony, like metaphor and meiosis, fail to observe the maxim of quality, which concerns the truth of the propositional content in the utterance (Grice 1975: 53). This rule-breaking character of tropes accounts for their use in

humorous discourse since “humour’s credo is that rules are made to be broken” (Dolitsky 1992: 34).

Another possible explanation, and possibly the most widely accepted one, points to the notion of incongruity as a defining feature of humour and hyperbole. Dolitsky (1992: 38), for example, has also claimed that the key to humorous communication is an incongruity that transgresses the rules of the speaking situation.

Since the early 1970s there has been a debate over the role of incongruity in humour. This debate centres basically on two oppositions: one which describes humour as a two-stage process, namely the perception of an incongruity and the resolution of that incongruity (e.g. Suls 1972); and one which considers incongruity alone to be the necessary prerequisite of humour (e.g. Nerhardt 1970). With or without the need of a resolution stage, the incongruity theory postulates that laughter results from a clash of unexpected words or ideas and from the perception of incongruity when these words or ideas are manipulated in acceptable juxtapositions (Tsang 2000: 157).

Much humour research emphasises the role of incongruity in humour appreciation (e.g. Forabosco 1992, Yus Ramos 1995-1996, McGhee 1976). Bruner and Postman (1949; quoted in Forabosco 1992: 50) state that the element characterising the perception of incongruity is the violation of an expectation. This concept, of crucial importance in modern theories of humour, has been defined as “a discrepancy between what was expected and what occurred in the humorous event” (Long and Graesser 1988: 36), as the “presence of opposing and incompatible aspects, of disproportion, disharmony, etc.” (Forabosco 1992: 56). Several other terms such as contrast, discrepancy or dissonance fall within the compass of meaning of this notion. In particular the term “contrast”, being defined as “the incongruity of a remark with its referent topic” (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1559), is typical of figurative language comprehension theories. Hyperbole, like irony and understatement, makes use of the contrast between expected and ensuing events, between what is expected and what actually happens (Colston and Keller 1998: 505). Thus, the notion of contrast in tropes also serves to account for the use of figurative language in humour, since incongruity is the necessary condition for a humorous experience.

As for the linguistic strategies used to produce a comic effect, the laughter of incongruity, says Tsang (2000: 165), is evoked with a range of linguistic devices including irony, parody, exaggeration and disproportion. Hyperbole is such a common humorous

technique because comedy makes frequent use of disproportion, and this disproportion often takes the form of an exaggeration.

All in all, in humour research, the efficiency of hyperbole, like understatement and irony, in evoking laughter has either been assessed in terms of violations of conversational maxims so in tune with the rule-breaking character of humour, or through the notion of incongruity, crucial in modern theories of humour, to which the relation of dissonance or contrast in non-literal language conforms. But what really is at stake here is that although a wide range of linguistic devices can be used in comedy, the essence always lies in a kind of “creative distortion” (Mintz 1985: 79) or “deviations from our established logic” (Zijderveld 1968: 301-2) through exaggeration, burlesque and incongruous context (Tsang 2000: 158).

2.6.2.1. Hyperbole in the tradition of the Tall Tale

In his attempt to explain why exaggeration seems to prevail in American English, while understatement is the British type of the English language, Spitzbardt (1963: 280) highlights that “there is a tradition of high rhetoric in America – some of the most extreme examples are to be found in what we call *frontier humor*”. Likewise, in his book *American English*, Albert Marckwardt (1958; quoted in Spitzbardt 1963: 280) tries to explain this psycholinguistic and social divergence of style between American and British English in the following terms:

One may easily surmise that the admiration of the big word spread from the seacoast to the frontier, where new coinages now became a sport of the unlettered, fitting in neatly with the other hyperbolic characteristics of tall talk. To put it another way, the Elizabethan tendency toward hyperbole or overstatement was, in this country, never submerged by the countermovement toward litotes, or understatement, which was a feature of the English classical revival of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This kind of tall talk, these “high-sounding, mouth-filling words” are described as follows:

A form of utterance ranging in composition from striking concoctions of ingeniously contrived epithets expressing disparagement or encomium, to wild hyperbole, fantastic simile and metaphor, and a highly bombastic display of oratory, employed to impress the listener with the physical prowess or general superiority of the speaker. (Marckwardt 1958; quoted in Spitzbardt 1963: 280)

Similarly, Nichols (1937: 67; quoted in Hansen 1977: 181) in his *Forty Years of American Life, 1821-1861*, briefly comments on the American fondness for humorous exaggeration: “American humor consists largely of exaggeration, and of strange and quaint expressions”. He correctly suggests that there is a clear tradition in America of the “improving” exaggeration. “Americans”, he notes, “have a passion for making improvements on everything” (p. 68). Later, Hansen (1977: 183) clearly distinguishes two traditions of American exaggeration that are seldom discriminated: the transformers and the epitomizers.

Both the epitomizers and the transformers rely on language, rather than action, as their basic medium. It is primarily their talk, not their conduct, that is funny. In the one instance, that of the transformer, the talk is humorous perhaps because it is obviously an alteration of the actual state of affairs. In the other, the epitomizer’s talk is humorous because – while its literal level of meaning is so exaggerated as to inspire disbelief – its metaphoric properties are richly suggestive and expressive, and usually very much to the point. Beyond their shared reliance on language, these two traditions can be seen as natural opposites. The transformer uses language to realize as far as possible his desired fantasy; the epitomizer uses language to express his indescribable – perhaps fantastic – reality.

The transformers’ lies, says Hansen (1977: 182), improve life in an attempt to fulfil the hunger for things that are not, whereas the epitomizer conceives of himself and his circumstances as being virtually indescribable; so extreme or surreal seems his lot to him that it defies ordinary description. “It takes hyperbolic language”, as Thorpe (1854; quoted in Hansen 1977: 182) suggests, “to express even the commonplace in the mighty primitive wilds”. As a rule, the epitomizer, the frontiersman of the nineteenth century was engaged in the act of self-definition through tall talk and symbolic language. Merely surviving in

the wilderness must have promoted a great deal of self-assurance, which accounts, as Hansen (1977: 182) notes, for the important role that hyperbolic boast plays in tall tales.

However, the tradition of the tall tale is not exclusive of American backwoodsmen. Turner (1973: 221) briefly comments that such style, the tall talk, where grotesque exaggeration co-occurs with irony and understatement, is a feature of hard frontier life and appeared in America and Australia as it appeared and became great literature in the early European frontier region, Iceland.

Jones (1987: 60) pays special attention to the tradition of the tall story in Australia, which is rooted in past history and in people's responses to the land itself, life in the bush. Within the general pattern of Australian humour, he says, the sense of alienation is expressed through irony and sardonic resignation, while the possibility of a new beginning is expressed through irreverence, riotousness and a fantasticality which often manifests itself in the tradition of the tall story. In his own words:

Tall tales represent a response in the folklore of a frontier society to the expansiveness and promise of a new land. By an exercise of imagination, they incorporate into the fabric of ordinary life an awareness of illogicality and impossibility [...]. But although the use of fantasy may evoke images of hazards, endurance and achievement on a grand scale, it can also be undermining in its emphasis on the utter impossibility of what is being described. An ironic note, often essential to the effect of the tall story, keeps intruding. Extravagant boasting contains the seed of self-parody and the delight of such tale can come from exposing the lie at its centre. (Jones 1987: 78)

Jones (1987: 70) contends that the spirit of fantasy and grotesque exaggeration to convey the hardships of life in the bush is the essence of the tall story. Similarly, Nash (1985: 169) highlights that "the comic mode of hyperbole, or overstatement, [is] the stylistic trademark of many a tall tale".

There are a number of differences between Australian bush yarns and those of American backwoodsmen. In this sense, Jones (1987: 77) notes that: "The very different conditions of settlement prevailing in frontier America and the Australian bush account for a considerable difference in tone, even although many of the same motifs, jokes and witticisms appear in the humour of the two countries". Although humorous exaggeration in both traditions responds to a psychological defence mechanism, the essence of the tall

story in American and Australian humour is different. Thus, Hoffman (1952: 29) claims that for American backwoodsmen, tall stories represent “the necessary fantasies men create in order to fortify themselves against the dangers they must face and the threats they cannot overcome except by force of mind”. In Australia, however, the bust of energy generated by the tall story serves mainly as a relief from the monotony and ever-recurring disappointments of bush life (Jones 1987: 79).

2.7. Recent developments: McCarthy and Carter’s (2004) study

McCarthy and Carter’s (2004) article “‘There’s millions of them’: Hyperbole in everyday conversation” deserves special attention for having focused on one of the most frequently overlooked aspects of the trope, namely, the interactive nature of hyperbole. The collaborative dimension of figures is an issue which only recently has been discussed in the literature on irony and metaphor, often considered the master tropes, but which has been totally ignored or disregarded for the study of other figures, including exaggeration.

This study is also remarkable for the analysis of overstatement in naturally-occurring speech, since not a great amount of empirical research exists into everyday spoken hyperbole and naturalistic data. Together with the study that Sell *et al.* (1997) conducted focusing on parent’s use of non-literal language with pre-school children, this is the only analysis of overstatement in naturally-occurring dialogue. It is also the first corpus-based study of the trope. McCarthy and Carter (2004) examine the occurrence of hyperbole in the CANCODE corpus, a five-million-word spoken corpus of everyday English conversation. They analyse a sample of core semantic fields which speakers seem routinely to overstate for affective and evaluative purposes, namely expressions of number, amount and quantity, time expressions, adjectives and adverbs of size, degree and intensity, etc. The degree of hyperbole-proneness of every overstated item in their corpus is calculated.

Their research devotes special attention to the interactive nature of overstatement. Embracing an interactive approach to the trope is indispensable for its proper understanding “since it fundamentally depends on a joint acceptance of a distortion of reality” (p. 161). “Listener reaction is crucial to its interpretation and the success of hyperbole depends on the listener entering a pact of acceptance of extreme formulations,

the creation of impossible worlds, and apparent counterfactuality” (p. 149). In their own words:

Any full account of hyperbole must have an interactive dimension; as with other acts of linguistic creativity, it is validated in interaction and can only be described adequately by including the listener’s contributions to the unfolding act, rather than being examined as a single, creative act by the speaker alone, or solely within the domain of intentionality. (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 153)

Evidence of that interactivity is listener take-up, whereby listeners react with supportive behaviour such as laughter or assenting back channel markers and/or contribute further to the figurative frame (p. 162).

McCarthy and Carter (2004) have also highlighted the speaker’s affective involvement as crucial to the interpretation of exaggeration. Examination of the trope in interactive contexts underlines its expressive and interpersonal meanings. Intensification, humour and banter, empathy, informality and intimacy, along with evaluative and persuasive goals, are all recurrent features (p. 176).

Finally, this study is also remarkable for being the first to suggest the need of examining hyperboles within a conversational analysis framework, since they are not one-off, but complex lexico-grammatical items.

[H]yperboles are not encoded solely in lexico-grammatical items: syntactic and discoursal strategies such as polysyndeton, repetition and clustering of hyperbolic items suggest that hyperboles (and other tropes) need to be examined over turn-boundaries and within the constraints of placement and sequencing that conversation analysis has always highlighted, albeit with limited data samples. (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 175)

3. THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and analytical framework adopted for analysis. It describes the research objectives and questions underlying the study, the procedure followed for the individual analysis in each chapter, and the data or corpus examined.

3.1. Research objectives

The aim of this dissertation is to make a contribution to the discussion of exaggeration and, by extension, to the literature on non-literal or figurative language. It aims to provide a general framework for the description and understanding of hyperbolic usage in conversation, and to demonstrate that rather than restricted to literary language, this trope is a ubiquitous feature of everyday speech. The basic objectives guiding the study are:

Objective 1: to provide an adequate definition of the notion of hyperbole, one which permits a clear distinction between exaggeration and other related tropes, such as understatement and irony; to list the criteria for identifying and labelling hyperbole, so that non-exaggerated uses of expressions can be excluded.

Objective 2: to set up a classification of hyperbolic items according to the following parameters: semantic field, grammatical category, extreme of the scale or continuum, and interactivity with other figures of speech.

Objective 3: to explore the long neglected production process of hyperbole, both in terms of usage (interactional genres and text forms) and functions (rhetorical and speech acts).

Objective 4: to examine the trope as an interactional device, as an activity collaboratively constructed by speaker and hearer, by focusing on listeners' verbal responses and further contributions to overstatement.

The aforesaid objectives correspond to the research questions detailed in the introductory chapter and to be answered in this study, namely:

1. What is hyperbole? How can this figure be recognised and identified? What cues can be used in order to distinguish between hyperbolic and non-hyperbolic uses of words and expressions?

2. In which grammatical categories can hyperbole be realised, and which one is most productive? Is this trope more frequently used to amplify or to minimise? Into what semantic fields can it be classified and which one is most often exaggerated? Is hyperbole a productive strategy in the creation of other figures of speech?
3. What kinds of speech acts can be exaggerated? Which illocutionary force is most often assigned to overstated utterances? Why are some hyperbolic speech acts performed indirectly?
4. What pragmatic functions does overstatement fulfil in discourse? Which communicative goals are more recurrent? Why should speakers prefer to express their thoughts indirectly or hyperbolically instead of literally? What is the relationship between neighbouring exaggerated and literal expressions?
5. In what types of interactional genre and text form does hyperbole feature? Which are more hyperbole-prone? What kind of conversational goal, language use and participant relation exhibits a higher frequency of overstatement?
6. How do listeners normally react to the speaker's exaggeration? What kind of verbal response predominates? Why is hyperbole so frequently employed in narratives? Which functions does it fulfil in storytelling?

3.2. Theoretical framework: Pragmatics and Conversational Analysis

The theoretical framework adopted for the present study relies heavily on a pragmatic and conversational analysis approach, and benefits from the tools that the two disciplines offer for the description of hyperbolic speech in interaction. In this sense, Hutchby and Drew (1995: 182) have noted that research in both conversational analysis and pragmatics contributes to the development of a naturalistic, observation-based empirical science of actual verbal behaviour.

3.2.1. Pragmatics

There are many definitions of the term to be found, but pragmatics is generally seen as the study of meaning in context. Hyperbole, the object of study in this dissertation, can be defined as a purely pragmatic phenomenon, since it is entirely dependent on context.

Numerous scholars have emphasised the crucial role that contextual information, both linguistic and extralinguistic, plays in the perception and identification of exaggeration. Among them, Ravazzoli (1978, 1979) stands out for highlighting the pragmatic nature of the trope, since “l’iperbole non è totalmente riconoscibile [...] senza il ricorso alla referenza” (1978: 75). He notes three ways in which the context is vital for the study of overstatement: a) it helps to determine whether utterances must be interpreted hyperbolically or literally (p. 84); b) it allows us to measure the degree of inflation of the word or expression, according to the semantic divergence between *posé* and *présupposé* and c) it helps to disambiguate the vagueness or polysemy of isolated hyperbolic expressions (p. 83).

Since overstatement can only be understood in context, not in isolation or decontextualized situations, this study can be said to be part of a vast body of literature that constitutes an area of research known as “pragmatics”.

In the early 1980s, pragmatics was commonly defined in very general or broad terms, as meaning in use or in context. This may be explained, says Thomas (1995: 21), by the fact that “the ‘pioneers’ in the area of pragmatics were reacting against an approach to linguistics which was strongly biased towards meaning in abstract”. But theories evolve and more recently, definitions of the term tend to fall into one of two fields: “those who equate pragmatics with speaker meaning and those who equate it with utterance interpretation” (p. 2). The two views represent radically different approaches to the discipline of pragmatics.

The term *speaker meaning* tends to be favoured by writers who take a broadly social view of the discipline; it puts the focus of attention firmly on the producer of the message, but at the same time obscures the fact that the process of interpreting what we hear involves moving between several levels of meaning. The final definition of *utterance interpretation*, which is favoured by those who take a broadly cognitive approach, avoids this fault, but at the cost of focusing too much on the receiver of the message, which in practice means largely ignoring the social constraints on utterance production. (Thomas 1995: 2)

This shows that pragmatics is by no means a unitary field of research. Similarly, Leech (1983: 10-1) drew a distinction between the sociological interface of pragmatics or socio-pragmatics, which is defined as the study of the social conditions placed on language in

use, and pragmalinguistics, which refers to “the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics”.

For the present study, however, I will adopt Thomas’ (1995) definition of pragmatics as meaning in interaction, since her definition takes account of the different contributions of both speaker and hearer, utterance and context to the making of meaning. She views meaning not as inherent in the words alone, nor as produced by the speaker or the hearer alone. Rather, “making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance” (p. 22).

Pragmatics has been deeply influenced by the philosophy of language. Indeed, the more lasting influences on modern pragmatics have been those of language philosophers, especially Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975). Austin has usually been credited with generating interest in what has since come to be known as pragmatics (Thomas 1995: 28). Austin (1962) originated, and later Searle (1969) further developed and elaborated, the theory of speech acts, which is concerned with the actions we perform through speaking.

Among other issues, pragmatics studies the relationship between what speakers say and what their words mean. This distinction between sense and force, says Leech (1983: 17), is essential to pragmatics. Grice’s (1975) theory is an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning (Thomas 1995: 56). In Grice’s (1975) Co-operative Principle, which has been extremely influential in different fields of language research, “understanding is a matter of inference from what is said to what is meant” (Dascal and Gross 1999: 109).

Pragmatics relates the sense (or grammatical meaning) of an utterance to its pragmatic (or illocutionary) force, and this relationship may be relatively direct or indirect (Leech 1983: 5). Thus, an adequate theory of pragmatics, says Fraser (1983: 45), must account for the fact that some communication is not explicit, but only implied, that is to say, some communication is not direct but indirect.

Leech (1983: 6) who has defined pragmatics as “the study of meaning in relation to speech situations” says this approach is mainly concerned with the study of the following elements that constitute and define speech situations:

- (1) Addressers and addressees
- (2) The context of an utterance

- (3) The goal(s) of an utterance
- (4) The utterance as a form of act or activity: a speech act
- (5) The utterance as a product of a verbal act (Leech 1983: 13-4).

Inasmuch as all these aspects are necessarily treated and discussed for the proper understanding of hyperbole a pragmatic approach is relevant for the present study.

3.2.2. Conversational Analysis

Conversational analysis (hereafter CA) has stressed the primacy of the social dimension of language study (Leech 1983: 4). The main objective of CA is “to uncover the sociolinguistic competences underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of social interaction” (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 183).

CA emerged in the 1960s, as part of an ethnomethodological research programme. Ethnomethodology is an interpretative approach to sociology which focuses upon everyday life as a skilled accomplishment, and upon the “methods” which people use for producing and interpreting it (Garfinkel 1967; quoted in Fairclough 1995: 21). Ethnomethodologists, says Strässler (1982), aim to give an account of the methods by which the participants of a conversation create and receive a conversation as an ordered phenomenon. The primary task of ethnomethodology is to “provide a machinery by which the hearer arrives at a particular hearing of an utterance” (p. 74).

The pioneering research of Sacks, and his colleagues, Schegloff and Jefferson, led to the emergence of a large corpus of ethnomethodological studies mainly “concerned with illuminating the social organization which underlies intelligible spoken interaction” (Greatbatch 1998: 164). These studies were inspired by Sacks’ proposal that the analysis of recordings of naturally-occurring conversation provides the possibility of developing a “naturalistic observation discipline which [can] deal with the details of social action(s) rigorously, empirically, and formally” (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 289). The methodological framework developed in these studies came to be known as Conversation Analysis.

CA involves detailed, qualitative analysis of audio and video recordings of naturally-occurring social interaction (Greatbatch 1998: 165). Although CA began from the study of ordinary conversations, it has increasingly been used in “institutional settings in which

more or less official or formal task-based activities are undertaken” (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991: 94). That is, more recent work in CA has concentrated on institutional types of discourse.

The focus is upon relational aspects of conversation: the achievement of interaction (Fairclough 1995: 23) and the locally produced orderliness of talk encounters (Greatbatch 1998: 163). Thus, CA is centrally concerned with the turn-taking system and its conventions, i.e. “the methods by which persons concertedly manage the routine exchange of turns while minimizing gap and overlap between them” (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 183). It also studies the sequential patterns and structures associated with the management of social activities in interaction. Conversations are structures of adjacency pairs, a fundamental concept for the ordered hearing of talk (Strässler 1982: 75) and so for CA research. Adjacency pairs, such as question-answer and invitation-acceptance/refusal, says Clark (1994: 992), are inherently a sequencing device. They are defined as “utterances produced by two successive speakers such that the second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow-up. The two form a pair, the first utterance constituting a *first pair part* and the next utterance constituting a *second pair part*” (Richards and Schmidt 1983: 128). No less important is the study of other related aspects of conversation, such as repair mechanisms, conversational openings and closings, topic management, agreement and disagreement, storytelling, discourse markers, non-lexical response tokens, laughter, etc.

The first to analyse hyperbole from a CA perspective were McCarthy and Carter (2004). They claim that since overstatements are not one-off lexico-grammatical items, they need to be examined within the constraints of placement, sequencing and turn-taking that conversational analysis has always highlighted (p. 175). In a similar vein, here I adopt the principles of CA, as a discipline which combines a concern with the contextual sensitivity of language use with a focus on talk as a vehicle for social action (Drew and Heritage 1992: 16). In order to explore the interactive nature of the trope, to examine listeners’ verbal responses to hyperbole, to determine shifts in footing associated with the presence of an exaggeration, to account for the different speech exchange systems and interactional genres in our data a CA framework is relevant for the study of this figure of speech. All these areas of investigation account for the preference of conversational-analytical methods over other related approaches such as discourse analysis.

The overlap between CA and discourse analysis (hereafter DA) is immense (Östman and Virtanen 1995: 247), but although they share some fields of interest, different aspects are in focus. Proponents of DA are fundamentally looking for structure in conversation and believe there are structural principles behind interaction, whereas CA proponents are not interested in overall structure but in how participants work locally and how language is conditioned by placement and sequence.

Roughly speaking, DA refers to “attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts” (Stubbs 1983: 1).

An early interest within DA was classroom interaction. Studies of the features of teacher-student interaction by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Coulthard (1977), Brazil *et al.* (1980), and other Birmingham-based discourse analysis brought this field to the very centre of DA. In fact, for some scholars, DA refers solely to the Birmingham School (Östman and Virtanen 1995: 249), which sought to describe rank-ordered structure beyond the sentence.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) devised a descriptive framework for analysing discourse, using classroom data as a starting point. They borrowed the idea of a rank scale from Halliday’s (1961) descriptive units: *act*, *move*, *exchange*, *transaction* and *lesson* (Tsui 1994: 8). These units are ordered in a hierarchical manner such that acts combine to form moves, moves combine to form exchanges, which in their turn combine to form transactions, and so on. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) define acts as units characterised according to their local function in discourse. According to this view, “the discourse value of an item depends on what linguistic items have preceded it, what are expected to follow, and what do follow” (p. 34). A move is the smallest free unit of discourse and is made up of one or more than one act (p. 23). According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), a typical classroom exchange is made up of three moves: an *initiating move* from the teacher (I), a *responding move* from the pupil (R), and a *follow-up move* from the teacher (F), although there are slight variations on this basic structure. The teacher controls the larger picture, says McCarthy and Slade (forthcoming), dividing the lesson up into meaningful stages, what Sinclair and Coulthard called *transactions* (whose boundaries are typically indicated by the discourse markers: *right*, *okay*, etc.).

The focus of DA is on language and context of communication: who is communicating with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolve, and their relationship to each other (Cook 1992: 1). This discipline views language and context holistically, that is, “discourse is text and context together, interacting in a way which is perceived as meaningful and unified for participants” (p. 2). The aim, says Cook, is to describe this phenomenon in general and particular instances of it, and to explain how participants distinguish one type of discourse from another. To do this, DA needs to pay attention not only to human cognitive processes in general, but also culturally-bound features. Thus, central areas of research within this field are cohesion, coherence, information structure, grounding, point of view, discourse types and genres, differences between speech and writing, etc.

3.3. Analytical framework

The analytical part of the research can be divided into two distinct parts. First, I had to define and characterise the notion of hyperbole and determine what constituted an exaggeration, alongside the collection of the data for analysis. Once the corpus had been compiled, the list of hyperboles present in the data was identified and subsequently classified according to different criteria.

Secondly, the production process of the trope became the object of study. In order to obtain a full and clear picture of the ways in which hyperboles are used in interaction, I set out to analyse the speech acts in which they were embedded, the pragmatic functions or communicative goals they fulfilled, the interactional genres and text forms with which they were associated and finally, the interactive nature (and so the reception process) of this figure of speech. The methodology or procedure for each individual analysis is detailed below. The different analyses and their results feature in chapters four, five, six, seven and eight.

3.3.1. Definition, identification and classification of hyperboles

The first step was to define and characterise the notion of exaggeration. This task was mainly accomplished by means of a thorough revision of the literature on the subject, and

placing special emphasis on those features that distinguish hyperbole from related tropes, such as understatement and verbal irony.

Once collected, I proceeded to identify the exaggerations in the data for analysis. Since the position of the analyst is that of an external observer, i.e. not taking part directly in the interaction, hyperbole identification was not always an easy task. Pollio *et al.* (1977: 38), for example, remark of hyperbole, litotes and irony that “they presuppose that the speaker and listener share some knowledge of the subject matter under discussion”. Thus, contextual information plays a crucial role in the perception of the trope. Yet, when the referent situation was not explicitly stated or could only be vaguely identified, reliance on other criteria (e.g. labels, downgraders), and reliance on McCarthy and Carter’s (2004) heuristic cues, was necessary to label this figure.

The list of exaggerations obtained from the data was submitted to classification according to different parameters. For classificatory purposes, the focus was on hyperbolic items, rather than sentences or utterances, which may consist of several of such items. By hyperbolic item, I mean the minimal unit of sense or meaning, whether a word, phrase or expression, which *per se*, given the appropriate context, conveys an idea of excess or extremity.

I began the analysis by listing the lexico-grammatical repertoire for hyperbole in the transcripts, drawing inspiration from the classifications devised by Spitzbardt (1963) and Norrick (1982). This typology was based on the word class of the items examined, whether major/open, minor/closed classes or else a lexico-grammatical combination. Secondly, a semantic-etymological taxonomy was elaborated, whereby hyperbolic elements were classified from a semasiological perspective. Following Spitzbardt (1965), the taxonomy was divided into two dimensions: evaluative and quantitative. Items were divided, on the basis of their meaning, into different semantic domains and fields organised around an idea or several related ideas. Although influenced by the semantic classifications of adverbs of degree in English carried out by Malcev (1964), Spitzbardt (1965) and Bolinger (1972), neither the nature nor the number of semantic domains and fields were decided a priori or imposed on the data. On the contrary, the classification was mainly data-driven. Thirdly, in order to determine whether the tendency is to upscale or downscale reality, hyperbolic items were classified following the classical division into auxesis or meiosis. This task was achieved by analysing the extreme of the continuum they headed towards, whether the

upper or lower end of the scale. Finally, the rate of co-occurrence of hyperbole with other figures of speech was calculated. My purpose here was to determine whether exaggeration is a productive strategy in the creation of other tropes, and if so, with which figures it tends to combine. Thus, hyperbolic items were classified as complex/compound or simple/pure depending on whether or not they interacted with other figurative language forms. Instances of hyperbole in combination with other figures were examined following Ravazzoli's (1978: 96-8) classification of compound exaggeration.

3.3.2. Production process of hyperbole

The next level of analysis focuses on several dimensions of the production process of hyperbolic utterances (rather than items). The term "utterance" is preferred instead of "sentence" since "we tend [...] to speak in short stretches which may or may not be accurate or complete sentences" (Cornbleet and Carter 2001: 61). In the present study, the word "utterance" refers to "the issuance of a sentence, or a sentence fragment in a particular context of situation" (Levinson 1983: 18). The procedure of analysis followed in this section consists of the following steps.

3.3.2.1. Speech act analysis

Participants in interaction have certain conversational goals, which can be viewed in terms of social functions (Werth 1981: 9). Several methodologies cluster around this area of inquiry. Since social functions are realised by actions, one approach is by way of the classification of speech acts. Thus, I proceeded to analyse hyperbolic utterances from within speech act theory. In this theory, which enjoys a central position in the realm of pragmatics, a speech act is defined as "the action that is performed in making an utterance" (Tsui 1994: 9). The aim was to arrive at a classification of the different acts that hyperbole performs in interaction by determining the communicative intent of the utterances in which the trope was embedded.

Although Austin's (1962) three-fold distinction between locution, illocution and perlocution was maintained here, only locutionary and illocutionary acts, which respectively refer to "the actual words uttered" and "the force or intention behind the

words” (Thomas 1995: 49), were examined. The study of perlocutionary acts, since they refer to the effect of the illocution on the hearers, goes beyond the scope of this analysis, and was therefore excluded.

In order to assign illocutionary force to utterances, a locutionary analysis was first performed, paying special attention to illocutionary force indicating devices such as sentence type and mood. Secondly, the context of utterance was examined, since “often, context alone will determine what force is assigned to an utterance” (Thomas 1983: 99).

Albeit with slight modifications, Searle’s (1969, 1975, 1976) speech act theory was adopted to carry out the analysis of hyperbolic utterances. Thus, four kinds of illocutionary acts were distinguished, namely representative or assertive, directive, commissive and expressive exaggeration. The category of declarations proposed by Searle (1976) was disregarded for not constituting an illocutionary force. Once identified in the data for analysis, I subdivided these forces into subclasses and acts, devising my own typologies when there was no general agreement as to how some illocutionary forces should be subclassified.

At the illocutionary level, a primary distinction between direct and indirect realisations of speech acts was drawn. Following Searle (1975: 60), indirect acts were defined as “cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another”. In other words, indirection refers to the use of an utterance with a certain illocutionary force different from the one conventionally indicated by grammatical cues (Nogales 1999: 173). In order to determine whether a speech act was being performed directly or indirectly, the relationship between locutionary and illocutionary act was examined by testing whether or not there was a one-to-one correspondence between sentence type and force.

The issue of indirection led me to enquire about the motives that may prompt speakers to perform a particular speech act under the linguistic guise of another act. Why do people resort to indirection when they can always express their communicative intent in a direct and straightforward way? In order to answer this question the notion of face-threatening acts was introduced, and so the connection between politeness and indirect speech acts was explored.

Although there are many different definitions of the term, I was primarily concerned with politeness as a pragmatic or illocutionary phenomenon, whereby it is interpreted as “a

strategy (or series of strategies) employed by a speaker to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining harmonious relations” (Thomas 1995: 157-9). Within pragmatics, there has been a great deal of interest in politeness, and so three major perspectives on politeness can be distinguished: the conversational-maxim view (e.g. Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983), the face-saving view (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987), and the conversational-contract view (e.g. Fraser 1990). Among them, the face-management view of politeness is generally accepted as the most clearly articulated and most thoroughly worked out. Within this framework, face-threatening acts are defined as acts that are liable to damage the face of any of the interlocutors in interaction (Brown and Levinson 1987: 65), and therefore need to be attenuated or palliated. Apart from indirection, other politeness strategies discussed in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model and used to mitigate face loss in our data were examined too.

3.3.2.2. Rhetorical function analysis

Secondly, I turned to the assessment of the rhetorical functions of each of the hyperbolic utterances under investigation. The aim was to determine the range of propositional and affective functions that exaggeration fulfils in discourse in order to understand why speakers often express their thoughts in exaggerated rather than literal terms.

In order to assign communicative goals to the overstated utterances in the data examined, a content analysis was first performed. Secondly, hyperboles were also examined in context to determine the purpose of their use. As Katz (1996: 3) notes: “the context may provide sufficient information about the reasons that a speaker or writer used the linguistic form that he or she did”.

Even though the object of study was overstated utterances, rather than items, when possible, a distinction was drawn between strict performance and enhancement of communicative functions. The test of suppression of the hyperbolic item often proved useful in drawing such a distinction. It helped to determine whether or not it was the exaggeration as such, rather than other sentence constituents, which fulfilled a particular discourse goal.

Since “utterances typically serve more than one function at the same time” (Stubbs 1983: 6), the assumption was that several purposes or functions could co-occur or be fulfilled simultaneously by a single overstatement.

The communicative functions in our taxonomy were primarily based on an analytic scheme developed by Roberts and Kreuz (1994), although additional categories were added to accommodate goals not included in their typology. Once the repertoire of pragmatic functions associated with the production of hyperbolic speech had been identified, and their frequency of occurrence calculated, I proceeded to define, explain and illustrate them, establishing, when pertinent, interrelations between different functions.

The issue of clarification, one of the rhetorical functions of the trope, prompted me to consider the relationship between neighbouring literal and exaggerated expressions. This kind of relation was deciphered or established on the basis of the propositional content and semantic meaning of the expressions in question, whether they paraphrased, clarified, explained, summed up, expanded or added to each other.

3.3.2.3. Mode and interactional genre analysis

Chapter seven addressed the production process of hyperbole in terms of usage. I examined the occurrence of overstatement in different speech genres and text forms to find correlations and patterns of use. The aim was to explore the way contextual factors influence over the use and frequency of the trope, and to determine which text form and conversational genre exhibits a higher degree of hyperbole-proneness.

Firstly, I began by examining the particular text form or mode the utterance or segment of text where the trope was embedded belonged to, following Werlich’s (1976) taxonomy of descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative and instructive texts based on cognitive properties. Although traditionally these labels have been considered text types and discussed on a global text-internal basis, they can also be applied to smaller textual units. In this chapter, the object of analysis was overstated utterances, and so the terms text form or mode were considered more appropriate. In order to assign text form to utterances, their cognitive properties were examined. Slight variations and an additional category were introduced in order to accommodate modes not included in Werlich’s (1976) typology. Thus, because of the intimate connection and overlapping between exposition and

argumentation, these two modes were not eventually separated. Likewise, the category of assessment was included in order to account for a group of utterances which did not fit any of the aforesaid modes. The term was used to refer to a group of listeners' reactions to speakers' contributions which involve some overstated form of evaluation, whether positive or negative. This class has clearly to do with the reception process and primarily consists of response and follow-up moves. Finally, the multifunctionality or hybrid nature of utterances, whereby different modes or text forms co-occur, was examined and a distinction between dominant and secondary modes was drawn.

Secondly, genres at the level of the overall interaction where the trope was embedded were examined. Although originally texts were selected according to BNC domain (i.e. business, institutional, educational-informative, leisure and informal), such classification proved rather intuitive. In this chapter, BNC texts were re-classified or redistributed into genres. Since our data focuses on speech, only spoken genres were discussed following Carter and McCarthy's (1997: 10) generic taxonomy. They distinguish eight major interactional genres: narrative, identifying, language-in-action, comment-elaboration, debate and argument, decision-making, service and learning encounters. Given that the different genres found in our data vary considerably in terms of size, that is to say, there is not a balanced distribution across the different speech genres, a weighted average was calculated in order to determine in which one the use of exaggeration was proportionally higher. Those genres were defined and their main features described according to the following parameters: purpose, lexico-grammatical characteristics and "situative structure", as defined by Günthner and Knoblauch (1995). At the situative level, special attention was devoted to the interactive organisation of genres as described by CA. Thus, for genre analysis, not only quantitative but also qualitative analytical methods were employed. Among the CA factors examined are the turn-taking organisation, turn length, adjacency pairs, preference structures, number of participants, power relationships, etc.

Finally, since genres are subject to slight variations, three defining generic dimensions, namely goal orientation, participant framework and transactional/interpersonal language use were examined in isolation to determine more specific patterns of use. The aim was to find out which individual factors control the frequency and usage of the trope in conversation. Thus, BNC texts were classified as transactional, interactional or a mixture of both according to Brown and Yule's (1983) distinction between interactions whose

primary focus is on the informative exchange or on establishing and maintaining social relations. In terms of goal orientation, three goal-types were distinguished in our data following the CANCODE genre-approach, namely: provision of information, collaborative ideas and tasks, depending on whether the dominant motivation for the talk was information giving, an interactive sharing of thoughts, judgements, opinions and attitudes or an interaction with the physical environment while speaking, respectively (McCarthy 1998a: 10). Finally, participant relationships were also analysed. BNC texts were classified in terms of power, according to whether the kind of relationship among the participants was symmetrical or asymmetrical. Symmetrical relations are those “in which the participants are considered to be equals or near equals” (Scollon and Scollon 1995: 44), whereas in the hierarchical or asymmetrical system, “the participants recognize and respect the social differences that place one in a superordinate position and the other in a subordinate position” (p. 45). On the other hand, five kinds of relationships, namely transactional, professional, pedagogical, socialising and intimate, were differentiated according to the CANCODE genre-approach. McCarthy (1998a: 9-10) succinctly defines them as relations where participants: a) display needs or imperatives and move towards satisfying those needs in a goal-oriented fashion, b) are professional colleagues in professional situations, c) engage in teacher-student or student-student interaction, d) engage in social or cultural activities and e) are family members or close friends in private settings, respectively.

3.3.2.4. Analysis of hyperbole as an interactional device

The analysis of the interactive and collaborative dimension of hyperbolic utterances meant embracing a joint activity view of discourse. Thus, the encoding/decoding, intentionalist and perspective-taking paradigm were disregarded, since “all of these paradigms view speakers and listeners acting autonomously as they separately figure out what to say and how to infer what is meant” (Gibbs 1999a: 45). By contrast, the dialogic or joint activity view of communication does not exclude “the crucial role of listeners and readers in both the creation and interpretation of meaning” (Gibbs 1999a: 57). The idea is that “conversations, stories and other discourses are not created by speakers acting autonomously. Rather they are the emergent products of an ensemble of people working

together” (Clark 1994: 876). They result from a collaborative process of interaction between participants.

In order to examine the nature of hyperbole as an interactional device, the reception process was analysed, paying special attention to listeners’ verbal responses to the trope and their own further contributions to the emergence of figurative frames. Although listenership as an interactive function of discourse is a remarkably under-researched area of study (McCarthy 1998b: 111), research into how listeners behave has reinforced the notion of conversation as jointly produced (McCarthy 2003: 44).

The analysis of listenership could only be performed from a conversational analysis approach, examining the trope within the constraints of placement, sequencing and turn-taking. Indeed, this is one of the aims of CA: to analyse recordings of naturally-occurring conversations to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 183).

In order to explore the role of conversational interactivity in hyperbole creation and comprehension, listeners’ subsequent turns were examined. In the analysis, the contributions of the different participants were classified into turns on the basis of change of speaker. All responses directly affected by or related to the speaker’s turn where hyperbole was embedded were examined. Thus, utterances were analysed “not as isolated instances of talk, but as interactive products of what was projected by previous turns and actions” (Gregori Signes 2000a: 12).

It is to be noted that the term “comprehension” above is solely concerned with either understanding or misunderstanding of the trope as indicated by listeners’ verbal reactions, rather than with the psychological processes activated in hyperbole comprehension. Traditionally, though, “listenership has been seen as a question of ‘listening comprehension’, i.e. the processing of messages, rather than the way in which speakers characteristically respond to them” (McCarthy 1998b: 111-2).

Listeners’ responses were classified on the basis of their propositional content and in relation to the speaker’s turn where the hyperbolic utterance was embedded, whether signalling concurrence or disagreement, which is another central concept in CA. Following Clark (1994: 993), two main kinds of responses were distinguished in the data: positive and negative evidence. The former indicates understanding and acceptance of the speaker’s message. The latter, by contrast, involves some manifest lack of interest, accord, affiliation

or understanding between the participants, as far as the hyperbole is concerned. In turn, positive and negative evidence were divided into different response types and subtypes, and paying special attention to the take-up and continuation of hyperbole or any other figure of speech, since they often bring about bursts of figurative language.

Finally, I examined the use of exaggeration as a performance feature in storytelling, a genre which has been widely discussed in CA. “Performance, or play-acting” is defined after Haiman (1997: 182) as “behavior *for an audience* in the same way that an image is an appearance for an audience”. In order to be considered relevant for analysis, narratives in the data needed to contain at least two overstatements. The functions they fulfilled in narrative episodes were examined in order to account for the importance of this figure in storytelling, and to explain how hyperbole may help turn a simple recount of events into a performed narrative.

3.4. Data description

3.4.1. Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is a branch of corpus analysis, which is usually viewed as “a continuation with different means and a different methodology of the descriptive, data-oriented linguistics of the structuralists earlier in the [twentieth] century” (Aarts 1995: 564). It is based primarily on quantitative studies of language, where the computer is used to count frequency of occurrence of words, phrases or other quantifiable phenomena, and to observe patterns of use (McCarthy and Carter 2002: 27).

One of the major benefits of using corpora is that “they allow researchers, teachers and learners to use great amounts of real data in their study of language instead of having to rely on intuitions and made-up examples” (Schmitt 2000: 68). Corpus-based research grounds its theorising, say Aston and Burnard (1998: 12), in empirical observation, rather than in appeals to linguistic intuition or expert knowledge.

Thus, corpora, says Schmitt (2000: 88), provide a convenient source from which to obtain evidence of the behaviour of many different facets of language: lexical, grammatical and pragmatic. Indeed, in recent years, there has been “a broadening of corpus-based studies into areas traditionally dominated by models of discourse- conversation- and text-

analysis, and increasingly, pragmatics” (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 148). Because of the predominance of lexicography in earlier corpus linguistics, literal meaning remained in the fore of corpus studies. Only recently, have corpus linguists turned their attention to the area of figurative language use. The first to use corpus data as the empirical test bed for their hypotheses on hyperbole were McCarthy and Carter (2004).

A major advantage of corpora is the automatic retrievability of context, so vital to interpret and recognise figurative language. As far as the study of figuration is concerned, McCarthy and Carter (2004: 149) claim that “the use of large corpora offers new insights with theoretical implications for the study of tropes”. As they clearly put it:

The benefits of a corpus-based study are manifold. If tropes such as hyperbole and metaphor can only be understood in context, then a large corpus offers many different contexts brought together under one body of data. If certain semantic fields are regularly exploited for hyperbole, then the corpus enables verification of such tendencies, or equally, may reveal gaps in the fields where potential items are not exploited. But most importantly, if hyperbole is viewed interactively (i.e. via the conditions of joint pretense, listener involvement, relevance and appropriateness to context, social acceptability, typical sources of evaluation, etc.), then the corpus provides us with just that evidence of interactivity: key, recurring items such as footing-shift markers, listener acceptance tokens (*yes, yeah, mm*, and so on), laughter, and listeners’ own further contributions to the emerging hyperbolic context. The corpus also shows us that hyperboles are not encoded solely in lexico-grammatical items: syntactic and discursal strategies such as polysyndeton, repetition and clustering of hyperbolic items suggest that hyperboles (and other tropes) need to be examined over turn-boundaries and within the constraints of placement and sequencing that conversation analysis has always highlighted, albeit with limited data samples. Recurrence and patterning, in terms of placement and sequence, is a powerful methodology which can combine the insightful qualitative categories of conversation- and discourse analysis with the quantitative, automatically retrievable evidence of corpora. (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 175-6)

The use of corpora -it might be added- enables the analyst to determine if the presence of an exaggeration in discourse is usually explicitly marked by a set of signals or cues, such as labels, downgraders, shifts in footing, etc. It also allows researchers to examine hyperbole in a wide range of different genres. Indeed, to a large extent, the impetus for

categorising genres came from the practical need of corpus linguists (Östman and Virtanen 1995: 246).

Based on the methodological observations above, this dissertation combines pragmatic and conversational-analytical methods with a corpus-based approach to the study of hyperbole in interaction, thus following McCarthy and Carter's (2002: 37) proposal that "quantitative and qualitative analyses should complement each other".

3.4.2. The British National Corpus

Nowadays, the term "corpus" usually refers to a collection of computer-readable texts, whether spoken or written, but always produced in an actual context of language use. The data upon which my analysis is based has been extracted from the British National Corpus (BNC, henceforth). The BNC can be defined as a collection of over 4000 samples, totalling over 100 million words, of contemporary British English, both spoken and written, stored in electronic form. It was "designed to characterize the state of contemporary British English in its various social and generic uses" (Aston and Burnard 1998: 28). The BNC was created by a consortium led by Oxford University Press together with major dictionary publishers Longman and Chambers, and research centres at the Universities of Lancaster and Oxford, and at the British Library.

It has been said that the BNC is a balanced, rather than a register-specific or dialect-specific corpus, "insofar as it attempts to capture the full range of varieties of language use" (Aston and Burnard 1998: 5). It is also a mixed corpus, containing both written and spoken texts, although this study concentrates on oral discourse, since not a great amount of research exists into everyday spoken hyperbole. The bulk of research has been conducted into written language, specially literary texts, or relies on artificial and elicited data.

Ten percent of the BNC is made up of transcribed spoken material (transcriptions of naturally-occurring speech), totalling about 10 million words. Roughly equal quantities were collected in each of two different ways:

- A demographic component of informal encounters or casual conversations recorded by a socially-stratified sample of respondents, recruited from across the United Kingdom, selected by age, sex, social class and geographic region.

- A context-governed component of more formal encounters (e.g. meetings, debates, lectures, seminars, radio programmes, etc.), categorised by topic and type of interaction.

The BNC spoken sub-corpus is organised into a balanced selection of the following domains (i.e. subject fields): educational, business, institutional, and leisure, taking into account such features as region, level and gender of speakers. Aston and Burnard (1998: 32-3) note that each of these categories can be divided into a range of contexts, namely:

Educational and informative: Lectures, talks and educational demonstrations; news commentaries; classroom interaction, etc.

Business: Company and trade union talks or interviews; business meetings; sales demonstrations, etc.

Institutional: Political speeches; sermons; local and national governmental proceedings, etc.

Leisure: Sports commentaries; broadcast chat shows and phone-ins; club meeting and speeches, etc.

Finally, there is a fifth domain of unclassified texts, here termed “informal”, which mainly refers to casual, informal conversations, normally between relatives and/or friends.

3.4.3. BNC data and items for analysis

Although this is a corpus-based study, the method of data sampling is non-deterministic. The object of study is not a particular hyperbolic word or expression, nor a specific word class or grammatical category. Rather, all instances of exaggeration included in the BNC texts selected for analysis were examined.

Whole conversations were scrutinised in search of hyperboles. This choice was motivated by the interactive nature of speech. As Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 64) correctly note:

Conversation is interactive, therefore language which is used by one speaker, in one turn, directly affects the language in the next turn. It's quite wrong to take naturally occurring speech and isolate utterances because a great deal of the language interrelates and interweaves across longer stretches of the exchange.

Similarly, Katz (1996: 2) emphasises that a crucial limitation in analyses based on isolated or decontextualized sentences, is that they “ignore the ecology in which we encounter and produce figurative language”.

By considering the entirety of the BNC texts, the whole linguistic context was provided and so a better understanding of the conversations was achieved. But most importantly, this enabled the analysis of certain aspects of the trope that otherwise would have been impossible to analyse, such as the presence of bursts of exaggerations or other figurative language forms, the interactive or collaborative dimension of the trope, the interactional nature of the speech acts in which hyperbole was embedded, etc.

The present study relies on the BNC as the primary source on which to base the analysis of hyperbole in interaction. The corpus analysed includes a list of 18 conversations, and together they add up to around 52,000 words. The texts examined belong to the five domains in which the BNC spoken sub-corpus is organised, namely: educational, business, institutional, leisure and informal. Usually for each domain, several texts in different contexts or speech genres were examined. Although the size of text varies considerably—informal conversations may be only a few minutes long, while the parliamentary debate lasts for hours- I tried to collect roughly equal quantities of words for every domain. An upper limit of around 10,000 words per domain was imposed, so that viable comparisons among them could be established. This means that although the bulk of texts were selected at random, a few choices were determined by size constraints (so that the whole domain did not exceed, at least not too greatly, the established size limit). In those cases, conversation size was inevitably a constraining factor.

Tables 3.1. and 3.2. below depict the number and size of texts and domains extracted for analysis from the BNC spoken sub-corpus, with a description of the range of contexts included in those domains.

I would like to emphasise two main characteristics of the data examined: firstly, the authenticity or naturalness of the spoken material for analysis. It is based on naturalistic conversational data, rather than artificial or elicited material; and secondly, the wide variety of contexts of use and interaction environments examined. Nevertheless, a word of caution is important here. The list of hyperboles extracted from the BNC conversations examined, although large and diverse, has to be viewed as a sampling rather than a

catalogue, since hyperbole is a creative act and “the possibilities for linguistic creativity are infinite” (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 150).

BNC domain	Text code and description	Word length
Informal	KB6 > Conversation recorded by Angela	1,142
	KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann	825
	KBA > Conversation recorded by Anthony	273
	KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra	3,659
	KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig	1,768
	KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances	2,245
	KPE > Conversation recorded by Grace	301
Leisure	J8J > Drugs: television discussion	5,339
	F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview	4,978
Educational & informative	F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on word processing	2,174
	F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food	3,516
	JNR > Seminar presentation at conference	1,613
	FMB > Science lesson: year 10	3,496
Business	K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting	3,615
	G5M > Medical consultation	1,914
	JJC > Estate agency: interview	1,121
	FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy	3,977
Institutional	JSH > House of Commons debate	10,234

Table 3.1. Number and size of conversations examined from the BNC spoken sub-corpus

BNC domain	Number of texts	Word length
Informal	7	10,213
Leisure	2	10,317
Educational & informative	4	10,799
Business	4	10,627
Institutional	1	10,234

Table 3.2. Size and quantity of texts per domain examined from the BNC spoken sub-corpus

This sample corpus, with its 52,000 words of speech, hopefully, will enable me to offer a broad picture of the use of hyperbole in interaction. The corpus was large and varied enough so that the results obtained could be said to be sufficiently indicative and representative of the everyday use of this figure in contemporary English, as represented by the BNC data.

Having laid out the methodological considerations pertinent for the present study, I turn now to present the different analyses and their results in the next chapters.

4. DEFINITION, IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF HYPERBOLE

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt firstly to provide a comprehensive definition and characterisation of hyperbole, hopefully, one that enables us to clearly differentiate it from other related figures, such as understatement and verbal irony. Secondly, the criteria for identifying and labelling this trope in a corpus such as the BNC is discussed. Once the hyperbolic items present in the data have been identified, a lexico-grammatical taxonomy of the different linguistic forms that hyperbole takes in those texts is provided. Similarly, overstated items are classified from a semantic-etymological perspective. Another classificatory criterion is the extreme or pole of the scale those items refer to, whether auxesis or meiosis. Finally, the complex nature of hyperbole, as a trope that may co-occur with other figures of speech, will be examined.

4.2. Definition of hyperbole

Based largely on the literature reviewed earlier, hyperbole is here defined in the following terms:

1. Hyperbole is a subjective act

Hyperbolic utterances depict in disproportionate terms some real state of affairs. From this, it follows that hyperbole is a subjective act. As Falk (1990: 46) correctly notes, “an overstatement has in it an element of subjective evaluation of an objective fact”.

2. Hyperbole produces a contrast with reality

The disproportion involved in an exaggeration naturally produces a contrast with reality. It seems that a defining feature of hyperbole is the notion of “contrast” (Colston

and O'Brien 2000a, 2000b). Hyperbolic utterances present a contrast between the state of affairs depicted in the utterance and the real state of affairs, between the semantic or "utterance meaning" of the comments (Dascal 1987, 1989) and the referent situation.

This notion has also been termed "incongruity" (e.g. Gibbs 1994a), "nonveridicality" (e.g. Kreuz and Roberts 1995), "counterfactuality" (e.g. Kreuz 1996, McCarthy and Carter 2004), and even "conversational implicature" (e.g. Grice 1975, Brown and Levinson 1987). All of them convey the idea of disproportion between the utterance and the reality of the situation.

However, the notion of contrast, although useful, poses problems because contrast is not a unique feature of hyperbole. Other tropes also establish a contrast between utterance meaning and reality, namely irony and understatement. Fogelin (1988: 16) was the first to point to this in the study of non-literal language in describing "understatement, irony, and hyperbole as contrasting figures of speech" since "in each case the speaker says something mutually understood to be in need of correction". If several tropes present contrasts, it seems that another criterion is needed in order to clearly differentiate hyperbole from other figures of speech.

3. The type of contrast established by hyperbole is one of magnitude

This problem has been partly solved by Colston and O'Brien (2000b) in drawing a distinction between contrast of kind and contrast of magnitude. They demonstrated that the contrast in hyperbole and understatement is one of magnitude, while irony produces contrasts of kind. Hyperbole uses contrasts of magnitude because very negative comments are made about moderately negative situations (p. 179). Similarly, understatements also present a contrast of magnitude because moderately negative comments are made about very negative situations (p. 186). On the contrary, verbal irony produces contrasts of kind because positive comments are made about negative situations (p. 180). Although Colston and O'Brien (2000b) take negative situations as a reference point, the objective fact or referent situation can also be positive.

Contrasts of kind, say Colston and O'Brien (2000b: 193), are fundamentally different from contrasts of magnitude because of the categorical difference they supply. In contrasts of kind, the mentioned and referent situation belong to different categories or kinds, since

irony is frequently thought of as a “speech form that describes a situation in terms that are seemingly the opposite of reality” (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1563). Verbal irony has traditionally been considered a contrary to fact statement⁷. In contrasts of magnitude, however, the mentioned and referent situation belong to the same category, but there is a difference in degree, whether up or down along the continuum within that category.

Although this distinction allows us to differentiate irony from hyperbole and understatement, a further criterion that enables us to clearly distinguish hyperbole from understatement is needed, since both figures produce contrasts of magnitude.

4. Hyperbole is an exaggeration, a form of extremity or excess

The key to distinguishing between hyperbole and understatement is the presence or absence of an element of excess in the utterance. Although both hyperbole and understatement depict some real state of affairs in disproportionate terms, only hyperbole adds to excess. With hyperbole extreme comments are made about relatively moderate situations, while with understatement moderate comments are made about extreme situations. For example, describing someone as *a little bit intoxicated* when in fact he/she is very drunk. Hyperbole works the other way round, describing someone as *smashed*, when they are actually a bit drunk.

Irony may also involve an element of extremity or exaggeration, although not necessarily. Indeed, hyperbole often co-occurs with verbal irony and has been pointed out as a reliable cue for ironic interpretations. But while in ironic utterances speakers say the opposite of what they really mean, hyperbole *per se* does not reverse polarity. As Ravazzoli (1978: 75) correctly notes, both hyperbole and irony are based on exaggeration: the former for asserting, the latter for negating.

The distinction among hyperbole, irony and understatement discussed above is succinctly explained and summarised by Fogelin (1988: 13-4).

⁷ Recent work calls into question whether the contrast in irony must necessarily involve a contradiction between what speakers say and what they mean. Attardo (2000: 814) argues that irony does not necessarily indicate the opposite or the converse of the literal meaning and quotes Schaffer’s (1982) claim that irony “merely points to the possibility that the speaker’s meaning may be other than that of the literal content of the utterance”.

I hold that ironic utterances function by invoking mutually recognized corrective responses. Their *point* is to invoke mutually recognized corrective responses. But this is not a unique feature of ironic judgements, for other figures of speech function in the same way. Consider understatement (meiosis). Here I say something weaker than I am in a position to say; for example, I say that someone has had something to drink when, in fact, he is utterly intoxicated. The corrective judgement goes: “What do you mean he has had *something* to drink? He’s plastered”. My remark counts as meiosis when it is mutually recognized that I have spoken with the intention of invoking this corrective judgement.

How does irony differ from meiosis? Irony reverses polarity; thus ironic “praise” becomes blame. My impression is that people will call something understatement if (true or false) it invokes a mutually recognized corrective judgement toward the extreme (on some scale). Understatement does not reverse polarity, but instead invites a *strengthening* correction.

Hyperbole works the other way round. Here I say something stronger than I have a right to say with the intention of having it corrected away from the extreme, but still to something *strong* that preserves the *same polarity*. When someone claims to be famished, he is typically indicating that he is very hungry. Hyperbole is an exaggeration on the side of truth. These contrasts are reflected in the following diagram:

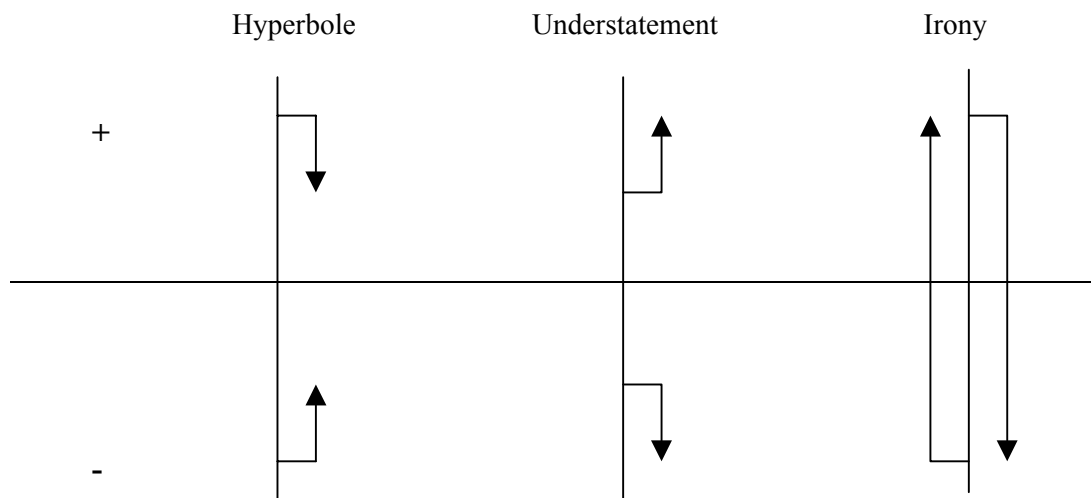


Figure 4.1. Fogelin’s (1988) depiction of the corrective responses to irony, under- and overstatement

5. Hyperbole is twofold: auxesis vs. meiosis

Hyperbole is defined as a process of exaggeration, whether amplifying, magnifying, or just the contrary, minimising, diminishing the reality of the situation. It either upscales or

downscales in excess an objective fact. Hyperbolic expressions can therefore be classified according to the extreme of the scale they occupy: upper or lower end along the continuum of some relevant dimension. Thus, two kinds of hyperbole are identified by Smith (1657: 55): *auxesis* and *meiosis*, that is, the exaggerated intensification, expanding or enlarging of an entity and the exaggerated reduction or attenuation of it, respectively.

Auxesis is an exaggerated increasing. It is when for the purposes of increasing and amplifying, we put a graver and more substantial term instead of a neutral word (Smith 1657: 55). *Meiosis*, on the other hand, is when we decrease, diminish or repress excessively. It is when less is spoken, yet more is understood; or when for extenuation sake we use a lighter word or term than the matter requires; or when we put a lesser word for a greater (p. 56). Although they are at opposite ends of a continuum (Fraser 1983: 34, Channell 1994: 89), with *auxesis* occupying the upper end of the scale (i.e. upscaling reality) and *meiosis* occupying the lower extreme of the continuum (i.e. downscaling reality), they are not separate or independent figures, as some scholars have claimed.

5.1. Distinction between *meiosis* and understatement

At this point a clear distinction must be drawn between *meiosis* and understatement, two distinct figures which have often been misunderstood and used interchangeably, as synonyms, in the literature on figurative language. *Meiosis* downscales in excess some relatively moderate state of affairs in the real world, keeping it to a minimum. For example, when to mean that my knowledge on something is limited I say *I know nothing*. Understatement, however, upscales or downscales some relatively extreme situation in the real world to a moderate one. For example, if I say that *Einstein was quite intelligent* instead of *a genius* or if instead of saying *that my account is badly in the red* I say that *I'm a little bit short of money*.

It seems that understatement is frequently confused with hyperbole that exaggerates a smaller-than-expected quantity or quality (i.e. *meiosis*). Colston and Keller (1998: 506) distinguish two different types of hyperbole on the grounds of the interaction between the type of comment and whether the unexpected situation involved a quantity that was less or more than expected. Because hyperbole exaggerates the ensuing state of affairs to contrast them with the expected state of affairs, when the quantity of an ensuing event is of greater

magnitude or degree than expected, a hyperbolic comment about that event is not constrained since one can exaggerate a quantity that is more than expected up to infinity. By contrast, when the quantity of an ensuing event is of lesser magnitude or degree than was expected, a hyperbolic comment is constrained because one can only exaggerate a quantity that is less than expected to the point of saying that the quantity was zero. Thus, to exaggerate the scarce number of people in the streets of my city when there is a World Cup football match on TV, I may say *There is not a soul out there!*

The basic difference between these two distinct figures can be formulated as follows: hyperbole describes moderate situations in the real world as extreme, whereas understatement describes extremes situations in the real world as moderate. The key to distinguishing between them is whether the extremity is present in the utterance or in the real state of affairs. If I say *I have hundreds of students in my class* when I only have forty-five, the extremity or exaggeration is in my utterance, in my words not in the real world. However, if talking to my three-year-old niece I say *A few Americans died because of terrorist acts the 11th of September 2000*, when I know that thousands of Americans were killed that day, the extremity, the abuse, lies in reality, in the objective fact, not in my utterance.

This leads us to another basic difference between these two figures of speech. Hyperbole and understatement significantly differ in communicative emphasis: hyperbole serves to intensify whereas understatement is used to moderate or mitigate. Thus, Kreuz and Roberts (1993: 154) note that the nature of understatement is to “de-emphasize”.

Another argument for considering understatement as a distinct phenomenon from hyperbole, whether auxesis or meiosis, is that understatement has often been considered a form of verbal irony “but here the situation is described in terms that fall between the opposite and the reality of the situation” (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1563).

6. Hyperbole may exaggerate a quantity or a quality

Although references to the element of “quantification” predominate in most definitions of hyperbole, apart from the quantitative scale, the qualitative or evaluative dimension of the trope deserves special mention. Whether positively or negatively, overstatement is a powerful tool for subjective evaluation. Although this aspect is latent in definitions and

clearly manifest in overstated examples, it has only been treated explicitly by a few researchers (e.g. Gracián 1969, Mayoral 1994). Thus, overstatement may respond either to an exalting-condemning or else maximising-minimising end. Yet, in practice, quantification and evaluation often co-occur, as we shall see in section 4.4.3.

7. Hyperbole may vary in the degree of inflation or exaggeration

Since different degrees of contrast can be established between utterance and reality, hyperbole may vary in the degree of inflation or exaggeration. This implies that there is a wide range of overstated utterances, exaggerating reality to varying degrees. This is a typical feature of overstatement that distinguishes it from other tropes, since “We talk of ‘slightly exaggerated’ and ‘greatly exaggerated’ but never the somewhat synecdochic use of language” (Fraser 1983: 34). The degree of inflation depends on the semantic divergence between mentioned and referent situation within a disambiguating context. Thus, Colston and Keller (1998: 502) remark that “speakers can use a continuum of inflation ranging from slight to outlandish”. They distinguish three levels of hyperbole: slight, moderate and extreme forms of exaggeration.

8. Hyperbole is not normally heard as a lie

Although hyperbole deviates from the actual truth, this exaggeration is not normally heard as an act of lying. It is usually accepted by the hearer without challenge because listeners adjust the utterance to fit the real world in an appropriate way rather than interpreting it literally. This does not mean, however, that listeners may not understand hyperbole in a literal way for several reasons, for example because they have missed the speaker’s exaggeration or pretend to do so, because they may wish to disagree with the speaker, etc.

9. Hyperbole exists independent of the speaker’s intention

Gibbs (1994a: 391) advocates a distinction between hyperbole and simple overstatement, by which a person unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a proposition

that is stronger than the evidence warrants, whereas hyperbole is fundamentally intentional. Kreuz and Roberts (1993: 154) also support this intentional component in defining hyperbole as “deliberate exaggeration”. The obvious difficulty here, as McCarthy and Carter (2004: 153) note, is how to operationalise a speaker-internal notion of intention since the same proposition can be overstatement in one person's mouth and hyperbole in another's.

4.2.1. Summary of definition

Taking all these criteria together, the definition of hyperbole may be briefly summarised as follows: hyperbole is a figure whereby the quantity or quality of an objective fact is, whether purposely or inadvertently, subjectively inflated or deflated in varying degrees but always to excess in an utterance which listeners do not normally interpret literally or perceive as a lie.

4.3. Identification of hyperbole

The task of identifying exaggeration is not always easy, unless we know both the referent and mentioned situation to contrast them and so unequivocally determine that the utterance has been expressed in terms of extremity or excess. This poses problems because quite often the referent situation is not explicitly stated or perhaps can only be vaguely identified. This is closely related to the indeterminacy associated with hyperbole, in the sense that in overstated utterances there is only a resemblance between mentioned and referent situation, and listeners are given no precise indication of the actual state of affairs.

Context plays a central role in the perception of hyperbole. For this reason, it has been argued that this figure cannot be studied out of the realm of pragmatics, since exaggeration cannot be understood in isolation or decontextualized situations. Contextual information, not only linguistic but also extralinguistic (situational and referential), allows us to determine whether the utterance must be interpreted hyperbolically or not. It is a purely pragmatic phenomenon, since it is only the full context or context (for the written or spoken expression, respectively) which can determine the presence of an exaggeration in discourse (Ravazzoli 1978: 75).

Our knowledge of the world may also be an aid to labelling hyperbole. As Kreuz *et al.* (1998: 96-7) note, “world knowledge allows listeners to correctly *detect* statements that are meant figuratively and to have greater certainty about these interpretations”. Because of our knowledge of the world we know that nobody can *cry an ocean of tears* or *be dying to meet someone*. So the test of physical impossibility or high unlikeness will be of considerable assistance in dealing with a large number of utterances in the present study, but the particular context will always be the defining factor (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 152).

4.3.1. Hyperbole identification in the BNC data

In the literature on hyperbole, the issue of identification is usually overlooked or taken for granted. If dealt with at all, it is limited to the counterfactuality or nonveridicality cue (i.e. a discrepancy between utterance and reality), and so presupposes knowledge of the objective fact or referent situation. If not, the illustrative samples are often so extreme and impossible that they are easily labelled as clearly exaggerated.

Not all cases of hyperbole, however, are as easily identifiable in the BNC data. It is not always clear whether an utterance is intended literally or hyperbolically. As Kreuz (1996: 25) correctly notes, “The hyperbolic cue might be helpful, but there are many utterances for which it cannot be employed” since it “presupposes that a discrepancy between the utterance and reality can be computed, but it often cannot be”. Given that the referent situation is hardly ever mentioned, the context is sometimes ambiguous or impoverished, and the test of sheer impossibility is not always applicable in our data, how can we identify hyperbole?

4.3.1.1. McCarthy and Carter’s (2004) framework for labelling hyperbole

McCarthy and Carter (2004), who have examined this figure in the CANCODE spoken corpus, have been the first to suggest a set of criteria for identifying and labelling hyperbole. These criteria taken together provide a reliable instrument by which most clear cases of hyperbole may be captured, since it allows to exclude non-hyperbolic uses of expressions.

Hyperbolic episodes in the talk, say McCarthy and Carter (2004: 162-3), must display at least three of the following characteristics:

- Disjunction with context (Norrick 1982): the speaker's utterance seems at odds with the general context. [...]
- Shifts in footing⁸: there is evidence (e.g. discourse marking) that a shift in footing is occurring to a conversational frame where impossible worlds or plainly counterfactual claims may appropriately occur.
- Counterfactuality not perceived as a lie (Swartz 1976, Bhaya 1985, Clark 1996): the listener accepts without challenge a statement which is obviously counterfactual. [...]
- Impossible worlds (Clift 1999): speaker and listener between them engage in the construction of fictitious worlds where impossible, exaggerated events take place. [...]
- Listener take-up: the listener reacts with supportive behaviour such as laughter or assenting back-channels markers and/or contributes further to the counterfactuality, impossibility, contextual disjunction, etc.
- Extreme case formulations (Pomerantz 1986) and intensification: the assertion is expressed in the most extreme way (e.g. adjectives such as *endless*, *massive*) and/or extreme intensifiers such as *literally*, *nearly*, *totally* are used. These are not necessarily counterfactual or absurd worlds, as many may be heard as (semi-) conventional metaphors (e.g. someone being *absolutely covered* in mud/grease/etc.).
- Syntactic support: syntactic devices (e.g. polysyndeton, as in *loads and loads and loads*, or complex modification such as *really great big long pole*) are used to underline the amplification of the expression.
- Relevant interpretability: the trope is interpretable as relevant to the speech act being performed, and is interpreted as figurative within its context, though there may also be evidence of literal interpretations being exploited for interactive/affective purposes.

4.3.1.2. Further hyperbolic cues

To the aforesaid criteria, several cues that may incline us towards a hyperbolic interpretation, might be added. Among them is the use of labels. Speakers may inform the

⁸ Goffman (1979) defines footing as “participants’ alignment, or set, or stance, or posture” (p. 4), and shifts in footing as “a change in the alignment we take up for ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame of events” (p. 5).

listener about how their words are to be taken and make explicit their intention to exaggerate. As Fraser (1983: 33) notes:

There are a variety of ways in which the speaker, should he be so inclined, can notify his listener that the present utterance should be interpreted figuratively: that is, what the speaker says is not one of the semantic interpretation of the sentence uttered. One way to notify the hearer is to actually announce your intention. Beginning your utterance with, “Speaking metaphorically...”, “At the risk of exaggerating...”, “Figuratively speaking...”, “If I may engage in hyperbole...”, or “In a manner of speaking...”, serves to put the hearer on notice.

There are other less explicit ways. Brown and Levinson (1987: 104), for example, have noted that exaggeration is often done with exaggerated intonation, stress and other aspects of prosody, as well as with intensifying modifiers. Likewise, for Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 29), hyperbolic statements, like ironic utterances, are typically accompanied by heavy stress and slow speaking rate. Although this kind of evidence is rarely encountered in our data, since the BNC transcripts hardly provide any kind of suprasegmental information, several linguistic markers such as the use of exclamation marks, exclamative words and interjections may serve to reflect an exaggerated intonation.

Although apparently a paradox, the use of downgraders, defined as “markers which play down the impact X’s utterance is likely to have on Y” (House and Kasper 1981: 166), are important signals of hyperbole, too. Among them, House and Kasper list the use of hedges, described as adverbials by means of which the speaker avoids a precise propositional specification (e.g. *kind of, sort of, somehow, more or less*). Downtoners, such as *perhaps, possibly*, may also mitigate the extremity of exaggerated remarks. They are “sentence modifiers which are used by X in order to modulate the impact his utterance is likely to have on Y” (p. 167). Minus committers, e.g. *I think, I guess, I believe, I suppose, etc.*, are “sentence modifiers which are used to lower the degree to which X commits himself to the state of affairs referred to in the proposition. X thus explicitly characterizes his utterance as his personal opinion” (*ibid.*), so that it cannot be challenged or refuted. Approximators, such as *almost* and *nearly*, can also be included under the heading of downgraders.

The rationale for the contrast between hyperbole (and so intensification) on the one hand and downgraders (whose aim is mitigation) on the other can be explained because speakers, aware of the extremity of their words, attempt to defend or protect themselves

against possible challenges to the legitimacy of their words, undue accusations of falsity, etc. that might result from a literal interpretation of the utterance.

4.4. Data analysis

4.4.1. Items for analysis

The number of apparently hyperbolic items in our data, that is, where the overall context leans towards a hyperbolic interpretation, amounts to 343. For the purposes of categorisation, items in this chapter will be treated individually. See the appendix for their identification in context.

The tables below depict the number of hyperbolic items examined per text and BNC domain (i.e. informal, leisure, educational, business, institutional), and the length of texts.

Domain	Text code and description	Word length	Occurrences
Informal	KB6 > Conversation recorded by Angela	1,142	12
	KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann	825	8
	KBA > Conversation recorded by Anthony	273	6
	KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra	3,659	29
	KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig	1,768	22
	KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances	2,245	15
	KPE > Conversation recorded by Grace	301	5
Leisure	J8J > Drugs: television discussion	5,339	36
	F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview	4,978	47
Educational & informative	F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on processing	2,174	18
	F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food	3,516	9
	JNR > Seminar presentation at conference	1,613	6
	FMB > Science lesson: year 10	3,496	5
Business	K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting	3,615	15
	G5M > Medical consultation	1,914	18
	JJC > Estate agency: interview	1,121	9
	FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy	3,977	34
Institutional	JSH > House of Commons debate	10,234	49

Table 4.2. Occurrences of hyperbolic items per BNC text

BNC domain	Number of texts	Word length	Occurrences
Informal	7	10,213	97
Leisure	2	10,317	83
Educational & informative	4	10,799	38
Business	4	10,627	76
Institutional	1	10,234	49
Total	18	52,208	343

Table 4.3. Occurrences of hyperbolic items per domains, their length and textual components

In order to facilitate classification, hyperbolic items rather than hyperbolic utterances, which may consist of several hyperbolic items, will be considered here. By hyperbolic item I mean the minimal unit of sense or meaning, whether a word, phrase or expression, which *per se*, given the appropriate context, conveys an idea of excess or extremity. In turn, different hyperbolic items may co-occur within a single utterance and form hyperbolic clusters (e.g. *lots of people have got nothing to do; everybody's asleep in a minute*, etc.). Overstated items may also modify or be modified by other hyperbolic elements. This type of construction often responds to the following syntactic pattern: adverb + adjective/noun (e.g. *totally illegible, absolutely another world*), or adjective + noun (e.g. *total mess, sheer hell*).

4.4.2. Lexico-grammatical repertoire

Hyperbole is realised in a wide range of linguistic forms in our transcripts. Mostly the devices are lexical. This is in line with Spitzbardt's (1963: 278) claim that "most of the devices of hyperbolic speech, as for example certain nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, or the application of metaphor and simile are of a lexical kind and belong to the field of semantics". But these are not the only means to express an overstatement. Thus, Norrick (1982: 170) notes that hyperbole is a pragmatic category that can be realised in any word class or lexico-grammatical configuration. Grammatical forms and the co-operation of lexical and grammatical means are also able to bring about an overstatement.

Below is the lexico-grammatical repertoire for overstatement in our data, with the number of occurrences in brackets if the same item re-occurs.

Lexical overstatement is not limited to nominal expressions. It can occur in any major word class. So, apart from nominal overstatement, hyperbolic verbs, adjectives and adverbs can be found too. Major or open word classes are clearly pervasive in our transcripts. Out of 343, 216 hyperbolic items, representing 62.9% of overstatement in our data, belong to a major word class. Among them, adjectives clearly prevail (28.8%), followed by adverbs (14.2%) and nouns (14.2%).

The category of noun phrases consists mainly of metaphors and quantitative expressions. Note also the use of emphatic plurals, such as *loads*, *lots* and *ages*. This is the list of noun phrases in our data: *a disaster*, *a disgrace*, *a paradise*, *hell* (2), *a hell (of a lot)*, *limbo* (2), *fits*, *mental health problems*, *a moustache*, *a beard* (2), *riding jodhpurs*, *another world*, *a mess* (5), *the evening*, *the weekend*, *a box room*, *dinosaurs*, *squeals*, *a shock*, *a mushrooming of*, *the whole of*, *the reviving*, *their utmost*, *a load of*, *loads of* (3), *a pile of*, *compost heap*, *lots*, *lots of* (8), *ages* (3), *a flea on a dog's back*.

Hyperbolic adjectives are by far the most recurrent word class for overstatement in our data. Adjective phrases include: *lovely* (7), *gorgeous*, *wonderful* (8), *brilliant* (3), *great* (8), *ideal*, *wicked*, *impressive* (2), *smashing* (3), *excellent* (2), *precious*, *(an) awful (lot of)* (6), *horrible* (4), *terrible* (4), *pathetic*, *obnoxious*, *sickening*, *relentless*, *illegible* (3), *lifelong*, *asleep* (3), *absolute*, *sheer* (2), *total*, *full*, *whole*, *massive*, *tremendous (amount of)*, *enormous (amount of)*, *enormous*, *huge*, *vast*, *mammoth*, *tiny*, *minuscule*, *vital* (4), *unbelievable* (2), *extraordinary* (2), *(not) overpowering*. To them, the set of predicative -ing or -ed deverbal adjectives must be added: *starving* (4), *reviving*, *freezing*, *thrilled*, *devastated*, *amazed*, *drained* (2), *revived* and *shocked*.

There is also an overwhelming presence of hyperbolic adverbs. Most of them are intensifiers or adverbs of degree, which can be broadly defined as adverbs that “express the degree or extent of a certain quality or state” (Huang 1975: 21). Adverb phrases in our transcripts are: *completely* (3), *absolutely* (5), *totally* (3), *fully*, *entirely*, *extremely* (5), *infinitely*, *definitely*, *immensely*, *terribly*, *dead*, *most + adjective* (3), *frantically*, *desperately*, *crazily*, *lovely*, *literally*, *remotely*, *instantly*, *never* (5), *always* (3), *forever*, *everywhere* (4), *not at all* (3).

Verbal overstatements also feature in our data, but their presence (5.5%), compared to the previous word classes, is almost negligible. The inventory of verb phrases includes the following items: *crack(-s) up* (2), *astonish*, *mess up*, *ruin*, *starve*, *give a headache*, *scream*,

(don't) move, killing, rolling in, blasting away, living on (drugs), erupted, couldn't believe, can't resist (2), can't breathe, coining money.

Although to a lesser extent, hyperbole also makes use of minor or closed word classes to express extremity, and so one can also find overstated numbers, quantifiers and prepositions.

- Prepositions: *next to, throughout, beyond.*
- Numerical hyperbole: *two days, six moths, ten times, two inches, an inch, a second, a minute (13), ten minutes, an hour, a week, two thousand, four thousand, half a million, not half as much, one and half million, three hundred million.*
- Quantifiers: *every (4), everything (6), everybody (6), everybody else, every one, not any (2), anything (2), not anything (4), no (4), no one, no one else, nobody, nothing (14), nothing else (2), all (26).*

Although rarely discussed in the literature on hyperbole, quantifiers seem to be one of the most productive strategies in the creation of this figure. Indeed, they are, after adjectives, the most prominent grammatical category for hyperbole in our data (21.8%). Mostly they function as heads of phrases, rarely as determiners.

In addition, overstatement is illustrated through the following lexico-grammatical structures:

- Superlative degree: *the most (+ adjective + noun) (3), the worst (+ adjective + noun).*
- Idiomatic expressions: *a recipe for disaster, day in, day out, gets on your nerves, get out of me head, went haywire, thrown on the scrap heap.*
- Similes or comparisons: *like a horse's nose bag, like a lifetime, like pure hot milk.*
- Whole sentences or clauses: *when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori, shock ... like when my husband gets a telephone bill, (no sort of worse than) coming off erm having a bad cold.*
- Polysyndetic structures: *ages and ages and ages, months and months and months.*
- Complex modification: *great big (2), little tiny.*

Structures of polysyndeton and complex modification have only been explicitly treated by McCarthy and Carter (2004). They have been the first to suggest that these syntactic patterns generate very rich exaggerations. "Polysyndetic structures are a feature of both numerical and temporal hyperboles, and are very effective in 'stretching' the vertical

reference to suggest extremes” (p. 171). The two examples found in our data refer to the slowness of the legal system and although the referent situation could in fact be a plurality of years or months “the coordinated repetition in both cases magnifies the reference to an open-ended extreme and the hyperbole is generated by the syntactic strategy rather than the lexical item *per se*” (*ibid.*).

Text G5M > Medical consultation

PATIENT>: It, it was a big shock that day, when we had that phone call

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: But it was I, you know, to know that you haven't got to fight,

GP>: That's right, yeah.

PATIENT>: t to take him to court.

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: Erm

GP>: But it's a long process. I mean, we have dealings with solicitors for all sorts of things, asking for reports and we send a lot of notes away to have a lot of er [...] medical opinion reports and they take ages to come back. And that's a, these are the preliminary things that the solicitor must go through before they get near court, so

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: *the people*

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: who it's actually, *they're actually dealing with are waiting months and months and months* and er

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: it looks like that in your case. We,

PATIENT>: [...]

GP>: we may well have to provide the medical report on your behalf, yet.

PATIENT>: God.

GP>: But n no-one has approached me to do so.

PATIENT>: No, no.

GP>: So er but it wouldn't surprise me if some sort of medical report on how you are doesn't reach court.

Similarly, in the case of complex modification the repetition of the same idea (e.g. smallness and largeness) through different adjectives helps create a sense of extremity.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

DEANNE>: And I went round town on Saturday ... and I'd gone more or less from work as well so ... I'd got my big bag with me and ... ooh, my shoulder! I mean, we're in town

SANDRA>: Oh!

DEANNE>: for a couple of hours. Shoulder were killing me! So when I went, I had to go again on Monday ... I took just my purse in my pocket and thought oh this is bit, cos I mean I knew what I was going for, you know, weren't looking round for anything in particular ...

and I thought this is bit risky! *So I nipped in and bought one of them **little tiny** bag*, I've never had tiny bag before.
 SANDRA>: [laugh]
 DEANNE>: And er, ooh I love it! Every time I go out now I keep chucking this little bag [laughing] over my shoulder
 SANDRA>: Oh!
 DEANNE>: it's great, you know! *So used to having a **great big** thing, I am.*
 SANDRA>: Yeah.
 DEANNE>: I think the bigger bag you put, the more you su rubbish
 SANDRA>: Rubbi Oh!
 DEANNE>: you put in it.

The table below depicts in terms of occurrences and percentages the lexico-grammatical repertoire for hyperbole in our data.

Lexical and grammatical word classes	Occurrences	Percentages
Nouns	49	14.2%
Adjectives	99	28.8%
Adverbs	49	14.2%
Verbs	19	5.5%
-----	----	-----
Major word classes	216	62.9%
Prepositions	3	0.8%
Numerical expressions	28	8.1%
Quantifiers	75	21.8%
-----	----	-----
Minor word classes	106	30.9%
Superlative degree	4	1.1%
Idioms	6	1.7%
Similes	3	0.8%
Whole sentences/clauses	3	0.8%
Polysyndeton	2	0.5%
Complex modification	3	0.8%
-----	----	-----
Lexico-grammatical strategies	21	6.1%

Table 4.4. Distribution of hyperbolic items over grammatical and lexical categories

4.4.3. Semantic-etymological classification of hyperbole

As we saw in chapter two, some attempts have been made at classifying English adverbs of degree semantically (e.g. Malcev 1963, Spitzbardt 1965, Bolinger 1972), which are useful for establishing a taxonomy of hyperbole from a semantic perspective.

As in Spitzbardt (1965: 355), our typology is similarly divided into two main dimensions: the predominantly objective-gradational and subjective-emotional sphere, here called predominantly quantitative and evaluative dimension, respectively. The former upscales or downscales with excess a quantity or magnitude. The latter involves a subjective evaluation which clearly shows the speaker's emotions and attitudes, whether positive or negative, towards the objective fact being assessed.

In practice, however, this division poses problems because some items share features from both dimensions. This overlapping can be clearly seen in examples, such as *terribly* naive, an *awful* lot of money, *dead* small or a *hell* of a lot, where there is a certain move from the field of evaluation to the field of quantification, but keeping their negative connotations. Similarly, the hyperbolic items referring to the quantitative dimension often assume positive or negative connotations in context. Recall Mayoral's (1994: 243) claim:

[...] tampoco parece que sea del todo posible pensar en una dimensión estrictamente cuantitativa: “engrandecedora/empequeñecedora” de la realidad representada, que no vaya asociada a un tiempo a una actitud valorativa: “enaltecedora o degradadora” o, lo que es lo mismo, “laudatoria o vituperadora”, de dicha realidad por parte del yo textual.

This overlapping is succinctly explained by Breckle (1963: 31; quoted in Spitzbardt 1965: 354-5) in claiming that in a semantic analysis of words objective-logical components are fused with emotional elements. Within the total content of a linguistic sign, says Breckle, both the category of objective conditions and that of connotative conditions are closely united. For this reason I will talk about predominance of one or the other dimension, rather than absoluteness when classifying hyperbolic items into semantic fields.

My semantic-etymological taxonomy is organised around major semantic domains, which in turn fall into different semantic fields. These semantic fields and domains are organised around an idea or several related ideas. By semantic field, following Spitzbardt (1965: 355), I mean “certain groupings of words whose lexical unity is determined by

criteria of synonymy or semantic neighbourhood”. As the possibility of complete synonymy is doubtful, hyperbolic items will be analysed according to principles of semantic analogy rather than pure synonymy.

The division into domains, both for the evaluative and quantitative dimension, is threefold: impact/singularity, positive and negative evaluation for the evaluative component and purity, quantity/measure and magnitude for the quantitative or gradational sphere.

Positive evaluation, which conveys approval, admiration or praise, comprises the following semantic fields:

- Idea of life, heaven: *revived, reviving* (2), *vital* (4), *paradise*.
- Idea of perfection, magnificence: *ideal, excellent* (2), *great* (8), *wonderful* (8).
- Idea of splendour, beauty: *lovely* (8), *gorgeous, precious, brilliant* (3).

Note here that although the repertoire for the domain of positive evaluation is limited, these hyperbolic items re-occur quite frequently in the data, thus suggesting that they have become conventionalised forms to express “kind” hyperbole.

The semantic fields falling under the heading of negative evaluation, which expresses disapproval, criticism or condemnation, are clearly not only more numerous but also more variegated.

- Idea of chaos, disorder: *mess* (5), *mess up, illegible* (3).
- Idea of shrillness, pungency: *scream, squeal, when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori*.
- Idea of badness, evil: *worst, wicked, relentless, obnoxious*.
- Idea of frightfulness: *horrible* (4), *terribly, terrible* (4), *an awful (lot of)* (6).
- Idea of violence, destruction: *disaster, a recipe for disaster, disgrace, devastated, ruin, (not) overpowering, erupted, blasting away, thrown on the scrap heap*.
- Idea of sorrow or pain: *pathetic, sickening, starve, starving* (4), *freezing, can't breathe, drained* (2), *(give me a) headache, (no sort of worse than) coming off er having a bad cold*.
- Idea of deadliness, hell: *killing, dead, limbo* (2), *hell* (2), *a hell of*.
- Idea of physical or psychic abandonment, loss of control: *desperately, frantically, gets on your nerves, get out of me head, crazily, went haywire, mental health problems, in fits, crack(s) me up* (2), *living on drugs, asleep* (3), *can't resist* (2).

Between the positive and negative evaluation categories is the domain of impact and singularity, which conveys the notion of specialty, notability and astonishment while simultaneously assuming either positive or negative connotations. Compare for example *a smashing defeat* vs. *a smashing performance*.

- Idea of impact, singularity: *impressive* (2), *smashing* (3), *amazed*, *astonish*, *shock*, *shocked*, *shock* ... *I like when my husband gets a telephone bill*, *thrilled*, *unbelievable* (2), *couldn't believe*, *extraordinary* (2), *another world*.

Up to this point I have discussed semantic fields belonging to the predominantly evaluative dimension. Now, I will consider hyperbolic items from the quantitative framework.

Under the domain of purity come the following semantic fields:

- Idea of completeness, absoluteness: *completely* (3), *absolute*, *absolutely* (5), *total*, *totally* (3), *entirely*, *full*, *fully*, *whole* (2), *sheer* (2), *(like) pure* (*hot milk*).
- Idea of universality, non-exceptionality: *all* (26), *always* (3), *everywhere* (4), *throughout the world*, *everybody* (6), *everybody else*, *every one*, *every* (4), *everything* (6), *anything* (2).
- Idea of non-existence, nullity: *no* (4), *no one*, *no one else*, *nobody*, *nothing* (14), *nothing else* (2), *not any* (2), *not anything* (4), *never* (5), *not at all* (3).
- Idea of veracity: *literally*, *beyond any doubt*, *definitely*.

The domain of quantity/measure, which involves numbers and words which have become more or less standardised as units of measure, is divided into four semantic fields:

- Time measure: period units: *ten times*, *a second*, *a minute* (13), *ten minutes*, *an hour*, *the evening*, *two days*, *the weekend*, *a week*, *six months*, *months and months and months*, *ages* (3), *ages and ages and ages*.
- Length/linear measures: *two inches*, *an inch*.
- Other numerical expressions: *two thousand*, *four thousand*, *not half as much*, *half a million*, *one and a half million*, *three hundred million*.
- Quantity words: idea of accumulation: *a load*, *loads of* (3), *a pile of*, *compost heap*, *lots* (9).

McCarthy and Carter (2004: 170) have shown that “overall numerical expressions and expressions of accumulation and quantity seem to generate very rich hyperboles”. They have found that amount/quantity words, in particular words denoting accumulation of

things, such as *masses (of)*, *stacks (of)*, *heaps (of)*, *loads (of)*, *tons (of)* and *piles (of)*, are very productive strategies in the creation of hyperbole (p. 179). Only *piles of* is used to any significant extent non-hyperbolically in their data, to refer to objects placed on top of each other; the remaining words are used almost exclusively metaphorically and for overstatement, with the exception of a couple of examples of *loads*, which refer to cargo loads (p. 168).

The domain of magnitude, which consists of natural language forms, as opposed to numerical expressions, is divided into two semantic fields moving around the notions of greatness and smallness as reflected in different proportions or dimensions, such as size, duration, distance, etc.

- Idea of greatness:

Size: *mammoth*, *dinosaurs*, *like a horse's nose bag*, *riding jodhpurs*, *great big (2)*, *massive*, *vast*, *huge*, *enormous*, *enormous (amount of)*, *tremendous (amount of)*, *immensely*.

Superabundance: *moustache*, *beard (2)*, *mushrooming*, *rolling in*, *coining money*.

Duration: *day in, day out*, *forever*, *lifelong*, *like a lifetime*.

Degree, limit: *most (3)*, *the most (3)*, *utmost*, *infinitely*, *extremely (5)*.

Distance: *remotely*.

- Idea of smallness:

Size: *a flea on a dog's back*, *little tiny*, *tiny*, *minuscule*, *box room*.

Distance: *next to*.

Duration: *instantly*.

Motion: *don't move*.

The classification in the semasiological field proves difficult because as Spitzbardt (1965: 354) notes, "in semantics the classificatory boundaries are overlapping to an inconveniently large extent". It goes without saying that here classificatory overlappings are to be expected too. For example, *wonderful* [from French *wundor*: wonder + -ful: exciting wonder] could have also been listed under the heading of impact/singularity, *absolute* [Latin *absolutus* from past part. *absolvere*: free from imperfection or fault] under the heading of perfection, etc.

The following tables reveal the results of the classification into semantic domains and semantic fields (SF, henceforth) in terms of occurrences and percentages.

Semantic domains and fields	Occurrences	Percentages
Evaluative scale	133	38.7%
Positive evaluation	40	11.6%
S.F. life, heaven	8	2.3%
S.F. perfection, magnificence	19	5.5%
S.F. splendour, beauty	13	3.7%
Impact, singularity	17	4.9%
Negative evaluation	76	22.1%
S.F. chaos, disorder	9	2.6%
S.F. shrillness, pungency	3	0.8%
S.F. badness, evil	4	1.1%
S.F. frightfulness	15	4.3%
S.F. violence, destruction	9	2.6%
S.F. sorrow, pain	13	3.7%
S.F. deadliness, hell	7	2.0%
S.F. physical or psychic control loss	16	4.6%

Table 4.5. Distribution of hyperbolic items over semantic domains and fields within the evaluative sphere

Semantic domains and fields	Occurrences	Percentages
Quantitative scale	210	61.2%
Purity	115	33.5%
S.F. completeness, absoluteness	21	6.1%
S.F. universality, non-exceptionality	54	15.7%
S.F. non-existence, nullity	37	10.7%
S.F. veracity	3	0.8%
Number, quantity, measure	50	14.5%
S.F. time measure: period units	27	7.8%
S.F. long/linear measures	2	0.5%
S.F. numerical expressions	6	1.7%
S.F. quantity words: accumulation	15	4.3%
Magnitude:	45	13.1%
S.F. greatness	37	10.7%
S.F. smallness	8	2.3%

Table 4.6. Distribution of hyperbolic items over semantic domains and fields in the quantitative sphere

As shown in the table, items from the quantitative or gradational dimension, representing 61.2% of overstatement in the data, clearly prevail over the evaluative sphere (38.7%). This does not mean, though, that hyperbole is used more often to quantify rather than to assess or evaluate, since, as mentioned above, overstatement is a subjective act, linked to the perception of the speaker. Thus, quantities, numbers and magnitudes often acquire, in context, an element of evaluation. For example, if I say *I have a thousand exams to grade*, it is clear that I am overstating the quantity of exams to correct, but there is also an implicit complaint in my utterance. Within the evaluative domain, negative hyperbolic items predominate (22.1%), especially those referring to the ideas of abandonment, frightfulness and sorrow or pain. They are not only more numerous but also cover a wider range of semantic fields.

Within the quantitative framework there is an overwhelming presence of hyperbolic items belonging to the purity domain (33.5%), whereby the overstatement is expressed in terms of all or nothing. This seems to suggest a preference for absolute terms, such as do not admit of variation or exception, when exaggerating. It also appears that speakers tend to upscale rather than downscale magnitudes, as the percentages for the semantic fields of greatness (10.7%) and smallness (2.3%) show. This leads us to another criterion according to which hyperbolic items can be classified, namely the division into auxesis and meiosis.

4.4.4. Classification into auxesis and meiosis

Below is the list of overstated items falling either into the category of auxesis or meiosis in the corpus examined.

Auxesis, broadly defined as an upscaling of reality, includes: *revived, reviving* (2), *vital* (4), *a paradise, ideal, excellent* (2), *great* (8), *wonderful* (8), *lovely* (8), *gorgeous, precious, brilliant* (3), *a mess* (5), *mess up, illegible* (3), *scream, squeal, when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori, worst, wicked, relentless, obnoxious, horrible* (4), *terribly, terrible* (4), *awful (lot of)* (6), *a disaster, a recipe for disaster, a disgrace, devastated, ruin, (not) overpowering, erupted, blasting away, thrown on the scrap heap, pathetic, sickening, starve, starving* (4), *give a headache, freezing, can't breathe, drained* (2), *killing, dead, limbo* (2), *hell* (2), *a hell (of a lot), desperately, frantically, gets on your nerves, get out of me head, crazily, went haywire, mental health problems, in fits, crack(s) up* (2), *can't resist*

(2), *living on drugs, asleep* (3), *impressive* (2), *smashing* (3), *amazed, astonish, shock, shocked, shock like when my husband gets a telephone bill, thrilled, unbelievable* (2), *couldn't believe, extraordinary* (2), *another world, completely* (3), *absolute, absolutely* (5), *total, totally* (3), *entirely, full, fully, whole* (2), *sheer* (2), *like pure hot milk, all* (26), *always* (3), *everywhere* (4), *throughout the world, everybody* (6), *everybody else, every one, every* (4), *everything* (6), *anything* (2), *literally, definitely, an hour, the evening, two days, six months, months and months and months, ages* (3), *ages and ages and ages, an inch, ten times, two thousand, four thousand, half a million, one and half a million, three hundred million, a load, loads of* (3), *a pile of, compost heap, lots, lots of* (8), *mammoth, dinosaurs, like a horse's nose bag, riding jodhpurs, great big* (2), *massive, vast, huge, enormous, enormous (amount of), tremendous (amount of), immensely, a moustache, a beard* (2), *a mushrooming of, rolling in, coining money, day in, day out, forever, lifelong, like a lifetime, most* (3), *the most* (3), *utmost, infinitely, extremely* (5), *next to, don't move, beyond any doubt.*

On the other hand, the repertoire of meiosis consists of: *no* (4), *no one, no one else, nobody, nothing* (14), *nothing else* (2), *not any* (2), *not anything* (4), *never* (5), *not at all* (3), *no sort of worse than coming off erm having a bad cold, a second, a minute* (13), *ten minutes, the weekend, a week, two inches, not half as much, a flea on a dog's back, little tiny, tiny, minuscule, box room, remotely, instantly.*

Notice here that although some items invariably belong to the category of auxesis (e.g. *extremely, immensely*) or meiosis (e.g. *never, nothing*), on the whole it is only the full context which determines whether the hyperbolic item upscales or downscales the referent situation. Compare these two samples from our transcripts: *I've just gone through A division and I've got er a pile of cards, literally an inch thick* (auxesis) vs. *She made me feel about two inches high* (meiosis).

Table 4.7. depicts the frequency and percentages of items per extreme in our data.

Extreme of scale	Occurrences	Percentages
Auxesis	279	81.3%
Meiosis	64	18.6%

Table 4.7. Distribution of hyperbolic items over auxesis and meiosis

The table unequivocally reveals an overwhelming presence of auxesis (81.3%) over meiosis (18.6%). This may help explain why people tend to associate hyperbole with amplification, but rarely with reduction or attenuation. Indeed, little has been said about meiosis in the literature on hyperbole, and if dealt with at all, it is often equated with or mistaken for understatement. In fact, the bulk of definitions and illustrations of this figure focus solely on the upscaling or magnifying dimension, and so overlook that hyperbole may also downscale or minimise reality.

A possible explanation for the scarce presence of meiosis in our data can be found in the constrained nature of this type of exaggeration. It appears that the range of linguistic choices and degree of inflation to express auxesis is considerably wider than those to express meiosis. This is succinctly explained by Colston and Keller (1998), who compared exaggerations of a less-than-expected quantity which are constrained relative to overstatements of a greater-than-expected quantity.

The interaction between the type of comment and whether the unexpected situation involved a quantity that was less or more than expected allows an interesting insight into the nature of hyperbole. When the quantity of an ensuing event is of greater magnitude or degree than expected, a hyperbolic comment about that event is not constrained. Recall that hyperbolic comments exaggerate the ensuing state of affair, and exaggerating about an ensuing event that was of a greater quantity than expected can stretch to infinity. However, when the quantity of an ensuing event is of lesser magnitude or degree than was expected, a hyperbolic comment is constrained. One can only exaggerate a smaller-than-expected quantity of something up to the point of saying that the quantity was zero. (Colston and Keller 1998: 506)

Colton and O'Brien (2000a: 1564) provide the following illustrative example:

One can only understate the quantity of something (e.g. a snowfall of ten inches) up to the point of saying that the quantity was zero, (e.g. 'It seems we got a tiny bit of snow last night' or 'It seems that we didn't get any snow last night'). However, one can overstate the quantity of something up to infinity, (e.g. 'We got a hundred feet of snow last night' or 'We got ten billion feet of snow last night').

Indeed, the most recurrent pattern for meiosis in the BNC texts examined is the idea of nullity or inexistence, that is, saying that the quantity was zero. Out of 64 cases of meiosis, 34 respond to the pattern *No X* or *Not any X*. After this construction, the most recurrent item for meiosis is the period unit *a minute*, which features thirteen times in our transcripts.

4.4.5. Complex vs. simple nature of hyperbole

Another purpose of the chapter was to determine the rate of co-occurrence of hyperbole with other figures of speech. Kreuz *et al.* (1996: 92), after studying the degree of co-occurrence of eight main forms of non-literal language, have shown that hyperbole is by far the trope that most often combines with other figures. In their study of short stories, hyperbole was involved in almost 80% of the cases of co-occurrence and interacted with every other non-literal language form, with the exception of its logical opposite, understatement. At this point, I will examine the extent to which overstatement is a creative strategy in the production of other tropes in our data. Hyperbolic items will be classified according to whether they are pure or else compound, that is, whether or not they interact with any other form of figurative language.

The list of hyperbolic items classed as simple or pure includes: *a second, a minute* (13), *ten minutes, an hour, the evening, two days, the weekend, a week, six months, months and months and moths, ages* (3), *ages and ages and ages, two inches, an inch, ten times, two thousand, four thousand, not half as much, half a million, one and a half million, three hundred million, absolutely* (5), *completely* (3), *entirely, full, fully, total, totally* (3), *whole, whole, sheer* (2), *literally, definitely, beyond any doubt, not at all* (3), *all* (26), *no* (4), *nothing* (14), *nothing else* (2), *no one, no one else, nobody, not any* (2), *not anything* (4), *anything* (2), *every* (4), *everything* (6), *everybody* (6), *everybody else, every one, everywhere* (4), *always* (3), *never* (5), *lovely* (8), *wonderful* (8), *gorgeous, precious, excellent* (2), *great* (7), *ideal, absolute, impressive* (2), *horrible* (4), *terrible* (4), *terribly, awful (lot of)* (6), *pathetic, obnoxious, relentless, starve, starving* (4), *worst, illegible* (3), *a mess* (5), *mess up, unbelievable* (2), *couldn't believe, can't resist* (2), *extraordinary* (2), *asleep* (3), *great big* (2), *little tiny, tiny, minuscule, tremendous (amount of), enormous, enormous (amount of), huge, vast, massive, immensely, infinitely, extremely* (5), *don't move, scream, blasting away, can't breathe, lifelong, forever, instantly, most* (3), *the most*

(3), *utmost, next to, throughout the world, thrilled, astonish, amazed, frantically, desperately, freezing, sickening, give a headache, mental health problems, killing, living on drugs, in fits.*

The rest are instances of complex or compound hyperbole. The repertoire of figures with which they interact in the transcripts examined are:

1. Metaphor: *a paradise, hell (2), a hell (of a lot), lots of (8), lots, a load of (crap), loads of (people/glasses/washing up) (3), compost heap, a pile of (cards), in limbo (2), a disaster, a disgrace, a flea on a dog's back, a mushrooming of, a box room, another world, mammoth, dinosaurs, a moustache, a beard (2), riding jodhpurs, squeals, vital (4), revived, reviving (2), brilliant (3), drained (2), erupted, ruin, devastated, dead (small), remotely, crack(s) up (2), smashing (3), crazily, a shock, shocked, rolling in.*

2. Idioms: *a recipe for disaster, went haywire, thrown on the scrap heap, day in, day out, gets on your nerves, get out of me head, coining money.*

3. Simile: *like a horse's nose bag, like a lifetime, shock ... like when my husband gets a telephone bill, like pure hot milk, no sort of worse than coming off erm, having a bad cold.*

4. Verbal irony: *Looks black out there. Great!, I had a wicked boogie last night, People will write snotty letters saying I've told you this once before. So, great, let's communicate with any other deputies and say if you're not prepared to take it over we'll close the, we're afraid the scheme will have to close down.*

5. Metonymy: *when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori.*

6. Litotes: *Yeah, i they're not overpowering, are they? No, they're delicate.*

Table 4.8. below represents the frequency of occurrence and percentage for simple and complex overstatement in our data.

Nature	Occurrences	Percentages
Simple	266	77.5%
Complex	77	22.4%

Table 4.8. Distribution of items over simple and complex hyperbole

Table 4.9. depicts the repertoire of non-literal language forms with which hyperbole interacts in terms of occurrences and percentages.

Figures of speech	Occurrences	Percentages
Metaphor	60	17.4%
Idioms	7	2.0%
Simile	5	1.4%
Verbal irony	3	0.8%
Metonymy	1	0.2%
Litotes	1	0.2%

Table 4.9. Frequencies for the co-occurrence of hyperbole with other figures of speech

As the table shows, the majority of items correspond to simple or pure overstatement (77.5%). Only 77 cases, which account for 22.4% of overstated items in the data, are of a compound nature. Although hyperbole can co-occur with any other figure of speech (Jiménez Patón 1987: 143), when complex, the bulk of items are instances of hyperbolic metaphor (17.4%). Indeed, “many metaphors are exaggerations” (Searle 1993: 97). This is in line with Ravazzoli’s (1978: 98) claim that among the different types of compound hyperbole, metaphoric overstatement is much more recurrent than the other combination types. Similarly, Kreuz *et al.* (1996) found that, in terms of co-occurrence, metaphor was by far the figure of speech with which hyperbole most often interacted. Indeed, they have shown that metaphor “only really interacts with hyperbole itself” (p. 92).

As in Kreuz *et al.*’s (1996) study, after metaphor, hyperbolic items in our data interacted mostly with idioms (2%), which are usually conceived as dead or frozen metaphors (Gibbs 1994b: 424) or as conventionalised non-literal expressions (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 154). They were closely followed by simile (1.4%), which can be broadly defined as an explicit comparison, and to a much lesser extent, by verbal irony (0.8%), which refers to the use of words to express something other and especially the opposite of the literal meaning. There are three instances of hyperbolic irony in our transcripts. In two cases *great*, uttered in relation to the possibility of a storm or a trawl, is an instance of “ironic criticism” or “sarcastic irony”, whereby the speaker says something positive to convey a negative attitude. The latter, *wicked*, can be counted as an instance of “ironic praise” or “kind irony”, in which the speaker says something negative to convey a positive attitude (Dews and Winner 1999, Anolli *et al.* 2000). This type of irony, called “asteism” in traditional

rhetoric, is defined by Fontanier (1969: 150) as praising or flattering something or someone under pretense of blaming or criticising.

The presence of other combination types for hyperbole in our data is almost negligible. There is just an instance of hyperbolic metonymy: *when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori*. Metonymy has traditionally been defined in rhetoric as a figure of speech “whereby people take one well understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent or stand for the thing as a whole” (Gibbs 1994b: 428). In this particular case, *tandoori* stands for Indian food. There is also an instance of litotes, “in which an idea is expressed by denying its opposite” (Kreuz *et al.* 1996: 87). It refers to statements in which the speaker uses a negative expression where a positive one would have been more forceful and direct (Gibbs 1994a: 391). Litotes are syntactically marked by negation and can be defined as “negated hyperboles” (Ravazzoli 1978: 75). Thus, hyperbolic items like *overpowering* are transformed into litotes when they are negated.

Although no instances of hyperbole combined with other indirect forms, such as antonomasia, rhetorical questions, personification, etc. were found in our transcripts, the results suggest that hyperbole is a productive strategy in the creation of other figures of speech.

4.5. Discussion

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide a sound definition of hyperbole, by listing its main features. This task enabled a distinction between the trope and other related figures, such as irony and understatement. Hyperbole produces a contrast of kind with the referent situation, whereas in verbal irony the contrast is one of magnitude. On the other hand, the difference between under- and overstatement can be formulated as follows: hyperbole describes moderate situations in the real world as extreme, whereas understatement describes extreme situations in the real world as moderate. The issue of trope perception and identification has also been addressed. Whenever a discrepancy between utterance and reality cannot be computed, a number of heuristic cues, such as shifts in footing, labels, downgraders, listener take-up, etc., may incline us towards a hyperbolic reading of the utterance.

Once identified in our data, I attempted to devise a taxonomy of overstated items according to four parameters, namely semantic field, grammatical category, interactivity with other figures of speech and extreme of the continuum. The classification into auxesis and meiosis revealed that by far the tendency is to upscale rather than to downscale reality, explaining thus why hyperbole has often been equated and identified with auxesis, but rarely with meiosis.

In terms of lexico-grammatical classification, overstatement was realised in a wide range of linguistic forms, but mostly the devices are lexical. Major word classes, therefore, can be thought of as the chief means to overstate. In particular, there seems to be a preference for adjectives. Not in vain, this word class, together with degree adverbs, has been intensively studied in the literature. By contrast, verbal overstatement was rarely found in our data. This appears to suggest that exaggeration is used to express emotions, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, opinions rather than cognition or behaviour. In this, hyperbole is similar to metaphorical language forms, since Fainsilber and Ortony (1987: 239) have found that metaphor is used more often to describe subjective feeling states than overt actions. The use of minor word classes to express extremity was less frequent, but one could also find overstated numbers, prepositions as well as quantifiers. In particular, although rarely discussed in the literature, quantifiers such as *everything*, *everybody*, *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. were considerably productive in the creation of hyperbole, and therefore deserve more notice than they have received to date. Finally, although rarely, the trope was brought about by a mixture of lexical and grammatical means, such as the use of the superlative degree, idiomatic expressions, similes or comparisons, whole sentences or clauses, polysyndetic structures and complex modification.

The semantic-etymological taxonomy was divided into two groups, namely the quantitative and evaluative dimension. The former upscales or downscales a quantity or magnitude in excess. The latter involves a subjective evaluation showing the speaker's emotions and attitudes, whether positive or negative, towards the objective fact assessed. Without claiming comprehensiveness, the taxonomy was organised around major semantic domains: impact/singularity, negative and positive evaluation for the evaluative sphere and quantity/measure, purity and magnitude for the quantitative component. Possibly, a different corpus might have suggested somewhat different domains, since hyperbole is an act of linguistic creativity. In particular, the overwhelming presence of items in the purity

domain, whereby hyperbole is expressed in terms of all or nothing, is remarkable. This appears to suggest a preference for absolute terms, such as do not admit of variation or exception, when exaggerating.

Finally, this chapter addressed the rate of co-occurrence of hyperbole with other figurative language forms. The results indicated the trope is most often simple, but this does not mean that exaggeration is not a productive strategy in the creation of other indirect or non-literal forms. Although complex exaggeration only stands for 22.4% of overstated items in our data, only a contrastive study measuring the co-occurrence frequency for other tropes could have truly revealed the extent to which hyperbole is a creative technique in the construction of other indirect forms. In the BNC texts examined, hyperbole interacted with metaphors, idioms, similes, irony, metonymy and litotes, but other corpora might have revealed additional patterns of co-occurrence with some other figures.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS: HYPERBOLE AND SPEECH ACTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter primarily focuses on speech act theory⁹. Although there are several speech act analyses of verbal irony (e.g. Brown 1980, Amante 1981, Haverkate 1990), no single study on hyperbolic illocutionary acts has been published to date. The present chapter aims to redress, at least in part, this lacuna by analysing hyperbole from within speech act theory. In particular, the aim is to discover what kinds of speech acts can be exaggerated and the way this trope distributes over the different illocutionary forces. The results seem to suggest that although the study of hyperbole has traditionally been relegated to the representative class, it is by no means restricted to assertions. Other illocutionary forces can be exaggerated too. Indeed, although assertives or representatives pervade direct illocutionary acts in the data examined, in the case of those performed indirectly, expressives and directives prevail.

The traditional distinction between direct and indirect illocutionary acts leads us to question why speakers should choose to perform acts indirectly, via other illocutionary acts, when they can be realised in a straightforward and direct way. It is suggested that indirection is closely related to the notion of face-threatening acts (FTAs), acts that are liable to damage the face of any of the interlocutors in interaction, and therefore need to be mitigated. Thus, the main motivation for being indirect in our data is politeness and saving face. Among the wide range of politeness strategies available to prevent face loss, humour and minimising the imposition are often realised through this figure.

5.2. Speech act theory

The theory of speech acts is probably the most firmly established part of pragmatics (Strässler 1982: 65). Indeed, “speech acts”, says Levinson (1983: 226), “remain, along with presupposition and implicature in particular, one of the central phenomena that any general pragmatic theory must account for”.

⁹ I am greatly indebted to Professor Carlos Hernández for suggesting this field of research.

Speech act theory grew out of a reaction to what was seen as an excessively narrow focus on the informative use of language. It was a reaction against truth conditional semantics and logical positivism, since they “were primarily concerned with the properties of sentences which could be evaluated in terms of *truth* or *falsity*” (Thomas 1995: 30). By contrast, speech act theorists contend that language can be used to perform actions. Speech acts are generally defined as “utterances which, rather than just conveying information, actually carry out an action or language function” (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994: 45).

There is a vast amount of literature on the subject, so I shall not attempt here a comprehensive review. Rather, I shall limit this section to the two classic books on speech act theory, namely Austin’s (1962) *How to do things with words*, and Searle’s (1969, 1975, 1976) discussions of illocutionary acts, both direct and indirect. Throughout this chapter, though, numerous references to other relevant speech act theorists will be made.

5.2.1. Austin’s speech act theory

5.2.1.1. The performative hypothesis

It was the British language philosopher Austin (1962) who first claimed that there are many things speakers can do with words. His most basic insight is that people do not just use language to say things (i.e. to make statements) but to do things, that is, to perform actions. This idea was articulated by way of the (soon to be abandoned) performative hypothesis.

Austin’s first move in *How to do things with words* was away from truth-conditions. He noticed that some utterances have no truth conditions, that is, they cannot be labelled as either true or false, since these assignments are only applicable to statements. He realised those utterances are neither statements nor questions, but rather actions; a conclusion he reached by analysing performative verbs (e.g. *warn*, *promise*). They are “utterances which involve the speaker in *doing* something rather than in *reporting* something” (Strässler 1982: 65). Thus, Austin drew a distinction between constatives (e.g. *There is an exhibition of Terracottas now in Valencia*) and performatives (e.g. *I apologize for being late*). The basic difference is that only constative utterances are subject to truth conditions. Performatives are used to perform actions, and hence it makes no sense to enquire about

their truth or falsity. In the words of Stubbs (1983: 151), “performative utterances may be inadequate in various ways, but they cannot be untrue”.

Austin observed that although performatives are not subject to truth conditions, yet they can go wrong. Several requirements, known as felicity conditions, need to apply for a successful performance of the act. Austin (1962: 14-5) lists the following felicity conditions:

(A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,

(A.2.) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B.1.) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B.2.) completely.

(C.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further

(C.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

If any of these felicity conditions is not observed, the performative may be infelicitous, fail or be unsuccessful. “Felicity conditions”, however, “apply particularly to performatives associated with various rituals or very formal events” (Thomas 1995: 37).

5.2.1.2. Collapse of the performative hypothesis

Austin’s argument that only performative verbs could be used to perform actions was untenable. The performative hypothesis collapsed for three main reasons:

(i) There is no formal (grammatical) way of distinguishing performative verbs from other sorts of verbs.

(ii) The presence of a performative verb does not guarantee that the specified action is performed.

(iii) There are ways of “doing things with words” which do not involve using performative verbs. (Thomas 1995: 44)

The most important reason for the collapse of the performative hypothesis was that Austin had equated “doing things with words” with the existence of a corresponding performative verb. This is, as himself later realised, clearly erroneous, since “there are many acts performed using language where it would be impossible, extremely odd or very unusual to use a performative verb” (Thomas 1995: 46). Thus, in chapter six of *How to do things with words*, Austin briefly introduced a distinction between primary (or explicit) and implicit performatives (i.e. without performative verb). Compare the following examples: *I promise to compensate you* vs. *I’ll compensate you*.

In chapter eleven of his book, Austin totally abandons the distinction between constatives and performatives. He realised this division was faulty, since statements are actions and therefore must be considered performatives too. From this observation, Austin developed his more general theory of speech acts: “a theory which examines what kinds of things we do when we speak, how we do them and how our acts may ‘succeed’ or ‘fail’” (Thomas 1995: 31). He made a three-fold distinction, namely locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act. The locutionary act is the act of saying something, “the act of producing an utterance with a certain more or less definite sense and a more or less definite reference” (Strässler 1982: 67). The illocutionary act refers to “the speech action that is performed in saying something” (Tsui 1994: 252). Finally, the perlocutionary act is defined as “the effect of the illocution on the hearer” (Thomas 1995: 49). This has been the traditional concern of rhetoric: the effect of language on the audience (Stubbs 1983: 152).

Speech act theorists have been primarily concerned with descriptive questions: how many types of speech act are there, and how should they be grouped together? (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 243). Austin’s (1962: 150-63) taxonomy of speech acts falls into five categories: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives and behabitives.

Verdictives consist in the delivering of a finding, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact so far as these are distinguishable. Examples of verbs in this class are *describe*, *assess* and *characterise*.

Exercitives refer to “the giving of a decision in favor of or against a certain course of action or advocacy of it”, “a decision that something is to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so” (p. 151). Among them, Austin lists *command, beg, advise*, etc.

Commissives, says Austin, commit the speaker to a certain course of action. In this category, we find examples such as *promise, vow* or *pledge*.

Expositives, such as *affirm, deny* and *report*, are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments and the clarifying of usage and reference.

Behabitives include the notion of reaction to other people’s behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else’s past or imminent conduct. Among the examples Austin lists are *thank, applaud* and *criticise*.

Austin, however, advances his classification tentatively. “I am not”, he says, “putting any of this forward as in the very least definitive” (p. 151). He is aware that his taxonomy contains several weaknesses. Its shortcomings have been extensively discussed by Searle. The taxonomy is defective, says Searle (1976: 1), for several reasons, “especially in its lack of clear criteria for distinguishing one kind of illocutionary force from another”. That is, there is no consistent principle on the basis of which the taxonomy is constructed. It has also been argued that “Austin appears to be classifying surface, lexical verbs in English, not illocutionary forces” (Stubbs 1983: 158).

Searle’s main objections to Austin’s classification are summarised below.

There are (at least) six related difficulties with Austin’s taxonomy; in ascending order of importance: there is a persistent confusion between verbs and acts, not all the verbs are illocutionary verbs, there is too much overlap of the categories, too much heterogeneity within the categories, many of the verbs listed in the categories don’t satisfy the definition given for the category and, most important, there is no consistent principle of classification. (Searle 1976: 9-10)

5.2.2. Searle’s theory of speech acts

5.2.2.1. Searle’s classification of (direct) illocutionary acts

The starting point of Searle’s (1969: 21) speech act theory is the following:

The hypothesis that the speech act is the basic unit of communication, taken together with the principle of expressibility, suggests that there are a series of analytic connections between the notion of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence (or other linguistic element) uttered means, what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are.

According to Searle (1969), every utterance is taken to have, apart from its propositional content, an illocutionary force indicator (IFID, henceforth), which shows “what illocutionary force the utterance is to have; that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance” (p. 30). In English, IFIDs include: word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb and performative verbs. Searle acknowledges, though, that often, in actual speech situations, the context makes clear what the illocutionary force of the utterance is, without its being necessary to invoke the appropriate IFID.

Searle (1976) distinguishes five basic kinds of illocutionary acts, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. He provides a dozen linguistically significant dimensions of differences between them (pp. 2-7).

- (1) Differences in the point (or purpose) of the (type of) act
- (2) Differences in the direction of fit between words and the world
- (3) Differences in expressed psychological states
- (4) Differences in the force or strength with which the illocutionary point is expressed
- (5) Differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer as these bear on the illocutionary force of the utterance
- (6) Differences in the way the utterance relates to the interests of the speaker and the hearer
- (7) Differences in relations to the rest of the discourse
- (8) Differences in propositional content that are determined by illocutionary force indicating devices
- (9) Differences between those acts that must always be speech acts, and those that can be, but need not be performed as speech acts
- (10) Differences between those acts that require extra-linguistic institutions for their performance and those that do not
- (11) Differences between those acts where the corresponding illocutionary verb has a performative use and those where it does not

(12) Differences in the style of performance of the illocutionary act

Of these, the most important parameters, according to Searle (1976: 5), are illocutionary point, direction of fit and expressed psychological state. These three dimensions form the basis of his taxonomy of illocutionary acts. In general, the notion of illocutionary point is considered the most important element in determining illocutionary force.

If we adopt illocutionary point as the basic notion on which to classify uses of language, then there are a rather limited number of basic things we can do with language: we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to doing things, we express our feelings and attitudes, and we bring about changes through our utterances. (Searle 1976: 22-3)

Notice that these five basic uses of language (according to illocutionary point) correspond, as we shall see below, to the five classes of speech acts distinguished by Searle. The second variable, differences in the direction of fit, permits a distinction between illocutions that aim to get the words or propositional content to match the world, or the other way round. The third parameter refers to the psychological state conveyed by the speech act. In performing an illocutionary act, the speaker expresses some attitude to the propositional content. The psychological or intentional state expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act is the “sincerity condition” of that act (Searle 1976: 4).

Let us now discuss Searle’s (1976: 10-4) taxonomy of illocutionary acts. Examples of verbs denoting members of each class appear between brackets.

The illocutionary point of the representative class (e.g. *predict, state*) is “to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition” (p. 10). All the members of this class are subject to truth conditions: they are assessable in terms of truth or falsity. The direction of fit is words-to-world, and the psychological state expressed is: belief (that p).

In terms of illocutionary point, directives (e.g. *order, request*) “are attempts (of varying degrees) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (p. 11). The direction of fit is world-to-words, and the sincerity condition is: want (or wish or desire). The propositional content is always that the hearer does some future action A.

Commissives (e.g. *promise, pledge*), whose definition Searle appropriates from Austin, are those acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action. The direction of fit is world-to-words, and the sincerity condition is: intention. The propositional content is always that the speaker does some future action A.

The illocutionary point of the class of expressives (e.g. *congratulate, thank*) is “to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (p. 12). There is no direction of fit in expressives. The truth of the proposition expressed is presupposed, and the propositional content ascribes some property to either the speaker or hearer.

The main feature that distinguishes declarations (e.g. *christen, resign*) from other classes of illocutionary acts is that saying makes it so. In the words of Searle (1976: 13): “successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world”. Because of the special character of declarations, there is no sincerity condition and the direction of fit is both words-to-world and world-to-words. Another peculiarity of this class is that “there must exist an extra-linguistic institution and the speaker and hearer must occupy special places within this institution” (p. 14).

5.2.2.2. Indirect speech acts

A central problem for speech act theory is, as Stubbs (1983: 147) correctly notes, “the depth of indirection involved in much discourse, the distance between what is said and what is meant”. Although some speech acts are direct and straightforward, the majority in everyday conversation are indirect (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994: 45). According to Searle (1975: 60), “the problem posed by indirect speech acts is the problem of how it is possible for the speaker to say one thing and mean that but also to mean something else”.

The starting point in Searle’s theory of indirect speech acts is as follows:

The hypothesis I wish to defend is simply this: In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearers. (Searle 1975: 60-1)

Indirect speech acts are defined as “cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another” (Searle 1975: 60). It refers to the use of an utterance with a certain illocutionary force different from the one indicated by grammatical cues (Nogales 1999: 173). The point with indirection, says Searle (1975: 70), is that the speaker means not only what (s)he says but something more as well. In such cases, the utterance is said to have two illocutionary forces¹⁰: a primary and secondary force. “The secondary illocutionary act”, says Searle (1975: 62), “is literal; the primary illocutionary act is not literal”. Let us take the following example from our data to illustrate the case. When Frances says *Can somebody please go and watch Chloe a minute?*, she means it not merely as a question (secondary act) but as a request for action (primary act). Thus, the speaker issues a directive by way of asking a question about the hearer’s ability to perform a particular act.

A crucial goal for conversationalists is to interpret the intended speech act appropriately. In the case of indirect speech acts, the main difficulty is that “the illocutionary forces of sentences do not always correspond with the illocutionary force normally assigned to the specific types of sentences, i.e. with the *literal force*” (Strässler 1982: 71). The inferential strategy is to establish, first, that the primary illocutionary point departs from the literal, and second, what the primary illocutionary point is (Searle 1975: 64).

The mechanisms by which indirect speech acts are meant and understood have to do with the theory of speech acts, the principles of cooperative conversation and shared background information, says Searle (1975: 75). In particular, Grice’s (1975) Co-operative Principle is seen as crucial for the perception and understanding of indirect illocutionary acts. Fraser (1983: 47) explains why the recognition of indirect speech acts is generally seen as proceeding along Gricean lines.

Grice talks about what the speaker says and what the speaker implicates, but does not mention illocutionary force. However, determining what the speaker says is a preliminary step to determining what *direct* illocutionary act has been intended. Analogously, what is *implicated*, in Grice’s terms, is what is indirectly said. And it is quite reasonable to move

¹⁰ Edmonson (1981) rejects the notion of parallel forces. “We need to distinguish”, he says, “between a locutionary and illocutionary act, and reject the notion of co-occurrent direct and indirect illocutionary acts” (p. 30). He contends that the grammatical mood of a sentence is part of the meaning of the sentence, and as such belongs to the *locution*.

beyond Grice's discussion to talk of what the speaker says and the corresponding direct illocutionary force (whether performed by speaking literally or figuratively) to what the speaker *implicates* and its associated *indirect* illocutionary force.

In this sense, Sperber and Wilson (1995: 244) have claimed that "speech-act theory thus offers itself as a natural complement to Gricean pragmatics, dealing with the classification in speech-act terms of both implicatures and explicatures".

Clark (1983: 319-20) lists five main properties that characterise indirect speech acts:

1. Simultaneous meanings. Indirect acts involve more than one meaning: a direct meaning and one or more indirect meanings. In such cases, listeners use both the direct and indirect meanings, even though their ultimate interest is in the indirect one.

2. Logical priority. The standard pragmatic model assumes that the indirect meaning is logically dependent on the performance of the literal meaning (Gibbs 1994a: 85). The literal force is logically prior to the indirect one. I perform the latter by performing the former, and not vice versa.

3. Literalness of direct meaning. The direct meaning "follows pretty directly, via conventions of language, from the literal meaning of the sentence" (Clark 1983: 319). This is one reason that the speaker's direct meaning is often called the literal meaning.

4. Non-denumerability of indirect meanings. There is no way to list the possible indirect meanings a speaker could intend in uttering an indirect speech act. "Whereas the direct meaning", says Clark, "is pretty well determined by the literal meaning, if any, of the sentence uttered, the indirect meaning could be any number of things" (*ibid.*).

5. Contextuality of indirect meanings. Indirect meanings, unlike direct ones, are critically dependent on the context of utterance.

5.2.2.2.1. Indirect speech acts vs. figurative language

Some scholars seem, erroneously, to equate indirect speech acts with figures of speech. Take, for example, Fogelin (1988) who identifies metaphors with indirect realisations of illocutionary acts. Although both are indirect uses of language, they are essentially distinct phenomena. There is a radical difference between indirect speech acts, on the one hand, and figures of speech, on the other. In indirect illocutionary acts, says Searle (1979: 113), "the speaker means what he says. However, in addition, he means something more". In

non-literal utterances, by contrast, “speakers do not mean more than what they say, but actually mean something *other* than what they say” (Dews and Winner 1997: 378). As Nogales (1999: 185) clearly puts it: “One cannot explain metaphoricity (or any other type of figurativeness) or the distinction between literal and the nonliteral by appealing to indirect speech acts and the distinction between the direct and indirect”. And yet, although indirect illocutionary acts have nothing in common with hyperbole, this does not mean that this figure cannot occur as part of such acts.

5.2.3. Weaknesses in speech act theory

Although its application has been constant and ubiquitous, speech act theory has many critics and reviewers. One of the main objections is that almost all data are elicited rather than naturalistic use (Celce-Murcia *et al.* 1995, Stubbs 1983, 1996). Speech act theorists rarely test their intuitions empirically against real instances of language. For instance, Austin (1962: 148) suggests collecting (for example, from a concise dictionary) a list of explicit performative verbs as a guide to illocutionary forces. Searle’s data, on the other hand, are artificial. This helps explain a major limitation in speech act theory: the lack of attested data.

It has also been argued that the bulk of research on illocutionary acts is limited to a relatively narrow range of the more easily definable acts, such as requests, apologies, thanking, etc. (Flowerdew 1990: 90). In a similar vein, Edmonson (1981: 20-1) writes:

In characterising different illocutionary acts, Searle’s procedure is to consider the “paradigm cases”, the “simple and idealised case” (Searle 1969, pp. 54-5). [...] However in the empirical investigation of conversational behaviour we seldom come across the “paradigm” cases (if indeed we ever do).

Thirdly, much of the speech act literature attempts to define illocutionary acts independently of context. As Tsui (1994: 9) correctly notes:

In Speech Act Theory, an *act* refers to the action that is performed in making an utterance. Utterances are taken in isolation and the kind of speech act being performed is determined by considerations like the meaning conveyed by the words and the structures of utterances, the

psychological conditions of the speaker, and so forth. No consideration is given to the discourse context in which the utterance occurs.

In interpreting the force of an utterance, though, hearers often draw on their knowledge of the preceding discourse (Stubbs 1983: 149).

Another limitation of traditional speech act theory is that speech acts are defined in terms of speaker intentions. It is a speaker-oriented model of analysis. The nature of conversation, however, depends crucially on the interaction between speaker and hearer (Richards and Schmidt 1983: 126). In this sense, Gibbs (1999a: 57) reports that “the fundamental problem with the speech act view of intentional communication is that it excludes the crucial role of listeners and readers in both the creation and interpretation of meaning”. Conversation, says Franck (1981: 226), is an interactive process, during which the meaning and illocutionary force of utterances are negotiated between speaker and addressee, not an interchange of utterances with speaker-determined illocutionary forces.

Related to the interactional nature of speech acts are Hancher’s (1979) and Edmonson’s (1981) claim that certain acts (e.g. bets, challenges, etc.) require, for their success, the collaboration or particular uptake of another participant. With some performatives, says Edmonson (1981: 26), at least “doing it” is a co-operative achievement: it is not simply a case of the individual uttering a sentence in appropriate circumstances. Since speech act theory has been based on contrived, isolated sentences, it is not surprising that the ways in which some acts may be co-operatively constructed across different speakers’ utterances have been overlooked (Stubbs 1983: 156).

Finally, the principle of expressibility has been criticised too. Both Austin (1962: 103) and Searle (1969: 68) argue that illocutionary forces (if inexplicit) can always be made explicit by a performative formula. In other words, every performative could be put into the form of an explicit performative with the help of a list of special verbs. However, it would be quite wrong to think, as Stubbs (1983: 157) correctly notes, “that just adding an IFID to an utterance makes the illocutionary force explicit without otherwise changing its meaning”.

Speech act theory has been severely criticised and questioned, but this does not seem to have affected its application, which has continued to grow upon Austin’s and Searle’s bases.

5.3. Speech act analysis of hyperbolic utterances in the BNC data

This chapter deals with criteria for characterising functions of utterances, and one approach to the analysis of language functions is through speech act theory. The aim is to show that the category of hyperbole can be properly described within the framework of speech acts. In particular, the aim is to determine what kinds of illocutionary act can be exaggerated and the way this trope distributes over the different illocutionary forces.

Although Austin (1962: 52) originally used the term speech act to refer to an utterance and “the total situation in which the utterance is issued”, nowadays the term is used as a synonym of illocutionary act, which refers to “the force or the intention behind the words” (Thomas 1995: 49). In fact, the terms speech act, illocutionary act, illocutionary force, pragmatic force or simply force are used interchangeably in speech act literature.

Here I am primarily concerned with the identification and characterisation of illocutionary acts where hyperbole features. In labelling an utterance as performing a particular speech act, it is essential to define the labels and criteria for classification. I shall also identify the main subclasses and acts which can be distinguished for each illocutionary force in our data.

At the illocutionary level, it is important to distinguish between direct and indirect speech acts. In order to do so, the relation between the locutionary and illocutionary act will be examined. Unlike them, “perlocutionary effects are not part of pragmatics” (Fraser 1983: 54), and therefore, their study goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Rather, the aim is to determine what type of realisation prevails in our data, whether direct or indirect. I shall also address the question of why speakers should choose to perform acts indirectly, via other illocutionary acts, when they can perform them in a direct and straightforward way. Differences in distribution over illocutionary forces for direct and indirect acts will be explained in terms of politeness and face-threatening acts.

The total number of hyperbolic utterances examined in our data was 310. Some of them contain several hyperbolic items. Illocutionary force, as Stubbs (1983: 158) correctly notes “is a property of utterances, not sentences, since the same sentence may have different illocutionary forces on different occasions of utterance”. The following examples extracted from our data may serve to illustrate the case.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

KALEY>: Want something to eat.
FRANCES>: Give Brett his, give Francis [...] his
KALEY>: I want something to eat.
FRANCES>: Well, just a minute, daddy'll be here soon and you can have some. Get down. You can't have the party without daddy when it's his birthday.
KALEY>: Well, *I'm starving*.
FRANCES>: Did you eat your dinner at school?
KALEY>: Yeah. [...]
FRANCES>: What?
KALEY>: And I eat my pudding.
FRANCES>: Oh.

Text KB6 > Conversation recorded by Angela

ANGELA>: Have you gotta have him today or not?
SUE>: No. Katie, I took out of school [...] and then she went back again.
ANGELA>: Oh. ... [...]
SUE>: Oh yeah, there, there's some people I wouldn't take them to. Do you know what I mean?
ANGELA>: Yeah, I know what you mean. ... [...] [laugh] *I'm so starving*.
SUE>: Do you have a breakfast?
ANGELA>: No.
SUE>: Oh. ...
ANGELA>: Yeah, [...] a sandwich [...] in a minute.
SUE>: How the hell do you keep so slim? I've completely cut out [...]
ANGELA>: Well, we've been rushing around, haven't we?
SUE>: Haven't got time to think about food.
ANGELA>: No. ... Been here, there and everywhere, you know what I mean?

Note that although syntactically both utterances are practically identical, they differ greatly in illocutionary force. The former is an indirect speech act, whereby the speaker issues a request by way of performing a representative act, specifically a report informing about some physical state. The latter, by contrast, is only an assertion to the effect that the speaker is hungry used to change the topic of conversation.

Since a given sentence may have many potential forces, and the problem of determining which one is intended can only be resolved by considering the context (Fraser 1983: 44), the context-dependence of illocutionary force is presupposed here. As Thomas (1983: 99) clearly puts it: "In order to interpret the force of an utterance in the way in which the speaker intended, the hearer must take into account both contextual and linguistic cues. Often, context alone will determine what force is assigned to an utterance".

To answer the question: what speech acts or illocutionary forces can be assigned to exaggerated utterances in discourse?, a locution analysis was first performed, paying special attention to IFIDs, particularly to sentence type and mood. Recall here that the locutionary act refers to “the actual words uttered” (Thomas 1995: 49). Hyperbole was also examined in context to determine the purpose of its use since, as Katz (1996: 3) notes, “the context will provide cues as to the speaker’s intent”.

However, assigning force to utterances in naturally-occurring conversation is no easy task. It is obviously not the case that propositional content and illocutionary force are unambiguously retrievable from utterances and clear to all speakers (Stubbs 1983: 164). And, even if unambiguous to participants, they may remain ambiguous or opaque to the observer or analyst. Palmer (1976) has pointed out that utterances lie on a dimension of lesser or greater ambiguity in conveying illocutionary force. Indeed, the least ambiguous cases, says Stubbs (1983: 158), are “the rather rare instances, overemphasized in the literature, in which an explicit first person performative verb is used in a ritual context”.

An additional problem points to the multiplicity of acts that an utterance may perform simultaneously. Thus, Searle (1976: 14) claims “any utterance will consist in performing one or more illocutionary acts”. In this sense, Richards and Schmidt (1983: 126) note that “any, perhaps, most, speech acts are multifunctional”. Consequently, Levinson (1983: 291) suggests that it is not possible to characterise an utterance as performing a certain speech act because it often has more than one function.

The problem of multiplicity, at least in the data examined, only arises at the level of illocutionary subclasses or acts, rather than forces. This means that sometimes it was necessary to choose among competing possibilities, but they always belong to the same illocutionary class, and therefore do not pose serious problems or alter the results of our analysis. In such cases, the illocutionary force was invariably the representative or assertive class. In this sense, Fraser (1983: 43) notes that the use of a declarative means that the speaker expresses an attitude of belief toward the proposition, but leaves open which particular representative act is specifically intended. Most often the choice was between a member of the subclass of reports and one from the subclass of assessment. Although less frequently, the decision may also affect two different members of the report subclass. Often one of them is an interactional act such as challenge, disagree, confirm, agree, etc. Because of this, Levinson (1983) argues that the source of multiple functions

often lies in the sequential environment of the conversation in which the utterance occurs. Examples of the parallel acts that sometimes can be assigned to an utterance will be provided in section 5.4.1.1.

Unlike previous research, our data consist of naturalistic conversational texts. Thus, instead of “the simple and idealised cases” (Searle 1969: 55), real instances of language will be examined. Recall here that one of the main objections to speech act theory was the use of elicited or artificial rather than naturally-occurring data. Besides, the fact that the whole of a conversation, rather than isolated or decontextualized utterances, is analysed will allow us to examine the interactional nature of speech acts.

In sum, the aim of this chapter is twofold: (a) to determine the speech act or communicative intent of the utterances in which hyperbole is embedded; (b) to explore the connection between politeness and indirection.

5.4. Analysis and results

First of all, I will concentrate on the distinction between explicit and implicit illocutionary acts. The former group, although rare in our data, consists of utterances containing an explicit performative verb. The so-called performative verb, says Fraser (1983: 44), is “a most visible force-indicating property”, since they announce to the hearer the intention of the speaker. However, it is important not to confuse the actual verb with the illocutionary force of the utterance. As Stubbs (1983: 158) correctly notes, the two things are closely related, but not always the same thing. The following excerpt, where rather than a bet, what the speaker is doing is hypothesising or presupposing, illustrates that “when performative verbs are used, they do not necessarily perform the named action” (Tsui 1994: 267).

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

PS000>: Well, yeah, I [...] I got [...] in a lavender bush when I was small so [...]

MASSEUR>: Oh, did you?

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...] you'll like the lavender one.

PS000>: [...] My brothers er, I mean, you know, this lavender bush and [...] ... Get in there.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: ***Bet you smelled lovely when you came out.***

PS000>: [...] compost heap.

PS000>: [laugh]
PS000>: Yeah. [...] all right. ...

This problem could be solved by avoiding the term “performative verb” and using the term “speech act verb”¹¹, which can signal a variety of functions. Thus, for example, the speech act verb *promise* can be used to promise, warn, threaten, etc.; *bet* can be used to bet, hypothesise, assert, etc. However, utterances need not contain explicit performative or speech act verbs, as we shall see throughout this chapter. Indeed, with the exception of a few, the vast majority of acts in the transcripts examined are implicit speech acts. It may be that “people often avoid using an explicit performative since in many circumstances it seems to imply an unequal power relationship or a particular set of rights on the part of the speaker” (Thomas 1995: 48).

5.4.1. Hyperbole and illocutionary forces in the BNC data

In accordance with the taxonomic criteria proposed by Searle (1976) five basic illocutionary forces can be distinguished: assertives or representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. Declarations, however, will be excluded from our analysis, since they are not a class of illocutionary act. They are “institutional and conventional, and therefore not illocutionary at all: because they cannot be performed by any speaker of the language, only by someone by virtue of occupying some social role” (Stubbs 1996: 215). Thus, it has been argued they cannot be explained within linguistic theory, since their felicitous performance “requires that their speakers have social roles bestowed on them by the framework of some social institution” (Stubbs 1983: 159).

A significant issue is that overstatement is not limited to assertions, or in other words, that other speech acts can be exaggerated too. Apart from the representative class, this figure also features in directives, commissives and expressives. However, it turns out that hyperbolic manifestations of speech acts are not equally distributed over these classes in our data. Exaggeration manifests itself predominantly in the performance of assertives, which is implicitly corroborated by the literature on the subject. The vast majority of figurative language researchers limit themselves - usually without explicit motivation - to the analysis of assertives (Haverkate 1990: 89). It is the aim of this study to extend the

analysis by focusing not only on assertive, but directive, commissive and expressive exaggeration.

The table below shows how hyperbolic utterances are distributed over the different illocutionary forces.

Illocutionary force	Occurrences	Percentages
Representative	208	67%
Directive	62	20%
Commissive	7	2.2%
Expressive	33	10.6%

Table 5.1. Distribution of hyperbolic utterances over illocutionary forces in the BNC

5.4.1.1. Assertives or representatives

The first class of acts, referred to as representatives (or assertives), is that in which “the speaker expresses his belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true” (Fraser 1983: 38). With 67% of occurrences, this is by far the most recurrent illocutionary force for exaggeration in the BNC data.

It is difficult to establish a classification of assertive speech acts, says Haverkate (1990: 90), “since it is not clear by means of which parameters the corresponding sub-classes should be differentiated”. In general, two broad types of taxonomies have been proposed: global and specific ones. Global taxonomies consist of a reduced set of classes (e.g. descriptive vs. evaluative assertions). By contrast, specific ones are exhaustive. Fraser (1983: 38-9), to give an example, distinguishes eleven different sub-classes for assertives, namely:

Speaker expresses belief that the propositional content is true and:

- A. Indicates the belief is his own pinion
- B. Indicates the belief rests with some verifiable knowledge
- C. Indicates the belief rests with some truth-seeking procedure
- D. Indicates the belief is contrary to the previous belief

¹¹ I owe this suggestion to Michael McCarthy.

- E. Indicates the belief is no longer held by him
- F. Indicates the belief is that of another person
- G. Indicates the belief is not that of another person
- H. Indicates the belief is tentative
- I. Indicates the belief is worth consideration
- J. Indicates the belief is not shared by all
- K. Indicates the belief accurately characterizes some object

It is noteworthy, though, that Fraser does not ignore the interactional nature of illocutionary acts, as attested by sub-classes D, E, F, G and J.

Since there is no general agreement as to how assertive acts should be subclassified, I shall divide them here into two main subclasses: reports and assessments. Reports are defined as informative acts which “report events, states of affairs, or recount personal experiences” (Tsui 1994: 137). On the other hand, the term assessment refers to those acts where “the speaker asserts his judgements or evaluation of certain people, objects, events, states of affairs and so on” (p. 142). Obviously, this evaluation can be positive or negative. The former subclass is clearly more numerous in the transcripts examined. Out of 208 representative acts, 152 (73%) are reports and 56 (26.9%) correspond to evaluations.

In turn, these subclasses can be subdivided into different acts. Thus, according to the target of evaluation, different kinds of assessment can be distinguished: assessing and self-assessment. The former, clearly the most prominent in our data, “gives judgement or evaluation of an event, state(s) of affairs, or a third party – that is, neither the speaker nor the addressee” (Tsui 1994: 143). The latter is directed at the speaker him/herself. In our data, out of 56 occurrences, 49 correspond to some form of assessing, whereas only 7 instances of self-assessment could be found. Roughly equal numbers of positive and negative evaluation were found in both cases.

The excerpt below contains two positive forms of assessing, whose target is Deanne’s new leather bag. Sandra’s response to Deanne’s assessing is realised by a second evaluation which agrees with her judgement.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

DEANNE>: Well, I got that one. That's the little one I bought.
SANDRA>: Yeah! That's nice.

DEANNE>: And it was ... 4'99 from a shoe firm. I thought, that's ideal just for

SANDRA>: That's leather, int it?

DEANNE>: Yeah! It is leather. See. *Ideal for just walking round town.*

SANDRA>: Oh! *That's great!* 4'99?

DEANNE>: Yeah!

SANDRA>: Ooh! I'll have to have a look in there.

The following extract includes first, an instance of negative assessing where the speaker complains about the sound of her voice in the recording, and secondly, an instance of self-deprecation.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

STUART>: Just have to try and, take a little while to get used to it. Once you're used to it, it's probably [...]. It's all a matter of getting used to being recorded. Conversation.

ANN>: Yeah, well it sounds ever so funny when you hear it [...]

STUART>: I know. Yeah.

ANN>: *Horrible*. You think ... I don't sound like that! [laugh]. Really makes you think. I wish [...] done something about my ... the way I speak.

STUART>: Mm.

ANN>: *Mine's terrible* because I've got a low voice, a deep voice anyway. Sound more like a man, I do. I do on the phone, don't I?

STUART>: Don't know really. I've not really heard you much on the phone.

ANN>: Used to telephone, didn't you?

Reports subsume acts which have been identified in the speech act literature as recount, inform and state. They are the most recurrent acts in our data, although others such as describe, predict, explain, agree, etc. also belong to this subclass. The act of recounting, which refers to the report of some past event, usually a personal experience of the speaker, is particularly frequent. The next excerpt nicely illustrates the multiple acts that sometimes can be assigned to utterances. Apart from recounting a personal experience, the speaker here complains about the side effects of valium.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS004>: I take Tamazapam to sleep. Erm, and I have no side effects to it, I've been on it for quite a long while.

J8JPS000>: Every night?

J8JPS004>: Every night. One every night. It induces four hours of sleep, and if you sleep after that it's a normal sleep. I waken up fine.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS004>: No problems.

J8JPS000>: And how long have you been doing that?

J8JPS004>: Erm ... nine years.

J8JPS000>: And why did you start?

J8JPS004>: I had a bereavement, a very close bereavement in the

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS004>: family and they put me onto valium, but having worked in psychiatric I knew the results of valium, so I, I gradually broke them down and got off them ... but **for six full months I couldn't sleep**

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS004>: so they did put me onto some. But, I, I kno, I do use them as they're prescribed, one

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS004>: per night. And they do help.

J8JPS000>: So you've got a drug that you can live with?

Because making a positive evaluation of oneself violates the social norm of modesty, a self-commendation is often presented as a report (Tsui 1994: 150). The minister in the example applauds his party's employment policies, probably to defend from the opposition's prior accusation.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR TONY LLOYD>: Madam Speaker, what, what actually would shift the Secretary of State from his, his mood of complacency? Between 1990 ... and 1992 over a million skilled workers were put out of work in this economy, nearly half a million semi-skilled workers lost their jobs. The number of people trained in industry dropped by three hundred thousand and the Secretary of State tells the House that this is a success. This isn't the opposition talking the country down, it's the Government doing the country down.

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I'm sorry that the opposition is continuing to talk the country down.

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: We ... **we have in fact er had a very impressive record on competitiveness**. We now in manufacturing where there's been a decline in employment since the 1960s, we now have four million workers in manufacturing producing more than seven million produced fifteen years ago. That's a tribute to the British work force and don't let the honourable gentleman forget that we now have one point four million more in work, in the UK than we had ten years ago. Let him start talking up our achievements rather than pointing to an agenda which his party has already signed up to which would destroy millions of jobs through statutory works councils, statutory minimum wage and statutory compulsory working week. That's a recipe for disaster.

Some items in the subclass of reports reflect the interactional nature of illocutionary acts, for instance, confirm/agree or challenge/disagree. In particular, Rees-Miller (2000: 1088), for whom "A Speaker S disagrees when s/he considers untrue some Proposition *P* uttered or presumed to be espoused by an Addressee A and reacts with an utterance the propositional content or implicature of which is *Not P*", emphasises the interactive nature of disagreement: "Unlike a directive or commissive in Searle's (1965) taxonomy,

disagreement is reactive, requiring a prior utterance from an interlocutor (Sornig, 1977: 364)". Let us take the following examples.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Would he agree with me that the social contract, the absence of a social contract ... certainly hasn't damaged er rates of take-home pay?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er ... Madam Speaker, *I entirely agree, I entirely agree with my ho honourable friend* er the absence of the social chapter in Britain accounts in part for our higher levels of employment and the reforms which we carried out in the 1980s and the figures speak for themselves, as do the er people who speak for industry, for example, when Black & Decker announced their intention to bring their operations er fully into Britain, out of Germany, a company spokesman said anyone familiar with this sit situation in Germany will grasp that because of costs it is become very difficult to do business there. If members opposite had their way, it would be very difficult to do business here.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CRAIG>: Who? [whispering] Yeah, oh, I don't like her.

CLAIRE>: [...]

CRAIG>: She's got a moustache.

CLAIRE>: Well, Vicky has, but she can't help it.

CRAIG>: *No, Vicky's got a beard.*

CLAIRE>: *No, I've got a beard.*

CRAIG>: [tut!] Oh. Teaspoon.

PS000>: If you dry up and put them there now cos it's nearly [...].

JO>: I got nice baggy arse here.

CRAIG>: [laugh] ... Are they ... riding jodhpurs, aren't they?

JO>: Yeah, well, such a shame.

In the first extract, the speaker agrees, in a rather explicit way, with Pawsey's argument, but makes subsequently clear that his agreement is only partial. Note the use of the explicit performative verb *agree*. By contrast, the second excerpt contains two instances of disagreement with the listener. Although humorous in nature, in both cases the speaker contradicts or challenges the preceding utterance. They may also be considered forms of assessment, thus illustrating again the multiplicity of functions that can be assigned to an utterance. The first (*Vicky's got a beard*) is an instance of negative assessing, in which a third person is insulted or criticised. The latter (*I've got a beard*) is an instance of self-deprecation.

Table 5.2. depicts the frequency of the members of the representative class in the transcripts analysed. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of representatives.

Illocutionary sub-class		Occurrences	Percentages
Report		152	73%
Acts	Recount	56	26.9%
	Inform	27	12.9%
	State	26	12.5%
	Others	43	20.6%
Assessment		56	26.9%
Acts	Assessing:	49	23.5%
	Positive assessing	24	
	Negative assessing	25	
	Self-assessment:	7	3.3%
	Self-deprecation	3	
	Self-commendation	4	

Table 5.2. Occurrences and percentages of assertive subclasses and acts in the BNC

5.4.1.2. Directives

Directives are attempts to get the hearer to do something. The speaker wants his/her interlocutor to carry out the act specified by the proposition. This is the second most common illocutionary force for exaggeration in our data. Its frequency, though, at least compared to representatives, is almost negligible. It only accounts for 20% of hyperbolic utterances.

The classification of directives into more delicate subclasses is no easy task. Indeed, several taxonomic subdivisions have been devised over the years to account for the members of this class. In order to define and classify the wide range of directive speech acts, I will mainly draw on Tsui (1994). Thus, directives fall into two subclasses, according to the type of prospected response, whether an action or verbal answer. As Haverkate (1990: 87) clearly puts it:

In both cases, the illocutionary point is specified in terms of the wish of the speaker that the hearer perform a certain action. They are differentiated with respect to the fact that questions require the hearer to perform a particular kind of action, viz., a verbal one, whereas requests

are not constrained in this way; here the action is specified in each case by the lexical meaning of the predicate.

Out of 62 directive speech acts in our data, 27 are elicitation. They are defined as “utterances which elicit solely a verbal response“ (Tsui 1994: 80). Such utterances are usually referred to as “questions”. Although speech act theorists tend to characterise them as requests for information (e.g. Searle 1969: 69, Bach and Harnish 1979: 48), here they are considered a subclass of directives on their own.

According to the prospected response, Tsui (1994: 81-88) distinguishes six different classes of elicitation, namely [elicit-] inform, confirm, agree, commit, repeat and clarify. Only the former three classes feature in our data.

The members of the first class have been defined as elicitation which invite the addressee to supply a piece of information, but they are rare in our transcripts. They often correspond, says Tsui (1994: 82), to “neutral polarity yes-no questions”, in which the speaker does not have any assumptions as to whether the answer is positive or negative.

Elicit-confirm acts consist of “elicitation which invite the addressee to confirm the speaker’s assumption” (*ibid.*), although this does not mean they cannot be disconfirmed or challenged. This class -the most recurrent in our corpus- can be realised by positive and negative polar interrogatives, declarative and tag questions. The following is an illustrative sample.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

LADY OLGA MAITLAND>: [...] Honourable friends, join me in condemning the non-sensible advice given by Liberty to truanting schoolchildren that they should defy police, and ***isn't it absolutely typical that the party opposite tend to support them?***

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: I would certainly join my honourable friend in condemning the advice which has been reported in the ... paper today. Er the Government's efforts to improve the campaign against truancy and the to succeed in getting errant pupils back to school which is where they should be, I believe is and should be widely supported. For Liberty to be opposing it in the way that they are shows that they don't remotely understand the best interests of our children or our schools.

To the third subclass belong “those elicitation which invite the addressee to agree with the speaker’s assumption that the expressed proposition is self-evidently true” (p. 86).

There are ten instances of this elicitation class in the data. It is commonly realised by negative polar interrogatives and tag questions. For instance:

Text F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

LECTURER>: Okay. That's something else that you need to be aware of. It would be no good ... putting together a menu that required ... certain equipment to be used ... and staff didn't have the ability to use it. ... And that is a summary of that. ... Another point there ... size and equipment of kitchen and dining room. ***It would be no good ... putting together menu ... and arranging to do two thousand covers if you've got ... spacing for twenty persons, would it?*** ... By the same token, if your equipment ... is ... small pieces of equipment ... then you would not have the facility ... to do a large volume of meals. If you think of it in relationship to the size of your cooker at home ... and the size of the convection ... ovens in ... the eighth floor kitchen ... or in [...] ... they're much larger ... and therefore you are more able to cook volume. ... It's alright. When I'm actually choosing the dishes that I'm going to put on the menu, what things do we need to consider?
PS000>: Er ... special diets, like vegetarian or

The second subclass of directives consists of those acts that elicit a non-verbal response. This subclass is slightly more numerous than the former. With 35 occurrences, it accounts for 56.4% of directives in our data. In turn, they can be subdivided into three separate types: requestives, mandates and advisives.

The crucial difference between requestives and mandates has to do with “whether or not the addressee is given the option of carrying out the solicited action” (Tsui 1994: 90). In a request, says Leech (1983: 219), the speaker acknowledges the addressee’s right to withhold compliance. Tsui (1994: 97) distinguishes between who the speaker’s action benefits, whether the speaker or the addressee, to separate invitations from requests for action. The latter group, clearly more numerous in our transcripts, subsumes acts which prospect only addressee action and speaker benefit. In invitations, however, the action is both to be performed by and is beneficial to the addressee (p. 98), as shown in the excerpt below.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: If you were to use essential oil neat, that's the little drops of oil, it's too strong and it will h, well, it won't harm you but it won't, it might set up irritations. You must always mix it with an oil. And if you went say to 's where they sell essential oils, theirs are pure oils. You must always buy what they call a carrier oil to help mix the oils. Now ours, we've helped you by already mixing it, so ours have got three percent of essential oil to a carrier oil, which in our case happens to be grapes erm grapeseed oil, which is a very light carrier oil. So ... I'll start with the first one and I'll pass it round and just ... ***put either the relaxing***

on one hand and the reviving on the other, and you'll have one hand relaxed, the other one [laughing] doing this.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: So and see just, get to like the smell. See which one you like the smell of as I pass them round. Now the first one is camomile. Have any of you ever been on a camomile lawn?

Mandatives show the same frequency of occurrence than requestives. They are “attempts to get the addressee to perform, or to refrain from performing, an action for the benefit of the speaker” (Tsui 1994: 127). They prospect, often by virtue of the speaker’s right or power/authority, a non-verbal action from the hearer without giving him/her the option of non-compliance (p. 116). Two different kinds of mandatives can be distinguished, namely instructions and threats¹².

One is issued because of the speaker’s want, or one can say is issued for the benefit of the speaker himself. The other has the additional feature of explicitly stating that the speaker himself will bring about the undesirable consequence should the addressee refuse to comply.

Let us identify the former as an *instruction* and the latter as a *threat*. (Tsui 1994: 128-9)

This example has been extracted from a teacher-pupil interaction where instructions typically occur. The preceding context made clear that only two students mentioned nutrition as an important factor when planning a menu.

Text F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

LECTURER>: The colours. The colour. ... You need this information to do your exercise that you're going to do for me ... shortly. ... So, do not repeat the main ingredients. Avoid food the same colour. It actually gives you an example there. And ***think about the textures of food***. ... Over here. Is that better? Can you see now?

PS000>: Yes.

LECTURER>: ***And ... something that ... you all mentioned ... nutrition.***

PS000>: No. It's alright.

LECTURER>: If you were planning a menu ... which would you consider first do you think? Proteins?

PS000>: Protein.

LECTURER>: vitamins, carbohydrates?

¹² In the speech act literature, threats have usually been classified as commissives rather than directives. However, Harris (1980: 175; quoted in Tsui 1994: 132) has noted, rightly in my view, that the purpose of a threat is not to commit the speaker to a future action, but to get the addressee to perform an action.

The following example illustrates how mothers resort to threats when they fail to get compliance from their children.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Look just put the phone book down.

KALEY>: Can I tell dad something? ...

FRANCIS>: Tell dad I wanna tell him something.

FRANCES>: It's all gone. Toy's eat it all. What's going on? Kaley, you get some milk out the fridge, please. ... Oh. Right, *there's gonna be trouble in a second*, mind. Kaley, you can talk in a minute cos [...] when Shirley comes back, Shirley wasn't there. Kaley, don't cry. Brett, give Kaley a cuddle now.

BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: Yes, you villain. Milk. ...

FRANCIS>: Ee, you've gotta [...]

FRANCES>: You what?

KALEY>: Brett [...] on the head.

FRANCES>: You, naughty boy. Now get off. Did you hit Kaley? You kiss her better now. Kiss Kaley this minute. Give her a kiss. Kiss it now. That's it, shake hands. Right [...]. I'll tell you what we need to do with you.

Finally, advisives are those directives “which advocate a course of action to be performed by the addressee for his own benefit” (Tsui 1994: 119). As with invitations, this demonstrates that not all directives are in the speaker’s advantage. Seven instances of advisives were found in our data (all of them performed indirectly). According to Tsui, two different kinds of advisives can be distinguished: warnings in which “the undesirable consequence of not complying is highlighted” and advices in which “the desirable consequence of complying is highlighted” (p. 120). The latter covers acts which have been referred to in the speech act literature as advise, suggest and recommend. In the following excerpt Sandra’s utterance is an advice in response to Deanne’s claim *don’t know what to do with it*.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

SANDRA>: The stuff I buy from Marks's is always good quality.

DEANNE>: Yeah. I don't like buying kid's

SANDRA>: They last longer.

DEANNE>: clothes from there. Because I think tha i ... I don't like anything that lasts long on kids. If yo, if you understand what I mean. I'd rather

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: them wear it out ... I'd rather it

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: wear out and me throw it away than it still be good and ... don't know what to do with it, you know, you're thinking

SANDRA>: [laughing] Yeah.
 DEANNE>: Oh, this is still too good to put in the rag bag basically, you know, that sort of [...]. I'd rather have it
 SANDRA>: Oh, *I've got loads of people I pass stuff on to.*
 DEANNE>: Yeah. Well, I
 SANDRA>: I mean
 DEANNE>: do if I've got anything, but I find half the time, I mean, it's like jeans and things, if you go into Marks's you can spend 15 pound on a
 SANDRA>: Oh! I never buy, I never buy for him in Marks's.

Table 5.3. illustrates the frequency and distribution of directive speech acts into subdivisions. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of the members of this class.

Illocutionary sub-class		Occurrences	Percentages
Prospected response: verbal > Elicit		27	43.5%
Acts	Elicit: confirm	12	
	Elicit: agree	10	
	Elicit: inform	5	
Prospected response: non-verbal action		35	56.4%
Requestive		14	22.5%
Acts	Invite	1	
	Request for action	13	
Mandative		14	22.5%
Acts	Threat	1	
	Instruct	13	
Advisive		7	11.2%
Acts	Warn	2	
	Advice	5	

Table 5.3. Occurrences and percentages of expressives in the BNC data

5.4.1.3. Expressives

The third group of illocutionary acts accounts for 10.6% of overstated utterances in the transcripts examined. Expressives convey the speaker's emotional attitude to the assumption expressed. Recall that "the property specified in the propositional content of an

expressive must be related to S or H” (Searle 1976: 13). They include the notion of reaction and attitude to other people’s behaviour and fortunes.

Since the class of expressives is heterogeneous as far as the illocutionary goal of its individual members is concerned, the sincerity condition must be defined for each case in a specific way (Haverkate 1990: 105). Thus, I shall limit myself to the analysis of the expressive speech acts present in the data.

Out of 33 occurrences, 23 can be defined as assessments directed at the addressee. Negative evaluations clearly prevail over positive ones, almost doubling them in number. Forms of positive evaluation correspond to praise, congratulations and compliments. In such cases, the speaker expresses “gladness for the hearer’s having performed some action” (Fraser 1983: 40). By contrast, negative assessment includes different forms of negative judgement, attitude or affect such as insult, reproach, disdain and blame. The next extract contains an example of both praise and criticism whose target is the hearer. Later in this chapter, we shall discuss why both acts are performed indirectly.

Text FMB > Science lesson: year 10

TEACHER>: Right, now, listen folks. [...] sh, sh, sh, sh, sh. Can I [...] remind you please, if you're answering a question, can you please put your hand up so I can select [...]. Some of you know [...] Now way back a couple of weeks ago when we were doing the group seven the one that's spelt F C L B R I A T. Hands up who can remember what any of those stand for without looking on er [...]

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: You forgot the first rule: put your hand up. Right, fluorine is the actual element, fluoride is the stuff that's in?

PS000>: Toothpaste.

TEACHER>: Toothpaste, very good. *You never put your hand up.* Right, CL.

PS000>: Please, sir is [...] chloride

TEACHER>: Chloride is the, is when it's joined up with something, chlorine is the element. And what do we get chlorine in?

PS000>: Swimming baths.

TEACHER>: Swimming baths to?

PS000>: To take away all the nasty.

PS000>: To kill the germs.

TEACHER>: Well, it doesn't exactly kill them, kill the [...] it's got its own smell which sort of ... tends to mask the smell [...] but it's also basically to kill the germs. BR?

PS000>: Bromine.

TEACHER>: Bromine [...], very good. And I?

PS000>: Iodine.

TEACHER>: *Very good, excellent.* S so what I want you to show you this morning is how we can actually make the chlorine.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: So [...] the people at the front, yeah, if, if you come up a little bit closer. ... [...] ... Now [...] sh, sh, sh, sh. ... Please ... Now ... I've got erm a bottle which is actually contains some chlorine here but it's not called chlorine liquid. I'll scratch this.

As for the rest of expressives, six are acts of commiseration, whereby the speaker expresses “sympathy for the hearer’s having suffered” (Fraser 1983: 40). The following example illustrates how the speaker shows (indirectly) concern and empathy for the addressee.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000>: What, what, what do you think of those two experiences? Yes?

PS000>: I admire them for being able to sit there in front of everybody and say they actually, what they've been through, because ***it must have been sheer hell ... er, trying to come off and withdrawal symptoms***. I mean, I don't know much about it cos I've never taken ... well, I smoke

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: and I take a drink, but hard drugs ... misused drugs ... ***it just must be shu he sheer hell!*** And if ... they're coming out stating that your families turned their back, they've had enough.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

PS000>: Who do you turn to?

Thanking is another expressive. It is a display of gratitude for a service rendered. It occurs three times in our transcripts, always indirectly performed. The speaker expresses “gratitude for the hearer’s participation in some prior action” (Fraser 1983: 41). In the extract below, the minister “expresses his feeling towards a debt which he has incurred” (Tsui 1994: 153), or that he feels he has incurred.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR ANTHONY COOMBS>: In recognising the crucial importance of lower non-wage costs in Britain compared to Europe, is my honourable friend aware of the fact that Lemmerz, a German wheel maker has transferred all its heavy wheel making operations to my constituency for precisely that reason?

PS000>: [...]

MR ANTHONY COOMBS>: and also the carpet companies in my constituency are now going to Germany to buy up their now redundant carpet-making machinery precisely because German companies can't compete in the kind of regime that they are have imposed upon them?

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, I, ***I'm most er grateful to my honourable friend ... for giving yet another example of how the social chapter has exported jobs out of the eleven into Britain***. That's good news for Britain as long as we ensure that we never ever sign up to the social chapter with its job destroying, er job destroying characteristics.

The table below shows the frequency of the members of the expressive class, with percentages calculated on the sum of expressives found in our data.

Illocutionary sub-class		Occurrences	Percentages
H assessment		23	69.6%
Acts	Positive evaluation	8	24.2%
	Negative evaluation	15	45.4%
Commiserate		6	18.1%
Thank		3	9%
Welcome		1	3%

Table 5.4. Occurrences and percentages of expressives in the BNC data

5.4.1.4. Commissives

The frequency of this force in our transcripts is almost negligible. It only accounts for 2.2% of overstated utterances. Commissives are acts which commit the speaker to the performance of a future course of action. They are diametrically opposed to directives, says Haverkate (1990: 97), “since they are centered upon an action to be performed by the speaker, not by the hearer; moreover, it is the hearer, not the speaker, who is supposed to primarily benefit from the result of the action”.

In terms of subclasses, commissive speech acts have generally been divided into promises and offers. Fraser (1983: 40) has refined, rightly in my view, this distinction.

Commissives: Speaker intends that his utterance obligates him to carry out the action specified in the propositional content:

A Without any further preconditions

(promise, swear, guarantee, vow)

B Subject to a favourable response by the hearer

(offer, propose, bet, volunteer, bid)

The second sub-class again demonstrates Fraser’s concern for the interactional and collaborative dimension of illocutionary acts.

In the BNC data, out of 7 commissive acts, 4 are promises and belong to the former subclass. Let us take the following example to illustrate the case.

Text F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on word processing

LECTURER>: So if you wanna select all the text you've written, she shift F10 selects the whole document. And essentially, you only will change the appearance of the text which is appearing in your vers video. So if you actually want to italicize something, you want to make it bold, you le you have to select it first and then you can carry out the ... tha, the function. So, if everybody selects the text that they want of their document and we'll just play around with it ... ***show you what a mess you can actually create using these formatting keys!*** So everybody have document and hit shift F10 ... and they're on page nine now ... if we go, hold down the alt key and type B ... and you'll just see er a shimmer go down the screen ... and ... then you don't actually see anything, but if you alt U, everything appears underlined ... alt K ... converts everything into small capitals ..., alt S strikes through everything ... and alt I ... italicizes all the words. If you don't press your arrow ... you'll see what a mess you've created in your document!

Subject to a favourable response by the listener are two different acts: an offer and a proposal. Offers are utterances in which “the speaker commits himself to doing something for the addressee” (Tsui 1994: 46), as in the next excerpt.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

PS000>: No, I think I know what a rose smells like.
MASSEUR>: You, Yes [...].
PS000>: [laugh]
MASSEUR>: He's gonna, he's gonna bypass that one.
ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Not macho
PS000>: No.
ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: enough.
PS000>: [laugh]
PS000>: No, I just I know they ta I know what they smell like, you know.
MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah.
PS000>: [...]
MANAGERESS>: [...] everybody's asleep in a minute, everybody's [...].
PS000>: [...] [laugh]
MASSEUR>: ***I've got the reviving ones next.*** You're all right?
PS000>: [laugh]
MASSEUR>: [...]
ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Are you okay in the corner Karen, enjoying the smells?
PS000>: Nearly asleep.
PS000>: [laugh]
MANAGERESS>: Haven't been so relaxed for ages, have we?

In proposals, “the action is to be performed by and is beneficial to both the speaker and the addressee” (p. 107). This shows that although commissives are generally regarded as acts carried out by the speaker for the hearer’s benefit, this is not always the case. The following is an indirect formulation of a proposal.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MANAGERESS>: Lavender must

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.

MANAGERESS>: be nice sort of in the bath at night.

MASSEUR>: Yes.

MANAGERESS>: So which one is the best sort of

MASSEUR>: Lavender is. We have a, a erm a bath oil here. Oh, well, I've got the massage one which w *we might massage our hands or massage somebody's hands in a minute*. This relaxing massage oil has got lavender in and ylang-ylang and frankincense

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: and sandalwood so it's nice for men as well cos they're supposed to like frankincense and sandalwood. [laugh] And this is nice if you just use a capful in a drawn bath. And so if you were to use that at night and then put a bit of lavender on it is really nice.

An instance of invitation decline has also been included in this class since turning down an invitation implies that the speaker refuses to do or to comply with a future course of action suggested by the hearer.

Until this point, I have been classifying, defining and exemplifying illocutionary forces, independently of their surface forms. Brief references have been made to the indirect character of some of the acts illustrated above. In the next section I will focus on the notion of indirectness.

5.4.2. Locution vs. illocutionary force: the notion of indirection

In section 5.3., it was argued that the context of utterance together with the locution, that is, the actual words uttered, needs to be examined in order to assign illocutionary force to an utterance. With regard to the locutionary act, Fraser (1983: 43) notes that “syntactic form *does* contribute to sentence meaning and therefore to what the speaker says in uttering a particular sentence”. Mood is a particularly important force indicator device in speech act theory: declaratives most typically have assertive force, interrogatives have question force and imperatives have directive force.

There would be few problems for speech act theory if utterances always carried a clear indication of their force, but this is, unfortunately, not always the case. The illocutionary force of utterances does not always correspond with the force normally assigned to specific sentence types. In other words, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between sentence type and illocutionary force. The problem of indirection points to the distance between what is said (sense) and what is meant (force), between the literal propositional meaning of an utterance and the act performed in context.

The notion of indirect speech act, first introduced by Searle (1975), points to an act which is masqueraded or performed by way of another illocutionary act. The indirection argument is a central concept in speech act theory. It shows that “the surface lexical, syntactic form of an utterance often does not make explicit the illocutionary intent of the speaker” (Stubbs 1996: 205). As a way of illustration, let us take the following excerpt where the minister thanks the Secretary of State for Employment by issuing a request for permission. Although the syntactic form of the utterance is that of a question, the illocutionary force is that of an expressive.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Question number two, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the levels of employment in the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, the United Kingdom has sixty-nine percent ... of its working age population in work and it is rising. Germany has sixty-five percent and it is falling and France sixty percent and now also falling.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Pawsey.

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: ***May I thank my honourable friend for that extremely helpful reply and for the encouraging figures which he has given to the House this afternoon?***

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Very encouraging [...].

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Clearly it happens to er underline the fact that the United Kingdom economy is in much better shape when compared to the economies of our principal European competitors.

Given the depth of indirection involved in many utterances, it is not surprising that conversationalists often have difficulties in determining what speech act is being performed. In such cases, addressees need to resort to the Cooperative Principle to infer what illocutionary act is being implicated. Indirect speech acts, says Fraser (1983: 46), “are intended to be *inferred* by the speaker on the basis of what has been said, the way in which it was said, and the context of speaking”.

5.4.2.1. Direct vs. indirect illocutionary acts in the BNC data

Out of 310 exaggerated utterances in the transcripts examined, only 77 are indirect illocutionary acts. With 233 occurrences, the results suggest an overwhelming presence of direct speech acts (75.1%) over those performed indirectly (23.8%). Despite the results, the focus in this section falls on indirection.

In order to explain why some speech acts are performed indirectly, first I shall determine what kinds of indirect illocutionary acts occur in our data. Here I will be primarily concerned with the study of what Searle (1975: 62) calls “primary illocutionary act”, that is, the indirect force of the utterance.

The table below shows the distribution of indirect acts over illocutionary forces in our data. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of acts performed indirectly.

Illocutionary force, subclass and act	Occurrences	Percentages
Representative:	12	15.5%
Report: state	5	6.4%
Assessment:	7	9%
Assessing: positive assessing	2	
Self-assessment:	5	
self-deprecation	1	
self-commendation	4	
Directive:	29	37.6%
Requestive: request for action	12	15.5%
Mandative:	10	12.9%
Instruct	9	
Threat	1	
Advisive:	7	9%
Advice	5	
Warn	2	
Commissive:	5	6.4%
Without precondition	3	3.8%
Promise	2	
Decline invitation	1	

Subject to favourable response by H	2	2.5%
Offer	1	
Proposal	1	
Expressive:	31	40.2%
H assessment:	21	27.2%
Positive evaluation	7	
Negative evaluation	14	
Commiserate	6	7.7%
Thank	3	3.8%
Welcome	1	1.2%

Table 5.5. Distribution of indirect speech acts over forces, subclasses and acts

As shown by the table, the most salient force, in terms of frequency, for indirect illocutionary acts is the area of expressives. With 31 occurrences, it accounts for 40.2% of indirect speech acts in our data. Note that, curiously, the most recurrent subclass is that of assessment directed at the addressee. Expressives are closely followed in number by the class of directives, whose frequency is 37.6%. Not in vain, the problem of how indirect speech acts are issued has been studied most extensively for indirect directives, particularly for indirect requests.

It is generally assumed that there are four basic methods by which the speaker can indirectly order or request the hearer to perform some action:

- (1) Ability. Assert to H that (s)he is able to do that action, or ask H whether or not (s)he is able to do that action. In the excerpt below, the mother issues a request by questioning “H’s ability to perform A” (Searle 1975: 65).

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: You're pretending it's Friday, are you? Yes, we're not gonna forget to sing happy birthday today, are you?

FRANCIS>: No.

FRANCES>: When he come in and give him a big kiss. *Can somebody please go and watch Chloe a minute?* What? Er, if you don't stop eating those biscuits there'll be trouble. Go on. Go and see Chloe. ... What you drawing, Kaley?

KALEY>: No, I'm writing the date.

FRANCES>: You're writing the date. Are you writing Friday then or Thursday?

KALEY>: No more cake, Friday.

(2) Desire. Assert to H that you want him/her to perform the action. No examples containing forms of exaggeration were found in our data.

(3) Future action. Assert to H that (s)he will do that action, or ask H whether or not (s)he will do that action. In the next extract, the minister requests an explanation on wage differentials from the Secretary of State for Employment.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR ALEX CARLILE>: Given the favourable non-wage labour cost which the minister told us about a moment ago, how does he justify the enormous discrepancy in wages between England and Wales as an average and areas like South Wales and Northumberland where average weekly earnings are up to sixty-five pounds less ... than the average? ... and **will he explain to us why the Government is not tackling huge wage differentials in this country?**

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Well, I have to say I'm amazed at the honourable gentleman asking that question. If he had his way, and we signed up for the social chapter, those extra costs would have to be met out of those pay packets and there'd be even less for people to take in wages, so the honourable gentleman shouldn't be complaining about low pay when he wants to add to the costs of employment along with the rest of his party.

(4) Reasons. Assert to H that there are good reasons for doing the act, or ask H whether or not there are good reasons for doing the act. In the extract below, Ian's statement to the effect that he has not got a pen counts as a request to refrain Grace from asking him repeatedly.

Text KPE > Conversation recorded by Grace

IAN>: Smelly bitch.

GRACE>: That's all you can say, innit? Can't say nothing else.

IAN>: Can't say nothing else.

GRACE>: [...] Can I have a pen?

IAN>: You got anything to say, say it out loud. Fucking bitch. Alright, if you've got anything to say ... don't smoke [...]. You understand English? [...] Are you cooperating properly?

GRACE>: God, I don't believe [...].

PS6U2>: Haven't got one.

IAN>: ***I have told you about ten times I have not got a pen.***

GRACE>: Have you got a pen [...]?

IAN>: Bring your own equipment.

PS6U2>: [...]

GRACE>: My pen's run out [...], pass me that pencil there. I, is it sharper?

These four methods for making indirect orders or requests are closely related to the felicity conditions listed by Searle (1975: 71) for directives, namely:

- (1) Preparatory condition: H is able to perform A
- (2) Sincerity condition: S wants H to do A
- (3) Propositional content condition: S predicates a future act A of H
- (4) Essential condition: Counts as an attempt by A to get H to do A

As the numbering shows, each felicity condition for the successful and felicitous performance of directives corresponds to a method for making indirect requests. By making explicit one of the conditions inherent in the performance of directive speech acts, “the speaker formally realizes a type of speech act (a) associating it by implication with another type of speech act (b)” (Haverkate 1990: 97).

Within the framework of indirect speech acts, some forms tend to become routinized or standardised. In the case of directives, some sentences seem almost to be conventionally used as indirect requests. Thus, *can you X?* as in the example above, is a highly conventionalised politeness form in British English, likely to be interpreted by native speakers as a *request* to do X, rather than a question as to one’s *ability* to do X (Thomas 1983: 101).

Now let us compare how direct illocutionary acts are distributed over forces, subclasses and acts in the transcripts examined. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of direct speech acts.

Illocutionary force, subclass and act	Occurrences	Percentages
Representative:	196	84.1%
Report:	147	63%
Recount	56	
Inform	27	
State	21	
Assessment:	49	21%
Assessing:	47	
Positive assessing	22	
Negative assessing	25	
Self-assessment: self-deprecate	2	
Directive:	33	14.1%
Requestive:	2	0.8%

Request for action	1	
Invite	1	
Mandative: instruct	4	1.7%
Elicit:	27	11.5%
Elicit: agree	10	
Elicit: confirm	12	
Elicit: inform	5	
Commissive:	2	0.8%
Without precondition: promise	2	
Expressive:	2	0.8%
H assessment:	2	
Positive evaluation	1	
Negative evaluation	1	

Table 5.6. Distribution of direct speech acts over forces, subclasses and acts

Comparing tables 5.5. and 5.6., one can see that, in terms of frequency, there is an extraordinary inverse correlation. In general, those forces that prevail for direct speech acts are scarce in the case of indirection, and the other way round. Thus, the class of assertives, which is the most prominent force for direct illocutionary acts (84.1%), only accounts for 15.5% of indirect cases. By contrast, expressives only count with 2 occurrences for direct acts (0.8%), but this is the most recurrent indirect force in our data (40.2%).

At first sight the class of directives seems exceptional, since roughly equal numbers of directives were found in both cases. However, a closer look at the tables reveals that the subclasses clearly vary for direct and indirect realisations. In the former case, 27 out of 33 items correspond to elicitation, whereas requestives, mandatives and advisives prevail for indirect realisations. On the other hand, commissives, although scarce in our data, are mostly realised indirectly.

We may now turn to the question of why speakers go to the trouble of expressing themselves indirectly, when their acts can be performed in a straightforward way. The aim is also to determine why direct and indirect speech acts belong to rather different illocutionary forces: why are directives and expressives mostly realised indirectly, and

representatives performed in direct ways? In order to answer these questions, the notions of politeness and face-threatening acts need to be introduced.

5.4.3. Politeness theory: the notion of face threatening act

Although different theories of politeness have been devised over the years (e.g. Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983, Fraser 1990, etc.), I shall mainly refer here to Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving model, since it is generally seen as the most clearly articulated and most thoroughly worked out. Indeed, nearly all current work on politeness is discussed in relation to this theory. According to these scholars, politeness is a pragmatic phenomenon. It refers to the use of appropriate linguistic strategies to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining harmonious interpersonal relations.

Brown and Levinson's politeness model aims to "provide an explanation for the divergence observed in conversational exchanges from the maxims postulated earlier by Grice" (Matsumoto 1989: 207). They postulate a Model Person (MP), who is a "wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, [...] endowed with two special properties – rationality and face" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 58). Since they are rational, all MPs choose those linguistic strategies that will satisfy their communicative ends. The notion of "face", central to Brown and Levinson's theory, is derived from Goffman (1967: 5), who defined it as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". For Brown and Levinson, face is a twofold concept, consisting of positive and negative face. Negative face refers to a person's want to be unimpeded by others, the desire to be free to act as s/he chooses and not be imposed upon. By contrast, positive face is defined as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 62). In other words, it is the need to be liked, appreciated and approved of.

Face, say Brown and Levinson (1987: 61), "can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction". Every participant, says Hübler (1983: 156), must have the dual role of both looking after his own face and having regard for the face of the other(s). MPs generally act so as to mutually maintain face. However, there are acts which intrinsically threaten face, namely "those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 65). They

have been termed face-threatening acts (FTAs, henceforth). They argue that two fundamental distinctions can be made: the type of face that is primarily threatened (whether positive or negative), and the person's face that is primarily threatened (speaker or hearer).

Let us now examine, following Brown and Levinson's (1987: 65-8) taxonomy, the types of FTA found in our transcripts, independently of their realisation, whether direct or indirect. Most have already been illustrated earlier in this chapter. The number of occurrences for each FTA appears in brackets.

In our data, acts that primarily threaten the addressee's negative-face want, "by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (S) does not intend avoid impeding H's freedom of action" (p. 65), include:

- (i) Acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in doing so put pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) A: instructions (13), requests for action (12), advices (4), warnings (2), threats (1) and invitations (1). In general, this class corresponds to the area of directives, and consists of requestives, mandates and advisives.
- (ii) Acts that "predicate some positive act of S toward H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to accept or reject them, and possibly to incur a debt" (p. 66): promises (2), offers (1) and proposals (1). Broadly, this group responds to commissive speech acts. Even if the act is made in the interest of the hearer, some invasion of privacy and some lessening of freedom of self-determination is implicit in such an act (Edmonson 1981: 30).
- (iii) Acts that predicate some desire of S toward H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that s/he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire or give it to S. This class of FTAs corresponds in our data to forms of positive assessment directed to the addressee (7), such as compliments, congratulations, expressions of admiration, praise, etc.

Below are acts that damage the hearer's positive face, by indicating that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc.

- (i) Acts that "show that S has a negative evaluation of some aspects of H's positive face" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66). To this class of FTAs belong those forms of negative assessment whose target is the listener (15), such as insult, reproach, disdain, blame, etc. It also corresponds to challenges or disagreements (5),

where S indicates “H is wrong or misguided or unreasonable about some issue, such wrongness being associated with disapproval” (*ibid.*).

- (ii) Acts showing that S does not care about (or is indifferent to) H’s positive face, for instance, by refusing blatantly to cooperate in an activity, as in declining an invitation (1).

FTAs threatening the speaker’s face also fall into two separate groups:

Acts that offend the addresser’s negative face include:

- (i) Expressing thanks (3), since “S accepts a debt, humbles his own face” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 67).
- (ii) Self-commendations (4), since this runs contrary to Leech’s (1983: 132) modesty maxim: “minimize praise of self”. Leech observes that to violate this maxim is to boast, which is socially unacceptable.

Acts that damage the speaker’s positive face in our data consist of:

- (i) Self-humiliations (3)
- (ii) Confessions or admissions (2)

One of the criticism of Brown and Levinson’s theory is that FTAs can often simultaneously threaten both the speaker’s and the hearer’s face (Thomas 1995: 176, Spencer-Oatey 2000: 4). For example, self-praise damages the speaker’s face, but also “constitutes a threat to the hearer in that he feels compelled either to present himself to the speaker in a good light, too, or to bow meekly to the speaker’s face, with all the attendant interpersonal consequences” (Hübler 1983: 158-9).

Table 5.7. depicts, in terms of frequency, the number and typology of FTAs in the transcripts examined. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of FTAs discussed above.

Face Target/Side	Positive		Negative	
	Occurrences	Percentages	Occurrences	Percentages
Hearer	21	27.1%	44	57.1%
Speaker	5	6.4%	7	9%

Table 5.7. Distribution of FTAs according to target and face variables

As the table shows, most often the target is the addressee, rather than the speaker. Acts against the hearer's face account for 84.4% of FTAs in our data, whereas the number of those directed at the speaker him/herself is almost negligible. On the other hand, threats against negative face are more numerous than those against positive face, independently of whose face is being damaged.

The most prominent class, in terms of frequency, is the group of FTAs against the hearer's negative face. It accounts for 57.1% of FTAs. Within this class, the area of directives, with 33 occurrences, clearly prevails, but it also includes commissives and expressives whose aim is to praise or compliment the addressee. The second most recurrent class responds to FTAs directed to the hearer's positive face. Out of 21 FTAs, 15 are expressives whereby the speaker criticises or condemns the addressee (or the referents within his or her field of interest). Notice that, curiously, the bulk of FTAs correspond to the largest areas of indirection in our data: directives and expressives. There is an extraordinary correspondence between the most recurrent classes of FTAs and the most frequent indirect illocutionary forces.

The total number of FTAs in the BNC transcripts examined amounts to 77. Of them, 18 are performed directly and 59 indirectly, via other speech acts. The difference in distribution can be more clearly appreciated when comparing them to the number of non-FTAs¹³. Out of 233 direct illocutionary acts, 215 are non-FTAs, whereas of 77 indirect realisations of acts, only 18 do not imply much risk to face. Hence, we can safely assume that there is an extraordinary correlation between indirection and FTAs, and that in general direct speech acts are those actions that are not offensive or dangerous to the face of participants in conversation.

In terms of distribution over text and text categories in the BNC data, it is not surprising that the text where the number of indirect illocutionary acts exceeds the number of those performed directly is the House of Commons' debate. This can be satisfactorily explained by the large number of FTAs ministers perform. Since the different parties, especially the Government and the opposition, adopt adversarial stances, they are constantly attacking and refuting each other's claims.

¹³ Another objection to Brown and Levinson's politeness framework is that all language is face-threatening. Dascal (1977: 315) argues, that merely speaking to someone sets up a "conversational demand": simply by speaking we trespass on another person's face. Similarly, Fraser (1990: 229) argues that all acts are inherently FTAs, since they all require the hearer to do work to understand the speaker's communicative intentions. Thus, they impose an effort on the hearer.

5.4.3.1. Politeness strategies

In Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 24) politeness model, the organising principle is the idea that “some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening”. Focusing mainly on reducing threat to hearer (rather than speaker) face, they note that “any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat” (p. 68), as the diagram below illustrates.

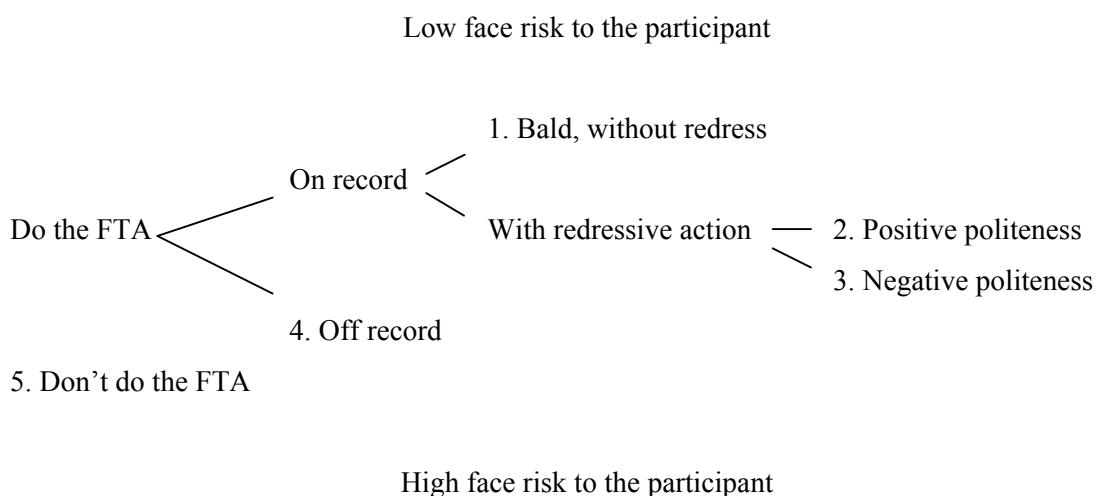


Diagram 5.8. Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 69) superstrategies for performing FTAs

Performing an act on record, but baldly (without redress), implies doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way. Except in these cases, where speakers want to do the FTA with maximum efficiency, they try to minimise the face threat by choosing an appropriate strategy.

By redressive action, Brown and Levinson (1987: 69-70) mean, “attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way, or with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired”. According to the kind of face (whether positive or negative), redress can take the form of positive or negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness, which is “roughly, the expressions of solidarity” (p. 2), orients towards the hearer’s positive face needs. Negative politeness or the expression of restraint is oriented towards the hearer’s negative face wants. Off-record politeness allows more than one justifiable interpretation of the act.

Broadly, it is defined as “the avoidance of unequivocal impositions” (p. 2). In turn, superstrategies 2, 3 and 4 can be subdivided into strategies, as we shall see below. Finally avoidance points to cases in which the act implies such a threat that it is not even performed.

Brown and Levinson claim that, in general, the greater the estimation of degree of face loss, that is, the more dangerous the FTA, the higher-numbered strategy that will be selected (p. 73). This means that positive politeness precedes (is less face-redressive than) negative politeness, which in turn is less protective than off record strategies. In order to compute the seriousness of risk or weightiness of an FTA, one must assess the social distance between S and H, the relative power of H over S, and the degree to which X is rated an imposition in that culture (p. 74). Leech (1980: 24) proposes almost identical criteria for calculating the amount of tact required in a given situation: the more power H holds over S, the more socially distant H is from S, the more costly X is to H, the more tact is required.

5.4.3.1.1. Politeness strategies in the BNC data

In this section I will focus on the analysis and exemplification of the politeness strategies found in our data, including indirect speech acts.

In our transcripts, only a few FTAs are performed baldly, on record. Direct imperatives stand out as clear examples of such usage. Normally, an FTA is done in this way if the speaker does not fear retribution from the addressee, for example in circumstances where “the danger to H’s face is *very* small, as in offers, requests, suggestions that are clearly in H’s interest and do not require great sacrifices of S” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69). Such is the case of the invitation (masseur: *put either the relaxing on one hand and the reviving on the other*) in section 5.4.1.2.

Similarly, acts are often performed baldly when the speaker is superior in power to the listener. In this sense, Brown and Levinson (1987: 78) note that “as S’s power over H increases, the weightiness of the FTA diminishes”. The instruction example (lecturer: *think about the textures of food and something that ... you all mentioned ... nutrition*) found in section 5.4.1.2. may serve to illustrate the case.

This is not the norm, though. All FTAs, with the exception of eight cases of bald-on-record usage, are to a greater or lesser extent mitigated in our data. I turn now to analyse those strategies used to express potential FTAs but maintaining face, namely positive, negative and off-record politeness. Since speakers may choose more than one strategy (or superstrategy) to reduce the degree of face threat of a particular act, that is, since several strategies may co-occur, I will talk in terms of occurrences of strategies, rather than FTAs.

At this point it is worth mentioning that for Brown and Levinson, the choice between negative and positive politeness strategies “is dependent on the weightiness of the face threat, not on the type of face (positive or negative) that is being threatened” (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 4).

There is just one strategy of positive politeness, totalling 9 occurrences, used to mitigate FTAs in our data, namely humour. Other involvement strategies such as exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) and intensify interest to H also occur in the transcripts examined, but they are not motivated by face needs. FTAs are implemented in joking by their very non-serious nature. In this sense, Brown and Levinson (1987: 124) claim that jokes may be used as “attempts to redefine the size of the FTA”. When humour is used to attack, while conveying the derogatory sense loud and clear, humour minimises the face threat in that it can easily be dismissed along the lines of: *He/she could not really mean that* or *He’s only joking* (Zajdman 1995: 326). As we shall see in chapter six, a productive strategy in evoking laughter is hyperbole, together with other figures of speech such as understatement and irony. In the excerpt below the speaker declines an invitation (*Just massage it on your hand*) and challenges the hearer’s claim (*if you’ve got a headache you can massage it on your temples*), under the pretence that he is not being serious. Note here that the act is performed indirectly by “asserting the satisfaction of the sincerity condition” (Searle 1975: 79).

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Just massage it on your hand. I'll leave some tissues around so that if you don't like it or you want to rub it off you can always use a tissue. There.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: There.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Your mother'll wonder where you've been Mike.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yes, yes [...].

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Ooh, yeah.

PS000>: [laugh]
MASSEUR>: [...]?
PS000>: No.
MASSEUR>: No, you don't like that one? No, right.
PS000>: No [...].
MASSEUR>: Right. There.
ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...] can smell that from here.
MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah. ...
PS000>: ***I think it'd give me a headache, not take it away.***
PS000>: [laugh]
MASSEUR>: Right. So, so you'd say to yourself. Right,
PS000>: No.
MASSEUR>: you don't like camomile, that's not gonna do you any good.

Negative politeness strategies are clearly more numerous and variegated in our data. They are aimed at “minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 129).

One such strategy is to minimise the imposition, which features 7 times in our data. It is used to minimise face threat by making explicit R, that is, the ranking of imposition. In this sense, Brown and Levinson (1987: 176) argue that “one way of defusing the FTA is to indicate that Rx, the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition, is not in itself great”. Recall that hyperbole is twofold and meiosis is defined as exaggerated reduction, extenuation or diminution (Smith 1657: 56). Thus, this trope seems an excellent tool to perform such strategy successfully.

In the extract below, apart from minimising the imposition (*shut up a minute*), the speaker resorts to indirection to mitigate the command. Note that the speaker indirectly instructs Kaley to be quiet or forbids her to talk via the pretence of granting her permission to talk later. In this sense, Tsui (1994: 104) observes that an important way of minimising threat is to present one subclass of act as another subclass.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Look just put the phone book down.
KALEY>: Can I tell dad something? ...
FRANCIS>: Tell dad I wanna tell him something.
FRANCES>: It's all gone. Toy's eat it all. What's going on? Kaley, you get some milk out the fridge, please. ... Oh. Right, there's gonna be trouble in a second, mind. ***Kaley, you can talk in a minute*** cos [...] when Shirley comes back, Shirley wasn't there. Kaley, don't cry. Brett, give Kaley a cuddle now.
BRETT>: No.
FRANCES>: Yes, you villain. Milk. ...
FRANCIS>: Ee, you've gotta [...]

FRANCES>: You what?

KALEY>: Brett [...] on the head.

FRANCES>: You, naughty boy. Now get off. Did you hit Kaley? You kiss her better now. Kiss Kaley this minute. Give her a kiss. Kiss it now. That's it, shake hands. Right [...]. I'll tell you what we need to do with you.

Impersonalising S and H is, with 15 occurrences, a recurrent technique to mitigate FTAs in our transcripts. That way, the speaker and/or hearer are dissociated from the particular infringement.

One way of indicating that S doesn't want to impinge on H is to phrase the FTA as if the agent were other than S, or at least possibly not S or not S alone, and the addressee were other than H, or only inclusive of H. This results in a variety of ways of avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 190)

A manner of impersonalising is when the speaker pretends to address the FTA to a third person. This strategy is particularly frequent in the House of Commons debate, as the example below illustrates.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR RAYNSFORD>: What message has the minister to give to the five hundred and five employees of Barclays Bank in London whose new year began with receipt of a redundancy notice ... at the very moment when the bank's new chief executive was having his pay doubled to seven hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds a year? What comment has the minister to make on this example of corporate ethics or does she, like the Prime Minister, believe it's no matter for her?

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: What is the matter for the honourable gentleman is giving his constituents hope, *what he appears completely unable to do*.

PS000>: [...]

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: You will ... the House will note, the House will note, Madam Speaker, that the phraseology of the honourable gentleman's original question was how many jobs have been lost. In fact, jobs had risen and he didn't even have the grace to welcome that.

The insult addressed to Raynsford above is also mitigated by the use of a hedge (*appears*).

This leads us to discuss the last negative politeness strategy in our data. Question/hedge is quite a useful technique to avoid commitment. It derives from the want not to presume and the want not to coerce (Brown and Levinson 1987: 145), giving the hearer the option

not to do the act. This strategy, with nine occurrences in our data, reads as follows: “don’t assume H is able/willing to do any acts predicated of him” (p. 136).

The minister’s question below is a request to Miss Widdecombe to welcome the Surrey TEC, performed indirectly by questioning her doing A.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Ian Taylor.

MR IAN TAYLOR>: *Would my honourable friend er recognise that just up the River Thames from er the South Thames TEC is the Surrey TEC which is doing an excellent job with local industry in re-skilling particularly younger people?* And this partnership with industry, not just dependent on what the Government does, but what industry itself does to try and help people get back into jobs with the new challenges that are coming from the difficulties that are presented by ... higher calibre needed particularly for school leavers and other, and will he w would she welcome the Surrey TEC's initiative?

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Er, yes, I have pleasure indeed in worre er in welcoming the er Surrey TEC's initiative er and indeed similar initiatives er in other TECs up and down the country.

Notice that this example is polite in at least two respects. Firstly, Mr Taylor does not presume Miss Widdescombe’s willingness, as he would if he had issued an imperative sentence. Secondly, the form gives – or at least appears to give – Miss Widdescombe the option of refusing, since a yes-no question allows *no* as a possible answer. Hence, compliance is made to appear a free act rather than obeying a command (Searle 1975: 75).

The last set of strategies are those performed off-record, that is, by being indirect. By doing an FTA off-record, one can avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation, since “it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 211).

Finally, the fourth strategy (off record) affords S the opportunity of evading responsibility altogether (by claiming, if challenged, that the interpretation of X as an FTA is wrong), and simultaneously allows S to avoid actually *imposing* the FTA X on H, since H himself must choose to interpret X as an FTA rather than as some more trivial remark. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 73)

Although rare in our data, one such off-record strategy is incompleteness or ellipsis. “By leaving an FTA half undone”, say Brown and Levinson (1987: 227), “S can leave the

implicature ‘hanging in the air’”. In this example, apart from minimising the imposition through meiosis, the speaker omits the imperative verb in order to mitigate the FTA.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Did you get a paddy for me, please? One, oh, look at that clever girl, yes. Another one? Brett, put them down, please. Where's Kaley's gone? Well, put it down.

KALEY>: [...] the paddy.

FRANCES>: Hurry up, Kaley. Where's Francis [...]?

FRANCIS>: There.

FRANCES>: In there?

FRANCIS>: There, mum. There.

FRANCES>: Come on. ... Come on, one, two, three. Oh dear, pick it up. ***Just a minute, just a minute.*** Watch this here. Pick it up, Brett. Can you find it? Have you found it?

KALEY>: Yeah.

FRANCES>: Oh. Come on then. There's a good girl. Brett, what are you doing? Come on. ... Get up, get up, Brett. Well, what are you doing for god's sake? [laughing] What? Where's it gone? Not there. Right you get a [...]. ... Who's this, look? Who's that? Is that Penny?

However, the most important strategy used to mitigate FTAs in our data is indirection. Recall here that out of 77 FTAs, 59 are performed indirectly, disguised as other speech acts. This strategy features twice, according to the degree of conventionality, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory: as a negative and off-record politeness technique. The prevalence of indirection can be explained because “if an illocutionary force is indirect or off the record to some degree, it will be possible to claim, if challenged, that it was never issued” (Stubbs 1996: 205). Since indirection is generally seen as a more protective strategy than other politeness techniques, it is not surprising that most FTAs in our data are performed indirectly. Thus, we can conclude that “indirect speech acts have as their prime *raison d'être* the politeness function they perform” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 142).

Within the framework of negative politeness, “indirect speech acts”, say Brown and Levinson (1987: 132), “are certainly the most significant form of conventional indirectness“. They add:

In this strategy a speaker is faced with opposing tensions: the desire to give H an “out” by being indirect, and the desire to go on record. In this case it is solved by the compromise of conventional indirectness, the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually ambiguous meanings (by virtue of conventionalization) which are different from their literal meanings. In this way the utterance goes on record (to have conveyed the same thing indirectly).

Apart from the more conventionalised indirect speech acts, Brown and Levinson have classified other ways of satisfying the wants to simultaneously go on record and be indirect as off-record strategies, which are essentially indirect uses of language.

Many indirect speech acts are accomplished by hints that consist in “raising the issue of” some desired act A, for instance by stating motives or reasons for doing A (p. 213), or by asserting or questioning the conditions for A (p. 215). In the next excerpt, Paul requests Clare to go to the bun shop by argumenting he is hungry.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CRAIG>: What happened?

PAUL>: She's meant go to the bun shop. But ah, ah!

CLAIRE>: [...] [...]

CRAIG>: [laugh]

PAUL>: Ah, *man's gonna starve*.

CRAIG>: Are you going down there?

CLAIRE>: Go upstairs and get some

PS000>: Me.

CRAIG>: I'll walk down there with you.

JO>: I mean ... buns.

PAUL>: I dunno where the bun shop is.

CRAIG>: The bun shop. I know where it is.

CLAIRE>: Where?

PAUL>: Do you wanna take my

CRAIG>: Just down there.

PAUL>: car, Craig? [laugh]

Expressives and directives are acts in which indirection is most prevalent, since they imply a high risk of offence or threat to the hearer's face. In this sense, Searle (1975: 64) argues that the area of directives is the most useful to study, since “ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperatives or explicit performatives, and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends”.

Within the framework of expressives, forms of hearer assessment clearly prevail. Hübler (1983: 158) remarks that the addressee's face is extremely sensitive to both praise and criticism aimed at him/her personally. Thus, forms of evaluation directed at the listener in our data often take the form of a report or assessing (whose target is neither the speaker nor the addressee). Evaluation of the hearer can be positive or negative, but forms of criticism are particularly offensive. For this reason, a criticism is often presented as a report (Tsui 1994: 147). Similarly, Fraser (1983: 55) has observed that “many insults are

carried off in the guise of a simple Representation, more specifically, a claim”, but the content embodies some characteristic that is devalued. A possible explanation has been proposed by Drew (1984: 137) who claims that by giving an account of an event without explicitly stating the implication of the account, “speakers withhold officially taking positions about the possible implications of their reportings”. The following example, where the minister blames the government for unemployment levels but indirectly, by reporting a situation or state of affairs, is illustrative.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR TONY LLOYD>: Madam Speaker, what, what actually would shift the Secretary of State from his, his mood of complacency? ***Between 1990 ... and 1992 over a million skilled workers were put out of work in this economy, nearly half a million semi-skilled workers lost their jobs.*** The number of people trained in industry dropped by three hundred thousand and the Secretary of State tells the House that this is a success. This isn't the opposition talking the country down, it's the Government doing the country down.

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I'm sorry that the opposition is continuing to talk the country down.

But this is not exclusive of acts evaluating the addressee or any other expressive. Indeed, the bulk of indirect speech acts (67 out of 77) in our data are disguised as or take the linguistic form of a representative.

5.5. Discussion

This chapter has, hopefully, demonstrated (in naturalistic, rather than elicited data) that the theory of speech acts in general and the classification of speech acts in particular provide an optimal framework for the description of hyperbole. Although speech act theory has been discussed extensively and enjoys a central position in the realm of pragmatics, it had never been applied to the study of this figure. The taxonomy of illocutionary acts has served here as an analytical tool for arriving at a classification of the different actions (or functions) that this figure may perform in interaction. This approach enabled us to set up a typology based upon the distinction between assertive, directive, commissive and expressive hyperbole.

Although the study of exaggeration has traditionally been limited to the analysis of assertions, this figure is not restricted to the representative class. Other illocutionary forces

can be exaggerated too. This chapter has extended the analysis of hyperbolic speech acts by focusing not only on assertive, but also directive, commissive and expressive exaggeration. It could be argued then that the term “overstatement” is a misnomer, since this trope is not only performed by means of statements or assertions.

It is true, though, that hyperbolic manifestations of speech acts are not equally distributed over these illocutionary forces in our data. Exaggeration manifests itself predominantly in the performance of assertives. Compared to them, the number of directives, commissives and expressives, even together, seems almost negligible. Broadly speaking, assertives represent nearly 70% of speech acts in the data examined, whereas the rest of illocutionary forces only accounts for approximately 30%.

I find a possible explanation for the overwhelming presence of assertives in Falk (1990). She claims that “since an overstatement has in it an element of subjective evaluation of an objective fact, it is unexpected to see it in a putative situation” (p. 46). Representatives are those acts in which “the speaker expresses his belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true” (Fraser 1983: 38), that is, it is a matter of fact. By contrast, since directives and commissives refer to a future course of action they can be defined as putative acts, rather than objective facts. This seems to justify the scarcity of these illocutionary forces in our data.

Speech act theory draws a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. The latter are those acts performed indirectly, via other illocutionary acts. They perform a particular illocutionary act under the linguistic disguise of another. By far, the most common linguistic or external form for indirect illocutionary acts in our data is that of representatives. Since this force dominates the area of direct and indirect speech acts (the latter, only in terms of secondary force or literal meaning), the fact that the vast majority of researchers have limited themselves to the study of hyperbolic assertions seems less surprising now.

The bulk of speech acts in our data are direct illocutionary acts, whereas only 23.8% are performed indirectly. This runs contrary to our initial expectations, since as Levinson (1983: 264) notes “the majority of speech acts are most frequently realized indirectly”. In terms of distribution over illocutionary forces, we have noted that there is an extraordinary inverse correlation between direct and indirect realisations of acts. In general, those forces that prevail for direct speech acts are scarce in the case of indirection, and the other way

round. Representatives pervade direct speech acts, whereas directives and expressives predominate in those acts performed indirectly.

The traditional distinction between direct and indirect illocutionary acts has led us to inquire about the motives that may prompt speakers to express themselves indirectly when they can perform speech acts in a direct or literal manner. The answer to this question points to the notion of face-threatening acts. Not in vain, there is an extraordinary correlation between indirection and FTAs in our data. In general, expressives and directives are acts that damage the face of the addressee, and therefore need to be softened or palliated. Thus, indirection becomes a politeness mechanism to prevent participants from losing their face. In this sense, Leech (1980: 14-5) claims: "If you do decide to violate the politeness maxims, do so indirectly (in a way which enables the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark by means of implicatures)". Indirect speech acts are generally seen as deviations from the Co-operative Principle, and for Brown and Levinson (1987), a strong motivation for not talking strictly according to the conversational maxims is to ensure politeness and to save face. Thus, it seems natural to assume that "the major motivation for being indirect at all is politeness" (p. 139).

Although indirection may be used for purposes other than politeness, their connection seems so strong that some scholars even include the notion of politeness in their definition of indirection. Take for example Stubbs (1983: 147) who defines indirect speech acts as those "in which the illocutionary force of an utterance is overlaid by markers of mitigation or politeness". Similarly, Tsui (1994: 115) writes: "Utterances which appear to be ambivalent, or to have indeterminate illocutionary forces or multiple functions, are in fact, performing a particular discourse act under the linguistic disguise of another discourse act in order to reduce the face-threatening effect".

By contrast, direct speech acts are generally those actions that are not offensive or dangerous to the face of participants in conversation. Because of the scarcity of indirect illocutionary acts in our data, it can be argued that in general hyperbole is not an offensive or threatening figure. It occurs in acts that do not imply much risk to face, and therefore, need not be mitigated through indirection.

But indirection is not the only strategy to protect the face of participants in interaction, although it is probably the most effective one. There is a wide range of strategies available to attenuate FTAs, such as hedges, ellipsis, humour, impersonalisation, etc. Often they

appear in combination or co-occur with indirection in our data. Fraser (1990: 229) emphasises the benefits of using the aforesaid strategies: “It is by the use of these so-called politeness strategies that speakers succeed in communicating both their primary message(s) as well as their intention to be polite in doing so. And in doing so, they reduce the face loss that results from the interaction”. Among these strategies, humour and minimising the imposition seem intrinsically connected to the nature of hyperbole, as we shall see in the next chapter.

6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS: HYPERBOLE AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the production process of hyperbole in terms of the different pragmatic functions this figure of speech may fulfil in discourse. Although the intensive focus on figurative language comprehension has often led researchers to overlook the pragmatic functioning of figures, I believe their study is (or should be) at least equally important, since it may help explain the existence of figuration in language by addressing the question of why speakers should choose to express their thoughts indirectly, in a non-literal way, when they can do it literally. My general interest here is to discover the range of propositional and affective functions that exaggeration fulfils in discourse. In addition, this chapter focuses on the relation between literal and hyperbolic expressions: how they extend and complement, rather than replace, each other. This complementation is often achieved through clarification of a preceding utterance, whether figurative or literal.

6.2. Figurative language theories: production vs. reception process

On several occasions, I have already mentioned that the bulk of figurative language research has extensively focused on the reception process of figures of speech (solely in terms of comprehension, though). The question of figurative language production, in contrast to understanding, has received comparatively little attention. This explains the fact that a major limitation in figurative language theories is the production process of non-literal forms. Relatively few researchers, as Roberts and Kreuz (1994: 159) correctly note, have addressed the specific discourse goals that underlie the use of figuration.

A possible explanation for this lack of interest in the pragmatic functions of figurative language can be found in Kreuz *et al.*'s (1996) claim: "It has typically been assumed that language is used figuratively when a literal expression would be inadequate. It has also been assumed that figurative language adds a rich aesthetic dimension to speaking and writing" (pp. 83-4). The fact that figures and tropes have traditionally been viewed as

forms of ornamentation may have prevented researchers from further investigating their pragmatic functioning.

Only in the last twenty years or so have cognitive psychologists become interested in the discourse goals fulfilled by non-literal or indirect language forms. However, although the literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of irony, and to a lesser extent metaphor¹⁴, is extensive, the study of other figures has been, at least comparatively, ignored.

Although figurative language researches have intensively focused on the cognitive processes activated in understanding, the production of figures, in terms of pragmatic functioning, seems, at least, equally important, since it may account for the existence of non-literal language forms by addressing the question of why speakers or writers should choose to express their thoughts indirectly, in a non-literal way, when they can do it literally.

6.2.1. The production process: why do people use figurative language?

At this point, it seem reasonable to take up the question of *why*: why do people use figurative rather than literal language? If in non-literal utterances speakers do not mean what they say but rather something else (Searle 1993: 84, Dews and Winner 1997: 378), then why do people make use of figures? Why not say it directly, that is, literally? A similar argument, but focusing on the ambiguity of figurative expressions, has been posed by Pollio *et al.* (1977). They wonder “why speakers resort to figurative language when they always would seem to have available a much less ambiguous possibility in literal expression” (p. 30). Likewise, Roberts and Kreuz (1994: 159) question the choice of indirectness:

If, as Grice (1975) argued, participants in a conversation cooperate in conveying meanings by expressing themselves as clearly and concisely as possible, how can we explain the use of figures? That is, why do not speakers simply say what they mean directly rather than cloaking their meanings in the indirect form of nonliteral language?

Given the “greater risk of misunderstanding that speakers undertake when they speak figuratively or indirectly” (Colston and O’Brien 2000b: 192), it seems reasonable to

attribute figurative language rewards or advantages over literal expressions. “The benefits of using figuration”, say Roberts and Kreuz (1994: 159), “must outweigh potential costs of being misunderstood”. Several arguments have been put forward to explain this superiority of non-literal over literal language forms.

Probably, the most widely recognised advantage of figurative language is that figures “permit the expression of that which is difficult”, if not impossible, “to express using literal language alone” (Fainsilber and Ortony 1987: 239). This is usually seen as the primary function of figurative language (Honeck 1986: 27). This argument, originally applied to metaphorical language, is referred to as “the inexpressibility hypothesis” (Ortony 1975; quoted in Fussell and Moss 1998: 114-5) and has been extended to include other figures and tropes. Previous research has shown that people opt for figurative or indirect ways of speaking, because these forms of language can often perform various functions that literal forms of speech cannot accomplish or cannot accomplish easily (Colston 1997a, 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O’Brien 2000a, 2000b, Dews *et al.* 1995, Dews and Winner 1995, Kreuz *et al.* 1991, Kreuz and Roberts 1993, Roberts and Kreuz 1994), for instance, to express hostility in a socially acceptable way.

Other studies have demonstrated that even though literal and figurative expressions may sometimes accomplish similar discourse goals, indirect forms fulfil them to a greater extent or more successfully than their literal counterparts (Kreuz *et al.* 1991, Jorgensen 1996, Colston 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O’Brien 2000a, 2000b). Colston and Keller (1998: 499), to give just one example, have shown that both hyperbole and verbal irony express more surprise than literal utterances.

Not only do figures satisfy some pragmatic functions better than literal expressions, figurative language fulfils more communicative goals than literal remarks. In this sense, Kreuz *et al.* (1991: 149) have shown that ironic remarks satisfy more discourse goals than do their equivalent literal statements.

Another advantage is that the use of figuration allows speakers to satisfy multiple discourse goals simultaneously (Kreuz *et al.* 1991, Kreuz and Roberts 1993). For instance, Kreuz *et al.* (1991) demonstrated that “the use of irony makes it possible for a speaker to communicate a particular assertion and an evaluation of that assertion” (p. 154).

¹⁴ In terms of pragmatic functioning, irony, rather than metaphor, is considered the master trope.

Finally, an additional argument supporting the superiority of non-literal over literal language is the irrefutability of figurative forms. In this sense, Sadock (1993: 49) argues that “since they are not intended to be taken literally, they are not as open to rebuttal as literal utterances. This immunity to contradiction may, in fact, be one of the purposes of figuration”.

6.3. Literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of hyperbole

Research on hyperbole so far has focused primarily on what exaggeration is and how hyperbolic statements are comprehended. In contrast, the larger question of why people use this figure has received little attention. Probably because of the intensive research effort on comprehension, rarely have the pragmatic functions of exaggeration been discussed. In this sense, Kreuz *et al.* (1996), after noting the ubiquity of this figure, correctly argue: “It may be helpful, for example, to examine the discourse goals of hyperbole in order to understand why it is employed so frequently” (p. 91).

6.3.1. Rhetoric and Literary Criticism

During late antiquity and the Middle Ages, rhetoric was equated with persuasive discourse and the exercise of power, and so hyperbole acquired a strategic dimension as a technique “to bring listeners into the perspective of speakers in a powerful way” (Swartz 1976: 101). The Renaissance, however, marks a change in emphasis from the canon of argumentation to the canon of invention, with rhetoric becoming primarily figural. During this period, ornamentation acquired unprecedented importance and so rhetoric was restricted to elocution, the artistic use of language (Levin 1982: 114), the use of tropes and figures, commonly considered forms of verbal ornament (Poster 2000: 120). Since then, “rhetorical figures have always been viewed as features of appealing, aesthetic speech” (Christmann and Mischo 2000: 232). Probably because of this, little effort has been made at examining other functions this figure may fulfil in discourse. There is no doubt that the aesthetic function is a prominent one in literary texts, but this is by no means the only function accomplished by overstatement. “In everyday life”, as Katz (1996: 2) has correctly noted, “a speaker will utter figurative language in a conversational or

environmental context to meet some communication goal". It is the aim of this chapter to show that hyperbole fulfils a wide range of functions, both propositional and affective.

6.3.2. Psycholinguistic research

Although sporadic references to some isolated function of hyperbole can be found elsewhere (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987, Falk 1990, etc.), as mentioned in chapter two, nowadays most interest in the pragmatic accomplishments of overstatement is concentrated in the field of psycholinguistics or cognitive psychology. It is notable that these studies, unlike previous research, have not totally disregarded the production process in favour of the comprehension issue. Apart from their overriding concern with understanding, they have addressed the pragmatic functioning of non-literal language forms, including exaggeration. The scarce extant literature, however, has only been concerned with function identification. Rarely are the pragmatic functions fulfilled by figurative forms defined or even exemplified.

Despite this interest, there is not (to my knowledge) a single study focusing exclusively on the functional repertoire of hyperbole. These works are all embedded within studies of other figures of speech, especially understatement and irony, to compare and contrast how these different non-literal language forms accomplish the same functions but with different degrees of success, and often over their literal counterparts (e.g. Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Colston 1997a, Sell *et al.* 1997, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O'Brien 2000a, 2000b). This points to a prevailing view among figurative language researchers, namely that the relation between discourse goals and non-literal language is rather complex, in the sense that different figures may satisfy the same pragmatic functions but to different extents. In other words, several figures may achieve the same indirect claims but some particular indirect forms will be better than others at their accomplishment.

Roberts and Kreuz's (1994) study, probably the most influential work on the functions of non-literal language published to date, was the first to list the repertoire of discourse goals for hyperbole. Their investigation revealed that different functions are shared and performed to varying extents by different indirect forms. It explored the communicative functions satisfied by eight main forms of non-literal language, namely: hyperbole, verbal irony, understatement, metaphor, simile, idiom, indirect requests and rhetorical questions.

In their experiment, college students were shown examples of these eight types of figurative language and were asked to generate new examples of particular non-literal forms. Each participant was asked to list the reasons that a person might choose to express him or herself in that particular non-literal way. Finally, a discourse goal taxonomy, based on the participants' responses, was devised. The most frequent or salient functions for exaggeration in this study were emphasis, adding interest, clarification and humour (p. 161). Although less prominent, other functions identified by participants for exaggeration were (in order of decreasing importance): to be conventional, to provoke thought, to show negative emotion, to get attention, to show positive emotion, to be eloquent and to manage discourse. With regard to the functional overlap among figurative forms, Roberts and Kreuz (1994: 160) claim:

Because each figure of speech shares certain discourse goals with other figures, the figures can be said to overlap to varying degrees. For example, every goal provided for hyperbole was also provided for understatement; however, not every goal provided for understatement was provided for hyperbole. A closer look shows that the most frequent goals for hyperbole ("to clarify", "to emphasize" and "to be humorous") are only weakly shared with understatement, while the most frequent goals for understatement ("to deemphasize", and "to show negative emotion") are only weakly shared with hyperbole.

Similarly, Sell *et al.* (1997) conducted an experiment addressing parents' use of non-literal language with pre-school children in free-play contexts. The aim was to identify the repertoire of functions achieved by different figurative forms. The non-literal forms subject to analysis were: indirect requests and "persuasive nonliteral forms" (p. 107), namely hyperbole, idiom, rhetorical questions, simile, metaphor, irony and understatement, (although no instances of irony or understatement were found in their data and they were eventually excluded). They found that functions typically accomplished by overstatement, like rhetorical questions and idioms, were clarification, emphasis, positive evaluation and maintaining the child's focus (p. 110), since parents typically used hyperbole to encourage children in their play activities. The latter is, arguably, similar to adding interest in Roberts and Kreuz's (1994: 161) repertoire of functions. Although Sell *et al.* (1997: 112) conclude that "very few of the communicative purposes identified here are also identified as reasons

for using non-literal forms in adult language”, at least in the case of exaggeration, our transcripts seem to suggest something different.

An emerging view in figurative language theories posits that the psychological phenomenon of “contrast” helps explain how certain types of non-literal forms, including hyperbole, attain their communication goals. In using the notion of contrast, “the speakers invoke a powerful mechanism to achieve many pragmatic functions” (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1559). In particular, Colston and O’Brien (2000a, 2000b) have shown that this notion helps explain many of the pragmatic functions performed by overstatement, understatement and verbal irony, such as humour, expressing surprise, etc. More importantly, Colston and O’Brien (2000a) have demonstrated that “contrast effects” offer predictions about the degree to which different figures will satisfy the same functions. This is explained by the fact that:

Since different tropes create varying degrees of contrast with the target topic, they should in turn create varying contrast effects – so long as the relevant underlying dimension is salient. These differing strengths of contrast effects would then lead to varying levels of performance of different pragmatic functions. (Colston and O’Brien 2000a: 1562)

In sum, hyperbole, understatement and verbal irony can achieve similar discourse goals but to varying extents according to the degree of contrast or discrepancy they create with the referent situation.

Fogelin (1988: 16) was the first to point out the coincidence in pragmatic functioning of these tropes in claiming: “I have spoken about meiosis, irony, and hyperbole as contrasting figures of speech. This does not mean that they cannot be used to achieve similar ends. In fact, often, all three devices are simultaneously available to make the same indirect claim”. But Fogelin only hints at the variability in the pragmatic functioning of these tropes.

In their study of the functions of understatement and verbal irony, Colston and O’Brien (2000a) have shown that these tropes accomplish similar discourse goals, since they both make use of the contrast between expected and ensuing events. Given that both irony and understatement refer to the expected event, they create a contrast with the experience event (p. 1557) that literal remarks, because they depict the real state of affairs, do not. In the experiment conducted, participants were shown several scenarios describing situations where something unexpected happened. The last line of each scenario described a person

making a comment, whether literal, ironic or understated, about that situation. Participants were asked to rate the strength of four pragmatic functions, namely to contrast differences, to be humorous, to condemn and to protect the speaker. The results demonstrated that contrast makes both irony and understatement generally funnier, more criticising, more expressive of a difference between expected and ensuing events and more protective of the speaker than literal remarks (p. 1557). They note that, on the whole, the greater the contrast, the greater the extent to which these function are performed. Thus, since “irony uses this contrast to a greater extent than understatement” (p. 1572), ironic utterances perform the first three functions with greater strength than understatement, while understatement achieves the latter function to a greater extent than irony, because “some pragmatic functions”, such as speaker protection, “actually decrease as contrasts gets stronger” (p. 1565).

Later, Colston and O’Brien (2000b) have indicated that contrast types, whether of magnitude (for hyperbole and understatement) or of kind (for verbal irony), also play a central role in predicting the strength with which different figures will accomplish the same functions. Their study focuses on irony, overstatement and literal language forms, to contrast the strength with which they fulfil three functions, namely condemnation, humour and speaker protection. In the experiment in question, participants were shown scenarios describing situations where something negative happened. The last line of each scenario described a person making a comment, either literal, ironic or overstated, about that situation. Then, participants were asked to rate the extent to which the three functions were accomplished by these language forms. The results revealed that since contrasts of kind are more contrasting of differences than contrasts of magnitude, irony is more successful than hyperbole in condemning, saving face and being funny or humorous (p. 180).

Similarly, Colston and Keller (1998) demonstrated that the degree of contrast created by various tropes appears to affect the degree to which they perform different pragmatic functions. They focus, though, on a single discourse goal, namely expressing surprise. “People”, they note, “can express this surprise by verbally noting the contrast between what was expected and what actually happened” (p. 499). Thus, verbal hyperbole and irony are useful in expressing surprise because they concisely make use of this contrast (p. 505). In three experiments, comparing how people comprehended irony and hyperbole as expressing surprise, participants were presented with different scenarios describing people

in unexpected situations. They were told to rate the degree to which they thought the speakers expected or did not expect the situation in which they found themselves, based upon what the speakers said (i.e. literal, hyperbolic or ironic comment). The results revealed that because overstatement creates a greater contrast with the ensuing event than understatement, hyperbole expresses surprise more successfully than understatement. They also demonstrated that both hyperbole and irony “expressed more surprise than literal commentary” (p. 499). Finally, their study proved that the range in degree of exaggeration serves to make it easier to determine that a speaker is surprised: “The more extreme the exaggeration, the easier the determination” (p. 510).

Colston (1997b) compared the extent to which overstatement, understatement and verbal irony express and indicate surprise, too. In two experiments, participants were shown several scenarios where something unexpected happened. They were asked to assess the degree to which these three figures of speech express surprise when the speaker’s expectations are or aren’t explicitly stated. The results suggested that “when events turn out unexpectedly and the expectations of characters were explicit, irony was more effective than overstatement and understatement” (p. 43). When expectations were not explicit and the situation had a negative outcome, overstatement was more effective than irony and understatement. For the positive situations, ironic and overstated comments were thought to indicate a significantly greater degree of surprise than understatement (p. 52).

A major limitation, however, is that these studies have been confined to the identification of communicative goals. They have only concentrated on identifying the pragmatic functions that hyperbole may satisfy in discourse. Rarely do they define, explain or exemplify any of these functions. This is probably because, rather than focusing on a single figure thoroughly, they can be described as “contrastive” studies. Their aim is to compare the magnitude or strength with which different indirect forms fulfil the same functions. Another limitation points to the data or test materials employed in the experiments conducted. For the most part, they are artificially constructed scenarios. Indeed, the bulk of psycholinguistic research often utilises artificial texts as stimulus materials.

6.4. Functional analysis of hyperbolic utterances in the BNC data

My aim in this chapter is to examine the pragmatic functions that hyperbole performs in discourse. This will, hopefully, help explain why exaggeration is so ubiquitous in everyday language, and why speakers often choose to speak hyperbolically rather than literally.

Roberts and Kreuz (1994) have correctly emphasised the relevance of investigating the production process of non-literal forms. As they clearly put it:

According to speech act theory, discourse participants comprehend utterances when they recognize the underlying goals and intentions of the other participants (Allen and Perrault, 1986). Understanding when and why an utterance is produced is crucial to understanding its meaning. (Roberts and Kreuz 1994: 158-9)

Here the aim is, firstly, to identify specific discourse goals associated with the production of hyperbole. That is, to discover the range of functions that this trope fulfils or may fulfil in discourse. But my general interest is not only to identify and list the repertoire of discourse goals for hyperbole, but also and more importantly, to define and illustrate these functions with actual, naturally-occurring examples. Unlike previous research - except for Sell *et al.*'s (1997) study - our corpus consists of naturalistic conversational data, since a crucial limitation in analyses based on decontextualized sentences, as Katz (1996: 2) has noted, is that they "ignore the ecology in which we encounter and produce figurative language".

In order to answer the question: what communicative functions does exaggeration fulfil in language?, a content analysis was performed. Hyperbole was examined in context to determine the purpose of its use. "The context", as Katz (1996: 3) correctly argues, "may provide sufficient information about the reasons that a speaker or writer used the linguistic form that he or she did". That is, the context will provide cues as to the speaker's intent. Thus, apart from playing a central role in the perception of hyperbole and allowing us to assess the degree of inflation of hyperbolic expressions, contextual information is crucial to determine the specific pragmatic functions this figure fulfils in discourse.

In Sell *et al.*'s (1997) study, a monothetic coding scheme (Graesser, Person and Huber 1992), in which each non-literal language form was coded into only one function category, was used. The assumption in the present study is that several purposes or functions can be

fulfilled simultaneously. Indeed, as Pollio *et al.* (1977: 17) have noted: “No single function really ever operates alone”.

6.5. Analysis and results

6.5.1. Identification of hyperbolic discourse goals in the BNC data

In the data examined, hyperbole seems to respond to nine communicative functions, namely expression of surprise, contrast of differences, evaluation, clarification, humour, emphasis, interest intensification, simplification and (polite) de-emphasis. Although some of these goals have been discussed in the literature reviewed above, some others, such as underemphasis, contrast of differences or simplification had not been previously identified for this figure. Note here that no instance of hyperbole for purely aesthetic purposes, function traditionally and most commonly attributed to the trope, was found in our transcripts.

The table below shows the number of occurrences and percentages per function in the transcripts examined. Rather than hyperbolic items, here the unit of analysis were overstated utterances, which sometimes may consist of several hyperbolic items. Statistics have been calculated on the total sum of hyperbolic utterances analysed, which amounts to 310.

Rhetorical functions	Occurrences	Percentages
Emphasis	260	83.8%
Evaluation (positive & negative)	147	47.4%
Expression of surprise	98	31.6%
Simplification	85	27.4%
Interest intensification	78	25.1%
Contrast of differences	41	13.2%
Humour	39	12.5%
Clarification	17	5.4%
De-emphasis	11	3.5%

Table 6.1. Distribution of hyperbolic functions in the BNC data examined

Even though the units examined were overstated utterances, rather than items, a distinction has been made between performance and enhancement of communicative functions. I have strictly considered, when possible, cases where it is the exaggeration, rather than other sentence constituents, which fulfils a particular discourse goal. The test of suppression of the hyperbolic item often proved useful in drawing such a distinction. The following samples may serve to illustrate this difference.

Text JNR > Seminar presentation at conference

PS4FW>: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. We're all aware that for th, for their number patients with superficial bladder cancer provide an enormous amount of our workload, and for reasons partly of ... husbanding our precious resources and also because lots of these patients come up with negative checks, reducing the amount of irritation and upset to them it would be useful if we could do less [...] than we do. Many people have looked at this before and they've come up with various prognostic markers, ***some of which are extremely complicated***. But perhaps the ... erm THE SIMPLEST ... erm ... prognostic routes were ... suggested by the MRC working parties which [...] general urology which was mentioned in the last presentation. ... They combined ... erm the four hundred and fifty odd erm ... four hundred and seventeen, sorry, patients in er several MRC studies and looked at them from the point of view of ... erm prognostic markers for occurrence and they came up with two factors which overridingly were more important than the others.

The speech where this excerpt is embedded can be described as a defence of MRC prognostic markers. In order to support their superiority, the speaker here criticises the complexity of other markers and does so to establish a contrast with MRC routes (*extremely complicated* vs. *the simplest prognostic routes*). However, the hyperbolic adverb *extremely* only serves to reinforce or enhance these pragmatic functions. It is actually the word *complicated* what carries the negative force and establishes a contrast with the simplicity of MRC routes. In contrast, the item *horrible* in the extract below is intrinsically evaluative and stands in direct opposition to the word *nice*.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Now, do any, have any of you tried aromatherapy? Do you know what it is?
MANAGERESS>: Mm.
MASSEUR>: Have you tried it?
MANAGERESS>: Mm.
MASSEUR>: tried aromatherapy? Aroma is the sense of smell. You all smell things, don't you? I mean, ***you know when something smells horrible*** and you know when something smells NICE. And so our sense of smell is very strong. So it soon tells you whether you like it or not. When you breathe something it goes up into ... your, your brain here, what they call the olfactory bulb up here, and this is right near the memory. And how many of you have

smelt ... things and you think it [...] turns you back either to when you were a child, ... maybe new bread, ... a certain flower.

As shown in the table, some discourse goals exhibit a higher frequency of occurrence, namely emphasis, evaluation and expression of surprise. These appear to be the most prominent functions for this figure.

Since hyperbole often co-occurs with other figures of speech (e.g. metaphor, irony, simile, etc.), it is reasonable to expect that overstatement assumes the pragmatic functions assigned to other indirect forms (e.g. to protect the self, to compare similarities, etc.), but this certainly goes beyond the scope of this dissertation¹⁵.

Our transcripts also suggest that overstatement often allows speakers to satisfy multiple goals simultaneously. Indeed, seldom does exaggeration in our data fulfil a unique function. The excerpts below may serve to illustrate this pragmatic multifunctionality.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: This one, the camomile, is, is very good for the, we call it the children's one because it's good for everything for children really. If they get a bit tetchy ... and, and they're crying a lot maybe cos they're teething you could just massage a little bit on their temples. If they're teething just on their jaw line. You never take them internally, it's always externally you use these. Or if you've got a headache you can massage it on your temples. If you suffer from eczema, psoriasis, any dry skin complaint, camomile is quite a soother for that.

[text omission]

MASSEUR>: No, you don't like that one? No, right.

PS000>: No [...].

MASSEUR>: Right. There.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...] can smell that from here.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah. ...

PS000>: I think *it'd give me a headache*, not TAKE it AWAY.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Right. So, so you'd say to yourself. Right,

PS000>: No.

MASSEUR>: you don't like camomile, that's not gonna do you any good.

The exaggeration above appears to fulfil four communicative goals, namely negative evaluation, expression of surprise, contrast of differences and humour. The speaker both expresses dislike and surprise at the strength of the smell of camomile oil, but does so in a non-serious or joking mood. Note also the opposition or contrast of antonyms (*give* vs. *take away*). The tone is humorous, despite the masseur's negative reaction. Recall that Leggitt

and Gibbs (2000: 19), who have studied people's emotional reactions to this figure, claim that hyperbole often has a negative effect that speakers did not intend.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWER>: How do you feel about Harlow now?

INTERVIEWEE>: I think it's a wonderful place! And I think ... the council ... are trying their utmost to ... make facilities for all ages. I mean, *when we came here, as I say, we had nothing*. Our children, if they wanted erm ... any entertainment ... we had to make our own entertainment, which we did. My son started a youth club ... in one of the common rooms and ... we as residents we got together ... we really enjoyed ourselves in ... our way, you know? But er ... I think, [laugh] ... PEOPLE THAT HAVE GOT SO MUCH NOW ... feel they haven't got enough.

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

This excerpt is particularly interesting for the accumulation of pragmatic functions. First, a contrast of differences, comparing the availability of facilities in two different periods, is established. Thus, *when we came here, as I say, we had nothing* contrasts with *people that have got so much now*. Simultaneously, the speaker complains about the lack of facilities in Harlow when she moved (and their efforts to build the town). The use of exaggeration also allows the interviewee to avoid specifying, detailing or enumerating (e.g. no schools, shopping facilities, entertainment, lightning, swimming pools, etc.), and so appears governed by the principle of linguistic economy. It is also an emphatic strategy, a way to intensify the problem and so a dramatisation technique to attract the listener's attention.

If instead of the overstated description *we had nothing*, the speaker had uttered its literal counterpart *we had few facilities*, only the former two functions, namely contrast of differences and negative evaluation, would have been performed. This seems consistent with the inexpressibility hypothesis (Ortony 1975; quoted in Fussell and Moss 1998: 114-5) in suggesting that some functions may be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil literally. It also suggests that although "no single phrase or use of language ever seems to have just a single function" (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), hyperboles accomplish more discourse goals than their literal equivalents. Note too that the contrast between *people that have got so much now* and the literal *we had few facilities* is less strong than the overstated recount *we had nothing*. This is because along the continuum depicting quantity *nothing* is far more distant

¹⁵ See Pollio *et al.* (1977), Roberts and Kreuz (1994) or Sell *et al.* (1997) for a review of the functions of other non-literal language forms.

from *so much* than the item *few*. Likewise, the tone of the literal form seems less negative than the overstated description. This suggests that although exaggerated and literal expressions sometimes accomplish the same discourse goals, hyperbole accomplishes them to a greater extent, with more strength than literal commentary. All these arguments together may help explain why speakers often choose to express their thoughts indirectly or exaggeratedly, rather than using literal language.

6.5.2. Definition and exemplification of hyperbolic functions

Once the repertoire of hyperbolic¹⁶ functions has been identified, I attempt to define and illustrate them with excerpts from the transcripts examined.

6.5.2.1. Emphasis

Percentages seem to suggest that this function is almost intrinsic to the figure (83.8%). It is the most prominent goal for overstatement in our data. Indeed, this is one of the most widely recognised functions for hyperbole in the literature (e.g. Bolinger 1972, Falk 1990, Gibbs 1994a, Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Sell *et al.* 1997). It is such an important function that it has been even included in some definitions. For instance, Kreuz *et al.* (1996: 86) label as hyperbolic “segments that indicate emphasis through exaggeration”, and Bolinger (1972: 20) defines intensification as “the linguistic expression of exaggeration and depreciation”.

A possible explanation for this emphatic and forceful nature of hyperboles lies in the fact that in using this figure, I am “substituting a stronger for a weaker synonym” (Bolinger 1972: 115). In the words of House and Kasper (1981: 169), overstaters “overrepresent the reality denoted in the proposition in the interests of increasing the force of the utterance”. Thus, at least compared to their referents and literal counterparts, exaggerated remarks always appear to be strengthened, heightened or intensified. Thus, contrast, for example, the overstated descriptions below with a possible literal equivalent, such as *She’s intelligent* and *I’m hungry*.

¹⁶ These functions are not exclusive of hyperbole but can also be accomplished by other non-literal forms.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: But erm ... she phones us and ... you know ... Oh I had a ... card, erm letter from her yesterday with er photographs and things like that.

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: And she was saying how well my granddaughter was getting along in the University. She has ... just this last year to go ... and er ... we hope for her sake everything goes well for her because *she's ... brilliant*, and as you see I have to fly the flag for her because she's

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: she's so Americanized, you see? But erm ... we have to fly the flag!

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: I said, have you got the paddy? Where is it then? What a nut-case! ... Will you put those down, please? Give Kaley hers back now.

KALEY>: Want something to eat.

FRANCES>: Give Brett his, give Francis [...] his

KALEY>: I want something to eat.

FRANCES>: Well, just a minute, daddy'll be here soon and you can have some. Get down. You can't have the party without daddy when it's his birthday.

KALEY>: Well, *I'm starving*.

FRANCES>: Did you eat your dinner at school?

KALEY>: Yeah. [...]

FRANCES>: What?

KALEY>: And I eat my pudding.

FRANCES>: Oh.

Overstatement is employed “when the speaker intends the message to be forceful” (Sell *et al.* 1997: 108), and this intensity is often accompanied by an emphatic stress or intonation as reflected in the use of exclamation marks in our transcripts.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: The only thing that was ... used to depress me with the fact that we couldn't get ... for our schools ... the things that we needed ... because to me and to all the people in Harlow who have children ... are concerned ... that we are ... being stopped so much money on education, which is the most vital thing ... in our children's lives! Without education, what kind of a country are we going to have? It's so important, so important!

INTERVIEWER>: So do you use the Leah Manning?

INTERVIEWEE>: Dame Leah Manning was my very best friend! She ... came to me one day and asked me if I would stand for the council, which I did. I have her book here. She ... wro ... did an autobiography of a ... education ... and *she was the most wonderful person ... that you would ever wish to meet!* She fought for ... the working class ... she fought for education ... she fought for everything to benefit the community ... She was a wonderful person! She really was!

INTERVIEWER>: Do you think that erm ... any of the town's been ... badly designed for the old people?

6.5.2.2. Evaluation

Exaggeration has traditionally been regarded as a general evaluative resource, since “an overstatement has in it an element of subjective evaluation of an objective fact” (Falk 1990: 46). This function is, after conveying emphasis, the second most recurrent function in our data (47.4%). Many hyperbolic utterances in our transcripts are essentially evaluative, whether the target of evaluation is a person, feeling, object or whatever else. When the aim is evaluative, hyperbole is “employed to convey the speaker’s beliefs or feelings about the topic” (Katz 1996: 3-4).

The references to this evaluative dimension in the literature are numerous. Pomerantz (1986: 220) highlights this evaluative context whereby speakers state behaviour which they hold to be right or wrong. Similarly, McCarthy and Cater (2004: 150) note that hyperboles are “creative intensifications for evaluative or affective purposes”. In this sense too, Falk (1990: 39), who examined a variety of stylistic features conveying emphasis and exaggeration in a corpus of oral narratives by Cape Breton islanders, says that “instead of conveying factual information, they express the speaker’s attitude, emotional state and degree of involvement in what is being said”.

Obviously, this function is twofold, since one can express both positive and negative opinions, emotions, attitudes, etc. Thus, people may exaggerate to fulfil positive discourse goals, such as to compliment, congratulate, praise, express sympathy, approval, delight or some other form of positive affect. Negative evaluation, on the other hand, is a form of subjective judgement whereby speakers attack, complain, condemn, criticise, express disapproval, antipathy or some other negative attitude. The extract below contains instances of both positive and negative evaluative forms.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I'm sorry that the opposition is continuing to talk the country down.

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: We ... *we have in fact er had a very impressive record on competitiveness*. We now in manufacturing where there's been a decline in employment since the 1960s, we now have four million workers in manufacturing producing more than seven million produced fifteen years ago. That's a tribute to the British work force and don't let the honourable gentleman forget that we now have one point four million more in work, in the UK than we had ten years ago. Let him start talking up our achievements rather than pointing to an agenda which his party has already signed up to which would destroy millions

of jobs through statutory works councils, statutory minimum wage and statutory compulsory working week. ***That's a recipe for disaster.***

PS000>: [...]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: James Pawsey.

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Question number two, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the levels of employment in the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

In the excerpt, what determines the evaluative force of the utterance is the positive or negative import of the hyperbolic item. At other times, though, “the precise attitude expressed can only be identified in the particular context” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 29).

Text K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

COLLISHAN>: I still think we have to have the system as such, perhaps not so intricate, but certainly keep the file probably with the bits in.

PS000>: We might, cos you won't be able to put maps and things on them.

PS000>: Eh.

PS000>: But certainly the main co-ordinators er

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: Almost like the burglar alarm [...] you just have scheme, head co-ordinators, you know deputy co-ordinator, number of 'ouses and that just a basic so you go in

COLLISHAN>: *We, we don't want really is street co-ordinators because*

PS000>: No.

COLLISHAN>: ***that'd be a mammoth task.***

STONE>: If you have somebody like somewhere like that

COLLISHAN>: I'm not talking about that, I'm now talking about Tollerton but it's eight hundred properties, it's a small village but there are twenty-seven street co-ordinators, so you know.

STONE>: Erm, yeah, so say all you need is just access to that field so if they do change you can just

Compare the tone of complaint in the excerpt above with the positive attitude in: *Congratulations! The production of the book alone, given its scope, must have been a mammoth task!*

Although the only type of evaluation Sell *et al.* (1997: 110) attribute to hyperbole is positive, negative evaluation, with 102 occurrences (32.9%), exceeds by far positive evaluation in our transcripts. The latter, totalling 45 occurrences, only accounts for 14.5% of utterances examined. This is consistent with Roberts and Kreuz's (1994) finding that exaggeration was more frequently used to convey negative emotions than positive affect in their data.

6.5.2.3. Expression of surprise

This is the third most prominent function for hyperbole in our data (31.6%). Surprise is a common reaction when events do not turn out as expected. It is “a form of unexpected judgement”, say Colston and Keller (1998), pointing to “a contrast between expected and ensuing events” (p. 499). One can express surprise, they add, by verbally noting the contrast between what was expected and what actually happened. Thus, hyperbole, like understatement and verbal irony, is useful in expressing surprise because it concisely makes use of this contrast (Colston 1996, 1997b, Colston and Keller 1998, Colston and O’Brien 2000a, Gibbs 1986, Jorgensen *et al.* 1984, Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989, Sperber and Wilson 1981). This is because “hyperbole *inflates* the discrepancy between what was expected and what ensues via an overstated description of what happened” (Colston and Keller 1998: 500).

Similarly, Pylkkö (1996: 283) has emphasised that “what we experience as a surprise betrays a gap, or incongruity, between expectations and what is actually encountered, and the surprise exploits the energy which is released by the incongruity”. As Suls (1972; quoted in Long and Graesser 1988: 58) correctly noted, “incongruity”, and so hyperbole, “produces the necessary element of surprise”. What triggers our energy to erupt and become what we experience as surprise, says Pylkkö, must somehow be deviant or even perverse with respect to the conceptions of which our expectations consist (p. 284).

The expression of surprise cannot exist without a violation of prior expectations, independently of whether they had been explicitly stated or not. As Pylkkö (1996: 283) clearly puts it:

The gap wouldn’t be there without a conflict, without opponents who have worked against our goals and interests. From the point of view of the person who experiences the surprise, the gap appears to bear a special aconceptual character with respect to expectations. Had the stimuli which violated our expectations been fully conceptualized and well-structured with respect to the expectations, no room would have been left for genuine surprise.

In the excerpt below, expectations are explicitly stated. In uttering *Did you say milky?*, Claire is echoing someone else’s description and her own failed expectations.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CLAIRE>: Craig do you wanna do something?

CRAIG>: Yeah, alright.

CLAIRE>: dry those.

CRAIG>: [...] ... alright, I'll dry them.

CLAIRE>: Cos I've gotta get ... er Craig, you can come if you drive home.

CRAIG>: Pardon?

CLAIRE>: You can come if you drive home.

CRAIG>: No, I'm gonna get out of me head [laugh] ... [laughing] I see him putting them over here. ... Oi!

CLAIRE>: Mm.

CRAIG>: Now.

CLAIRE>: Did you say milky? *Looks like pure hot milk.*

CRAIG>: Did someone write ... one

CLAIRE>: I don't feel like you're under pressure to do things, do you?

CRAIG>: It's nice that top.

In the majority of cases, though, the speaker's expectation is not explicitly stated. As Sperber and Wilson (1981: 309-10) note in their theory of echoic irony:

There are echoic mentions of many different degrees and types. Some are immediate echoes, and others delayed; some have their source in actual utterances, others in thoughts or opinions; some have a real source, others an imagined one; some are traceable back to a particular individual, whereas others have a vague origin. When the echoic character of the utterance is not immediately obvious, it is nevertheless suggested.

An emerging view in our data is that this function is often conceptually intertwined with the evaluative dimension of the trope, since whenever surprise is expressed, there is a contrast between expected and ensuing events, with the speaker usually conveying some attitude, whether positive or negative, towards that non-fulfilment of expectations. Speakers may express surprise both at positive and negative situations, actions or events, thus combining surprise with both praise and criticism. In this sense, Pylkkö (1996: 283) underlines that "intensive pleasure and horror arise from violated expectations". This helps explain the interrelation between surprise and evaluation in the following extracts. In the first excerpt the teacher's surprise at her students' diligence takes the form of praise, whereas in the second, the speaker is complaining about her voice, whose sound becomes even more distorted in the tape.

Text F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

LECTURER>: Can you just check that we took down the following? I think that we actually just had time to talk through these and you didn't actually make notes.

PS000>: We did!

PS000>: Yeah, we did!

LECTURER>: You've actually taken notes?

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: And you did that?

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Right! **Wonderful!** I was just a little curious and she seemed to be er

PS000>: Oblivious to [...]!

LECTURER>: [...]. And you actually took that down.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Right! **Wonderful!**

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Okay then! Continuing ... with the menu and ... when planning a menu the points to be taken into consideration are ... David! David. Okay? What things do you think you need to consider then ... when you're putting together a menu?

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

STUART>: Just have to try and, take a little while to get used to it. Once you're used to it, it's probably [...]. It's all a matter of getting used to being recorded. Conversation.

ANN>: Yeah, well it sounds ever so funny when you hear it [...]

STUART>: I know. Yeah.

ANN>: **Horrible.** You think ... I don't sound like that! [laugh]. Really makes you think. I wish [...] done something about my ... the way I speak.

STUART>: Mm.

ANN>: Mine's terrible because I've got a low voice, a deep voice anyway. Sound more like a man, I do. I do on the phone, don't I?

STUART>: Don't know really. I've not really heard you much on the phone.

ANN>: Used to telephone, didn't you?

STUART>: Well, yeah, but

ANN>: Didn't know it was me.

STUART>: Oh yeah, I knew it was you so it didn't make a lot of difference.

6.5.2.4. Simplification

Given the frequency of occurrence in our data (27.4%), it is striking that this goal had never been previously identified for hyperbole. This function often seems motivated by vagueness or by the principle of linguistic economy in communication. It is not difficult to image, for example, the linguistic advantage, in terms of word numbers, of sentences like *All the children of the residency had to travel to Chingford every day to school* over literal

forms of the type *All the children of the residency had to travel to Chingford Monday to Friday to school.*

Making a generalisation is the most recurrent form of simplification in our transcripts. Let us take the following fragment to illustrate the case.

Text F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

LECTURER>: So what ... do we have to think of when we actually compile a menu?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Pardon?

PS000>: Colour.

LECTURER>: Yes, we do. The colours. The colour. ... You need this information to do your exercise that you're going to do for me ... shortly. ... So, do not repeat the main ingredients. Avoid food the same colour. It actually gives you an example there. And think about the textures of food. ... Over here. Is that better? Can you see now?

PS000>: Yes.

LECTURER>: And ... *something that ... you all mentioned ... nutrition.*

PS000>: No. It's alright.

LECTURER>: If you were planning a menu ... which would you consider first do you think? Proteins?

PS000>: Protein.

LECTURER>: vitamins, carbohydrates?

Generalisations often allow speakers to avoid specifying, detailing, listing, etc. That is, they are ways to avoid providing exact and precise information. This is certainly related to vagueness. "Speakers select vague language", say Carter and McCarthy (1997: 119), "so that they do not have to specify precise examples". For instance:

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the ... real value of pensions has gone down for many years now following the break.

PS000>: [...]

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: following the break ... following the break ... following the break with the link with earnings and *the fact that value of pensions in the UK is out of line with virtually every other comparable European country* ... and in view of the fact, and in view of the fact that the

PS000>: [...]

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: compensation package ... for VAT for pensioners will not compensate them in full as was promised, ... and in view of the fact that we've had extremely cold weather for the last week, will the Government now introduce a special heating allowance for pensions?

They also allow speakers to stop or avoid further specification, detailing or enumeration, as in the fragment below.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000>: Yeah. And what would you say to a fourteen-year-old girl ... who might be watching this ... who might think of doing the same thing?

J8JPS007>: Just none of you ever try ... da er, ***it ruins your life, ruins your family and everything!***

J8JPS000>: Don't try it once?

J8JPS007>: No. Waste of time!

J8JPS000>: Would you say the same thing?

J8JPS008>: Aye, I would gi that. I would advise

PS000>: [cough]

J8JPS008>: erm, any young person never to try it. It ruins and wrecks your own life and family's life as well!

Hyperbole is also used to round, particularly numbers and quantities. Indeed, “most exaggerated statements”, as Kreuz *et al.* (1998: 101) correctly note, “are general in nature (e.g. “I’ve been waiting here for a thousand years!” as opposed to “I’ve been waiting here for 967.4 years!)”. In this sense, Channell (1994: 89) too remarks that exaggeration often makes use of round numbers to approximate quantities, as in the extract below. Note the use of a vague marker (*nearly*) indicating how the listener must interpret the utterance.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: Now, Tommy Cooper, he never charged us one penny! All we had to do ... was to pay the expense of the helicopter that brought him in ..., because at that time he was appearing at the Prince of Wales and it was a matter of him ... fitting his time in with his performances, you see? which we did. We brought him here ... ou, he changed his clothes from his ... own suit into the pied piper ... and erm ... then we got him back to the Prince of Wales Theatre. Well, ***the money that we raised from there ... and also from another one was about three thousand ... nearly four thousand ... three thousand something ...*** and we presented ... er ... Tommy Cooper with the cheque on the Prince, the stage of the Prince of Wales Theatre, but that cheque was to buy ... a special ambulance ... for the children of Upshire, which is the home of the disabled.

At other times, hyperbole in our transcripts provides a compact form of expression for complex ideas. In the case of metaphorical language, this has been referred to as “the compactness hypothesis” (Ortony 1975; quoted in Fussell and Moss 1998: 114-5). Ortony argued that metaphors are used to provide compact and succinct ways of stating ideas that would be lengthy or awkward to formulate in literal terms. Thus, hyperbole may

sometimes constitute a particularly compact means of communication. This compactness in our data often corresponds to cases of hyperbolic metaphor.

Text K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

HADFIELD>: I've been offered the opportunity by er Bob in training er in force [...] have taken this on er the tactical unit have taken it on, the chance of er one day erm assessment or appraisal training, at erm probably at Exeter for those of us that do it and erm I think that perhaps with the, the way that the diverse way that our staff's spread out, the proper ways of assessing people which I've, I've never been shown how to do and I don't think many of us have. Erm, I mean, he it sort of went through our staff inspector wise and er Paul was sort of chatting, and he wasn't being unkind he said yes, *they'll be dinosaurs* because it's a long time since you've had er any training like that.

STONE>: What about civilian staff? I have to assess my staff, I haven't had no training.

PS000>: Yeah, yeah.

These general or simplification forms are particularly difficult, if not totally impossible, to fulfil literally. They go to show that hardly ever, if ever, do we speak literally, with exactitude and precision. In general, some looseness of expression is to be expected, unless the relevance of the utterance depends on its exactitude (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 234). It seems to be inherent in language that we refer to vague, overstated categories (e.g. I lost my bag *and everything*). Not only are these emphatic, but they have to be simplified because nobody is expected to list all the items in a category (e.g. my purse, my keys, my mobile phone, my sun glasses, my walkman, my lipstick, my comb, my address-book). Only the most boring person would speak like that. There is an assumption that, in any culture, listeners will be able to “fill the gaps”. Thus, the use of hyperbole can sometimes be regarded as a “lazy” solution to linguistic selection.

6.5.2.5. Interest intensification

This function features as a prominent discourse goal of hyperbole in Roberts and Kreuz's (1994) and Sell *et al.*'s (1997) study. It can be defined as keeping listeners engaged, attracting their attention or arousing their interest. In our transcripts, it appears in 25.1% of the overstated utterances examined.

Interest intensification also features in Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-management framework, as a positive politeness technique, in particular, as a “claim common ground” strategy (p. 102). Through this function, speakers try to impress their listeners and draw

their attention to the speaker's own contributions to the conversation. As Brown and Levinson note, a technique for intensifying interest for the hearer is to exaggerate facts, to overstate. In doing so, "there seems to be an element of attempting to increase the interest of the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically" (p. 107).

This pragmatic goal was overwhelmingly found in the narrative genre¹⁷, as a way to make the story more engaging and entertaining, or else dramatic. Out of 78 occurrences of this function in our data, 45 (representing 57.6%) appear embedded in narratives. Basically, their aim is to add interest, either by "making a good story" (p. 106) or "by expressing them dramatically" (p. 107). The following excerpts may serve to illustrate this duality. In the first, hyperbole is used as a performance feature. The narrator indicates the light-hearted or non-serious nature of the story by laughing herself.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Neroli is very good for depression. It's also very good again if you're going on your committee meeting or you're going for an interview to rub on what they call the solar plexus, just here.

PS000>: Yeah? [laugh]

MASSEUR>: It helps to when you get, you know, when you get the your tummy

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Butterflies.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] butterflies, yeah. And to rub on there and it helps to calm it down. They do say that essential oils will often work quicker than a tablet. I mean, I've never timed them. [laugh]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Cos it depends how you feel. But that's what they do say, that it, it sometimes works quicker. So if you're going or when my daughter had a driving test ***I was massaging neroli all over her in the hope that she would calm down.***

ADMINISTRATOR>: [laugh]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Did she pass?

MASSEUR>: Well, only the third time.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laugh] ***She just went haywire as soon as she saw the instructor.***

PS000>: [laugh]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...]

MASSEUR>: It wouldn't be so bad, [laughing] er she's not a nervous type normally and ***it's the only person that's sort of made her go completely nervous.*** So neroli again is good for the skin.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWER>: What did you think of it when you first moved here?

INTERVIEWEE>: [laughing] Well, ... it really was so different from ... a built-up place ... but er ... um, when, but the day that we came in ... it was ... mm, pouring with rain ...

¹⁷ See chapter eight for the use of hyperbole as a performance feature in narratives.

everywhere was muddy ... and er ... of course, i i ... there were only erm ... one part of this town ... this area, rather ... that ... had been occupied because all the other parts were all fields. There was just the erm ... Broomfield Staffield ... Tanys Dell ... erm ... Glebelands ... and that was the ... all the area that was built up when we came here. Our children ... had to go to Chingford to school. My daughter was of er ... grammar school ... erm ... tuition ... but we couldn't put her into anywhere here because there were ... no schools available Loughton wouldn't take her ... neither would ... er Bishop's Stortford, because they were the only two grammar schools available here and erm ... **my dau, other daughter ... with many other children er, well, all the children of the residency in Tanys Dell and the Glebelands ... had to travel ... to Chingford every day to school.** Then, the infant school ... the first class of the infants ... we had in a hut ... on Netteswell Road ... and then we went, they came from that hut there to the servant's quarters of Mark Hall. The o, the Mark Hall ... only Mark Hall wasn't there, because it had been previously burnt down. So ... that was our first ... se ... good school, as you may say then ... and then within about four years ... they built Tanys Dell ... And erm ... we just ... you know, we formed a ... quite a, a ... a very good community here because we were all people from different areas ... we all had the same problems trying to ... re-adjust in a new place ... and I think then, we had ... more ... relationship with, with our neighbours than people are having today. Because

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: yo, you know, if we had problems we'd each ... talk to them and we had of course, we had, we formed a resident association and we took our problems to the resident's association ... and ... and we wo, you know, if we had problems which could be ironed out ... the man, general manager of the development corporation, Mr [...] would come and listen to our complaints ... and ... we seemed, you know, we, **we got along very ... very well really for ... such a small place with nothing** ... because the only shopping facilities were in the old town ... or we had to go to Epping ... or Bishop's Stortford ... you see?

Note that in this second excerpt the tone is somewhat more serious and graver. The speaker is recounting the difficulties encountered when her family moved into Harlow. Here hyperbole is used as a dramatisation technique. In this sense, Falk (1990: 48) notes that hyperbole has an important function in narratives, namely “establishing the narrator’s fortitude, endurance or some other outstanding quality”.

The narrative genre¹⁸ seems particularly well suited for the investigation of this function, since “oral storytellers have to interact with their listeners to attract and keep their attention. Storytellers have to stir their listeners, to make them have an active interest in the story itself” (Pridham 2001: 9), and one way is through the use of overstatement. “A good entertaining story often has”, say Carter and McCarthy (1997: 23), “embellishments or decorations by the teller, for example, exaggeration, intensification, suspense, amusing details”.

¹⁸ Interest intensification through hyperbole is used as a performance or dramatisation technique mainly but not solely in narratives.

Another situation where speakers typically attempt to add interest to their words points to cases of topic-shift. Via hyperbole, speakers attempt to make the new topic interesting and involving to listeners. The following fragment is illustrative.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...] can smell that from here.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah. ...

PS000>: I think it'd give me a headache, not take it away.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Right. So, so you'd say to yourself. Right,

PS000>: No.

MASSEUR>: you don't like camomile, that's not gonna do you any good. The next one, which is similar to camomile and which I find a lot of people like better, is lavender. ***Everybody thinks of grandma with lavender.***

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: ***Lavender in the cupboards and lavender everywhere.*** Lavender again is good for headaches and it's good if you can't sleep or you suffer a bit from insomnia.

PS000>: No, I s, s I don't suffer from that. [...]

MASSEUR>: No, [laughing] [...] like me, the opposite direction.

6.5.2.6. Contrast of differences

Although much of the literature on the pragmatic accomplishments of hyperbole is grounded on the notion of “contrast”, this function had not been previously identified for overstatement, despite McCarthy and Carter’s (2004: 164) claim that “contrasts, whether implicit or explicit, are an important feature of many hyperbolic utterances”. In their study of the functions of non-literal language, Roberts and Kreuz (1994), for example, assign this goal to irony, metaphor and understatement, but not to exaggeration. In terms of frequency, though, this is not a very prominent function in our data (13.2%).

Arguably, apart from contrasting expected and ensuing events as in expressing surprise, one can oppose and contrast differences between two distant poles that vary along some relevant dimension. One semantic pole is explicitly connected with the other pole amidst high semantic tension. “Upscaling of reality”, say McCarthy and Carter (2004: 170), “is a good means of intensifying contrasting situations”. Here the aim of hyperbole is to extend and heighten this discrepancy to the maximum, to make the disparity even more extreme, often up to the point of antagonism. Thus, it is not difficult to find antitheses as in the excerpts below.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Now the red range at the top here is all the oils to make you RELAX. ... And **all the oils at the bottom, the blue ones are to make you refreshed, happy, revived**, we hope. So if you ever go in and you want to have an oil that relaxes you, you look at all the red ones. Again, you must have one that you like the smell of. Also with essential oils, they come from plants, leaves, ... twigs, roots, or parts of flowers and plants. If you were to use essential oil neat, that's the little drops of oil, it's too strong and it will hurt, well, it won't harm you but it won't, it might set up irritations. You must always mix it with a carrier oil. And if you went to where they sell essential oils, theirs are pure oils. You must always buy what they call a carrier oil to help mix the oils. Now ours, we've helped you by already mixing it, so ours have got three percent of essential oil to a carrier oil, which in our case happens to be grape seed oil, which is a very light carrier oil. So ... I'll start with the first one and I'll pass it round and just ... *put either the RELAXING on one hand and the reviving on the other*, and you'll have one hand relaxed, the other one [laughing] doing this.

This contrast of differences can be explicit or implicit. It is explicit when the two discrepant terms, situations or objects are explicitly stated or can be found in the immediate context. For instance:

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

DEANNE>: I mean, it's like the jeans, I say, for Laura I paid 14'99 for a pair there, and 11'99 for the other pair. Well, I've been ... and got myself two pair ... cos I mean, it's more or less all I wear ... just a, a couple of weeks before, and I'd only paid 12'99 a pair for my own!

SANDRA>: Mm!

DEANNE>: So I mean, I had actually paid more for ... hers er, than, you know. Well, I think they're so, my own I don't mind paying a bit more for really, because they're so ... last me such a long while.

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: I wear them day in, day out, you know. I mean, I ... I've got like five pair at the moment. Some what I call are COMFY ones, **some that I can't breathe in**, you know!

SANDRA>: [laugh]

DEANNE>: [laughing] My going out ones.

Contrasts are implicit if one of the items is presupposed or cannot be found in the immediate environment, as in the following excerpt.

Text JNR > Seminar presentation at conference

PS4G1>: Can I just ask you both ... er are you unwilling to modify the standard follow-up or cystoscopy [...] for G3 tumours and for T1 tumours, or is it just for the G3T1? I think Steve you were, you were suggesting that it was only the G3T1 [...].

PS4G0>: Erm ... well ... ALL THE PATIENTS WHO PROGRESSED HAD EITHER G2 OR G3PT1 TUMOURS AT DIAGNOSIS. THEY SEEMED TO BE A VERY HIGH RISK GROUP OF PATIENTS.

PS4G1>: Right and a, a G3PTA?

PS4G0>: Erm well, there quite a few of those and none of them progressed.

PS4FX>: Microphone three [...].
PS4G2>: Chelmsford. If I come to you ... at three months with a PT ... A tumour, that's grade one or two, how long would you be ... er willing to accept that I should have a recurrence before you treat it? How
PS4G0>: But you sorry a G2?
PS4G2>: A, a ... G1
PS4G0>: G1.
PS4G2>: PTA tumour. How, how soon should I get it treated? Does it matter [...]?
PS4G0>: [...] I think it probably ... it probably doesn't. I mean, the r **the risk of progression is I, I, I would think is minuscule** ... erm and erm [...] you're only talking about changes in size, not risk of ... of ... erm muscle invasion, and I think therefore
PS4G2>: So if it's not causing me any symptoms, I should [...]?
PS4G0>: No, what I'm say, what I'm saying is ... that, that leaving it for a few months probably isn't going to do you any harm. I mean, clearly it will continue to grow and therefore any [...] that you do will be, will be greater.

As the fragment below illustrates, this contrast of differences may also serve to clarify an idea through negation of one of the two discrepant items. Again this goes to show the close connection among discourse goals, “how functions combine and mutually support one another” (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 17).

Text FMB > Science lesson: year 10

TEACHER>: Now ... in order to help this black powder to split up the acid. We're going to have to heat it up a little bit. Now again I'M TREATING IT CAREFULLY, **I'm not just sticking the bunsen underneath and blasting away at it**. I've got the ... Graham wanted to, well, unfortunately, Graham, this one's a bit dangerous so I'm having to do it so if anything goes wrong it's me that gets it and not you. ... Well, because I've got all the dirty chemicals [...] ... Sh, ... Please. ... Erm ... How will we know ... how will we know if there's any gas escaping?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: What. What's this paper?
PS000>: PH paper.
TEACHER>: PH paper. So I'm going to moisten it. ... Because of the gas that's drifting around in here [...] ... What?
PS000>: The gas, can you can you set fire to it?

6.5.2.7. Humour

Although percentages (12.5%) suggest that to be funny or witty is not a prominent goal in our data, as discussed in chapter two, humour has often been pointed out as a prominent goal of exaggeration (Long and Graesser 1988, Graesser *et al.* 1989, Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Sell *et al.* 1997, Colston and O'Brien 2000b). Exaggeration imparts humour to what is said. Indeed, much useful insight into this figure comes from the literature on humour. Not in vain, exaggeration has been defined as the essence of the tall story. In the words of

Nash (1985: 169): “the comic mode of hyperbole, or overstatement, [is] the stylistic trademark of many a tall tale”.

Humour is a complex cognitive, social and linguistic phenomenon (Long and Graesser 1988: 35, Gregori Signes *et al.* 1998: 73). Although it is often difficult to define, one common denominator that appears to underlie many forms of humour is a violation of expectations, discontinuity and/or incongruity (Nerhardt 1970, Suls 1972, McGhee 1976, Dolitsky 1992, Forabosco 1992, Yus Ramos 1995-1996, Tsang 2000). Humour and surprise, thus, become conceptually intertwined, since both refer to failed or frustrated expectations. Indeed, “humor is associated with what is unexpected and surprising” (Zajdman 1995: 327). Similarly, the incongruity-resolution theory of humour postulates that “a situation is perceived as humorous if the perceiver detects an incongruity in the situation (e.g. the situation in some way violates the person’s expectations, which surprises, perplexes, or arouses the person)” (Pepicello and Weisberg 1983, vol. 1: 73). Thus, the laughter of incongruity, says Tsang (2000: 165), is evoked with a range of linguistic devices including irony, parody, exaggeration and disproportion.

In Long and Graesser’s (1988: 39) taxonomy of wit, overstatements feature as humorous strategies, together with understatement, irony, satire and sarcasm. Since all of them are evaluative in nature, they are all expressions of opinion, whereby speakers state a belief, assert blame or praise (p. 44), we can safely assume that this type of wit, namely humorous exaggeration, can be used either for affiliation and involvement or for aggression and conflict. Note here again the interrelation of pragmatic functions (humour and evaluation) for the figure. Thus, a distinction must be drawn between humorous acts for aggression or for affiliation and involvement. Hyperbole can be funny or playful, but it can also be used to insult and mock. Jocularities are basically affiliative (Emerson 1969; quoted in Seckman and Couch 1989: 328), but there are also bitter acts for aggression. For example, the speaker may want to ridicule one of the receivers, as in the following passage.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000b>: Well, I just wonder you, there has got to be some kind of ... relationship between the fact that most people who take drugs live in really run down, deprived areas. I mean, I think that you have to look at that, because PEOPLE HAVE GOT NOTHING TO DO! Er, I mean, lots of people have got nothing to do and are unlikely to be employed during that time.

J8JPS000>: So you think, **you think people who live in, in well off areas, there's lots to do, don't take drugs?**

J8JPS000b>: No!

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: You don't think that?

J8JPS000b>: Oh, well, you know ... No, I don't think that, but I think that you have to ... I mean, there has to some kind of relationship between ... I'm not saying it's anything to do with the personalities or anything like that but

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS000b>: it's got something to do with the fact that ... people have got nothing to do in those areas, and no cha, no prospects, no chance of getting a job and it's actually quite a purposeful way of spending your time.

Humour for aggression, though, is rare in our data. The bulk of humorous acts in the transcripts examined respond to affiliative purposes, among which teasing and self-deprecating humour feature.

Self-deprecating humour, also referred to as self-denigrating or self-disparaging humour (Zajdman 1995: 337), takes the form of statements that target oneself as the object of humour (Graesser *et al.* 1989: 50). Obviously, this type of humour co-occurs systematically with negative evaluative forms. The intention may be to demonstrate modesty, to put the listener at ease, or to ingratiate oneself to a listener (Long and Graesser 1988: 43). The hyperbolic utterance *I've got a beard* in the excerpt below is illustrative.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CRAIG>: Who? [whispering] Yeah, oh, I don't like her.

CLAIRE>: [...]

CRAIG>: She's got a moustache.

CLAIRE>: Well, Vicky has, but she can't help it.

CRAIG>: No, Vicky's got a beard.

CLAIRE>: No, ***I've got a beard.***

CRAIG>: [tut!] Oh. Teaspoon.

PS000>: If you dry up and put them there now cos it's nearly [...].

JO>: I got nice baggy arse here.

CRAIG>: [laugh] ... ***Are they ... riding jodhpurs, aren't they?***

JO>: Yeah, well, such a shame.

CRAIG>: Can I have the erm ... grey thing here? ... You gotta wear that now?

On the other hand, teasing is defined as “utterances that hold as the object of amusement another’s personal appearance or foibles” (Graesser *et al.* 1989: 50), as the overstated *Are they riding jodhpurs, aren't they?* in the excerpt above. Teasing, say Long and Graesser (1988: 43), is unlike hostility and sarcasm because the intention is not to

seriously insult, offend or chastise. Rather, it illustrates the playful nature of humour, “where speakers tease one another without the intention to seriously harm or criticize” (Gibbs 2000: 24).

6.5.2.8. Clarification

Although clarification has been pointed out as a notable hyperbolic goal in Roberts and Kreuz’s (1994) and Sell *et al.*’s (1997) study of the functions of non-literal language, the frequency of occurrence of this function in our data is rather low (5.4%).

Exceptionally, Kreuz *et al.* (1998) have explained and even illustrated this function of clarification through overstatement.

It may seem paradoxical to think of clarification as one of the discourse goals of hyperbole, since such statements do not provide veridical information. Hyperbole, however, can often provide insight into *why* a particular statement has been uttered. Consider, for example, the utterance in (5):

(5) I’ve just watched the Pittsburgh football team lose for the thousandth time!

This hyperbolic statement provides specific information (that the Steelers lost), but it also informs listeners of the speaker’s attitude about this information (in this case, disgust or disillusionment). So hyperbole can be used by speakers to make clear their feelings or states of mind. (Kreuz *et al.* 1998: 94)

This is not the definition or sense of clarification that I wish to advocate for hyperbole, though. Rather than to clarification, it appears that Kreuz *et al.* (1998) are primarily referring to conveying the speaker’s attitude, and so to the evaluative or affective dimension of the trope. Indeed, this argument resembles Kreuz *et al.*’s (1991) claim that “the use of irony makes it possible for a speaker to communicate a particular assertion and an evaluation of that assertion” (p. 154). Rather, I refer here to the more traditional meaning of the word clarification: “to make it easy to understand and remove any doubts or confusion, for example by giving more details or a simple explanation” (Collins Cobuild

1987: 246). By exaggerating a preceding literal utterance, the speaker may attempt to clarify the meaning he/she intends to convey. For example:

Text F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on word processing

LECTURER>: Yes, true! It is one paragraph at a time, so it is correct.

PS000>: I hope so.

LECTURER>: I was having a job to recognise what was a pa ... Er, a paragraph as far as *Microsoft Word* is concerned is the space between two ... hits of the return key, okay? Whereas a sentence ... is, is the space between er the beginning of er, er between two full stops. A NEW WAY OF USING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, **when you're word processing is absolutely another world!** Okay. Erm ... if you go shift F9, or shift F8 ... it goes through the document, I think, one sentence at a time. Yep! And shift F7 takes you back through the document one sentence at a time. ... Shift F9 selects the current line, we've not er stated I think. ... Yeah, shift F9 ... er ... accepts the current line where the cursor is, is located. And probably the most useful key of all ... when you're doing global formatting, is shift F10 and you select the whole document. So if you wanna select all the text you've written, she shift F10 selects the whole document.

In the extract, overstatement is employed to reduce ambiguity, and so to increase the likelihood that the intent of the speaker's message is correctly understood. This form of clarification via exaggeration works by pushing the literal idea a step further so as to leave no doubt of the intended meaning in the hearer's mind.

As discussed in section 6.5.2.6., a marginal case of clarification by means of negation was found in the corpus examined.

6.5.2.9. Polite de-emphasis

This is the least frequent function for overstatement in the data examined (3.5%). Although it might seem that this function goes against the nature of the figure, which is to emphasise, its existence is explained in terms of politeness needs.

By polite de-emphasis I refer to cases of politeness motivated mitigation or underemphasis. This is certainly related to Leech's (1983: 107) tact maxim, which is formulated as follows: "Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other". One aspect of the tact maxim relates to the size of imposition. One can use "minimizers" to reduce the implied cost to the hearer, as in *Hang on a second* (Thomas 1995: 161). Hence, meiosis, defined as exaggerated reduction, extenuation or diminution (Smith 1657: 56), seems a good way of

minimising the expression of cost to other. Note that all instances of this function in our transcripts are time references (*a minute*) of the hyperbolic type meiosis.

This strategy is particularly useful in mitigating directives (e.g. orders, requests, etc.). In this sense, Bach and Harnish (1979: 47) state that in requests, the speaker expresses the desire that the listener do the action, and the intention that the listener do it because of the speaker's desire, or at least partially for this reason. The listener is asked to do the action, instead of being told to do so, and can decide to do the action or not, the outcome of which is largely or solely for the benefit of the speaker. Requests, then, are nearly always mitigated as shown in chapter five, since the action is to be done as a favour to the speaker (Koike 1994: 521).

There are other FTAs in our transcripts that require mitigation, such as refusing an offer or invitation, denying a petition, etc. Mitigation, a synonym of attenuation for Caffi (1999: 882), is functional, "to smooth interactional management in that it reduces risks for participants at various levels, e.g. risk of self-contradiction, refusal, losing face, conflict and so forth". Notice below how the risk of refusal decreases as the speaker minimises the time to await.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Brett, now you stop that this minute. Kaley, I want you to go upstairs and get me a pad for Brett, please. Hurry up so that he's got a paddy on at teatime. Come on, Kaley.

BRETT>: [...] tea.

FRANCES>: What?

BRETT>: Tea.

FRANCES>: *You're gonna have some tea in a minute, when daddy comes.*

BRETT>: Yes.

FRANCES>: Yes.

FRANCIS>: [...] will be here?

FRANCES>: Six o'clock.

FRANCIS>: Ooh!

FRANCES>: Teatime. ... You'd better watch and get that paddy first or there'll be trouble.

6.6. Relation between literal and figurative speech

The issue of clarification of literal statements via exaggeration leads us to consider the relationship between literal and hyperbolic language. Our transcripts suggest that speakers do not normally use figurative expressions *in lieu* of literal ones, but rather in addition to

them. This means that hyperbole and literal language reinforce and complement, rather than replace, each other, often through clarification.

Repetition of sense is, naturally, employed to ensure that listeners get across the force of the speaker's utterance, whether literal or figurative. Indeed, it has been argued that "a figurative expression, *E*, may be conjoined with an expression whose literal content is similar to the potential figurative effect of *E* and no redundancy should result" (Sadock 1993: 52-3). This notion of "reiterability" points to a reformulation or paraphrase of some preceding idea or propositional content, whether in literal or figurative terms.

Thus, two antithetic patterns can be distinguished in our data, depending on whether the restatement takes a literal or hyperbolic form. Sometimes, the speaker firstly produces an overstated account and then downscales the utterance to fit the world and reality. This is the most recurrent pattern, with 20 occurrences, in the transcripts examined. At other times, in 16 occasions, the opposite pattern occurs: the speaker produces a literal version that depicts the actual state of affairs and then upscales the utterance to an overstated description.

Often "figurative expressions followed literal descriptions, an observation suggesting that figurative expressions might be intended as a clarification" (Fussell and Moss 1998: 127). Let us take the following fragment by way of illustration.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

ANN>: I find people do tend to put a ... quite a lot do, put a telephone voice on. ...
STUART>: Specially if you're phoning a posh restaurant.
ANN>: Yes.
STUART>: Or something like that. You tend to sort of ... I'd like to book a table for two
ANN>: [laugh]
STUART>: on Saturday night. Rather than say ... look, mush, I want a
ANN>: [laugh]
STUART>: I want a table, you know. ...
ANN>: [cough] ... Oh, I'd better go and wash our dishes, dear.
STUART>: NOT MANY TO DO NOW [...] *done them all*.
ANN>: Most of them. There's only yours. Have you had
STUART>: What about
ANN>: enough to eat?
STUART>: Yes, thank you. Fine. I would have done it actually when, when I took the plate out, but the water in the bowl was cold. Thought it was hot but it was cold.

Or they were used to sum up a more literal description, as in the excerpt below.

Text F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on word processing

LECTURER>: So, if everybody selects the text that they want of their document and we'll just play around with it ... show you what a mess you can actually create using these formatting keys! So everybody have document and hit shift F10 ... and they're on page nine now ... if we go, hold down the alt key and type B ... and you'll just see er a shimmer go down the screen ... and ... then you don't actually see anything, but if you alt U, everything appears underlined ... alt K ... converts everything into small capitals ..., alt S strikes through everything ... and alt I ... italicizes all the words. If you don't press your arrow ... you'll see what a mess you've created in your document! ***You've made the text*** BOLD ... CAPITALIZED, STRUCK THROUGH, UNDERLINED, and ***totally illegible!*** So you've now actually taken all that nice typing that you've done and rendered it totally illegible! Fortunately, this is not permanent. So if you select all the text again, shift F10, and press the alt space bar, then all of that formatting is removed ... and it takes you back to your text as it was. So, from basically making it totally illegible you're back to where you started.

This observation is consistent with Roberts and Kreuz's (1994: 161) finding that people report using figures, especially rhetorical questions, similes, metaphors and overstatement, to clarify their meanings. Similarly, Sell *et al.* (1997: 110) have shown that a common function for hyperbole, rhetorical questions and idioms is clarification.

As in Fussell and Moss' (1998) study, figurative expressions in our corpus appeared at other times to set the stage for latter details, explaining in a literal way what was meant by a figurative expression (p. 128). This seems to suggest that literal language too is used to clarify indirect language forms. This is in consonance with Pollio *et al.*'s (1977) report that literal statements clarify similes (p. 154). The following extracts show how speakers may clarify or explain hyperbolic expressions via literal comments.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: The ... Catholic School ... which was the only ... school available then to us ... fo with the field that was ... we, which we needed. The Sister Constance, who was the then the principal sister there ... she let us have the field ... so we got ... entertainment laid on We invited a celebrity, I think our first celebrity was erm ... I think it was Lord and Lady [...] and ... then each time we had a different one. ***We had entertainment the whole time.*** WE STARTED, ABOUT HALF PAST TWO AND THEN WE HAD ENTERTAINMENT UNTIL SIX ... THEN WE HAD AN INTERVAL ... THEN WE HAD ENTERTAINMENT TILL TWELVE O'CLOCK ... I even took my piano down onto the field so that we could have music. We raised quite ... a good sum for the first time ... and that went to the Barnardos Home.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000>: Well, we've got onto illegal drugs, and of course le or, do you think illegal drugs are attractive almost because they are illegal? I mean, th there are other things that can give you a hit. There are, there are legal drugs in our society, and you may not think they should

be legal, I don't know, there's ... there's er, alcohol, I suppose is the most commonly used one but

J8JPS008>: It would start probably because they are illegal, erm ... but basically because *everybody else running about me ... er, was trying it*, MY FRIENDS so ... it basically boiled down to peer pressure ... at the start.

J8JPS000>: So what were you taking?

J8JPS008>: Heroin.

J8JPS000>: From the start?

J8JPS008>: Mhm.

J8JPS000>: And did it give you a high?

J8JPS008>: At the start, aye.

The matter of a speaker selecting a literal expression, in preference to a figurative way of saying or describing something, is particularly visible in the case of self-repairs, when the speaker changes what was going to be an exaggerated form and replaces it with a literal remark. The excerpt below is exemplary.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000>: What, what, what do you think of those two experiences? Yes?

PS000>: I admire them for being able to sit there in front of everybody and say they actually, what they've been through because it must have been sheer hell ... er, trying to come off and withdrawal symptoms. I mean, I don't know much about it cos *I've never taken* ... WELL, I SMOKE

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: AND I TAKE A DRINK, but hard drugs ... misused drugs ... it just must be shu he sheer hell! And if ... they're coming out stating that your families turned their back, they've had enough.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

PS000>: Who do you turn to?

J8JPS000a>: These, these seem to be extreme stories.

However, in accordance with Drew and Holt's (1998: 496) finding, self-repairs involving the substitution of a literal for a figurative description were also found in our data. Here the speaker starts to produce a literal version, but then does a self-repair which substitutes that version with a overstated description.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: Our children ... had to go to Chingford to school. My daughter was of er ... grammar school ... erm ... tuition ... but we couldn't put her into anywhere here because there were ... no schools available Loughton wouldn't take her ... neither would ... er Bishop's Stortford, because they were the only two grammar schools available here and erm ... *my dau, other daughter* ... WITH MANY OTHER CHILDREN *er, well, all the children of the residency in Tanys Dell and the Glebelands* ... *had to travel ... to Chingford every day to*

school. Then, the infant school ... the first class of the infants ... we had in a hut ... on Netteswell Road ... and then we went, they came from that hut there to the servant's quarters of Mark Hall. The o, the Mark Hall ... only Mark Hall wasn't there, because it had been previously burnt down. So ... that was our first ... se ... good school, as you may say then ... and then within about four years ... they built Tanys Dell.

These substitutions or self-repair mechanisms are rare in our transcripts, though, demonstrating thus that literal and figurative language often complement and further extend, rather than replace, each other. Hence, this relation is not one of competing but of complementary versions.

6.7. Discussion

This chapter has addressed the production process of hyperbole in terms of pragmatic functions, an aspect too often marginalised in the study of this figure. The aim was to answer the question: why do we use hyperbole in discourse? What are the communicative functions served by exaggeration?

Although figurative language has traditionally been relegated to the study of literary texts, equated with ornamentation and associated with aesthetic effects, the BNC data examined suggest that overstatement is not just a literary device. Rather, in everyday life, exaggeration performs a wide range of both affective and propositional functions. It appears to fulfil at least nine communicative goals, namely: expression of surprise, contrast of differences, evaluation, clarification, humour, emphasis, interest intensification, simplification and politeness motivated de-emphasis. Not all these functions are equally important, though. In terms of frequency, the most prominent goals are: emphasis, evaluation and expression of surprise. Despite Sell *et al.*'s (1997) argument that "parents use nonliteral forms differently when addressing preschoolers than when addressing other adults" (p. 99), at least emphasis and evaluation can be considered notable functions for hyperbole in adult speech, too. However, it may be that parents are more anxious to ensure children's comprehension and to attract their attention. This would help explain why clarification and interest intensification (i.e. maintaining focus) are so recurrent in addressing children, and not in our data.

To the extent that hyperbole assumes all these discourse goals, one would have to reject the classical view of hyperbole as merely linguistic decoration (or at worst as a vice). As

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1994: 448) correctly note: “Figurative language is no longer perceived as merely an ornament added to everyday, straightforward literal language, but is instead viewed as a powerful communicative and conceptual tool”.

Although I have discussed these pragmatic functions separately, they are by no means independent, but rather interrelated, even sometimes subordinated to each other. In the words of Pollio *et al.* (1977: 10): “figurative usage always has many functions and [that] to talk about them one at a time is simply a convenient fiction”. In looking carefully at the functional behaviour of this figure in our data one realises how the functions combine and mutually support one another (e.g. humour and evaluation, expression of surprise and evaluation). This helps explain how hyperbole accomplishes multiple functions simultaneously. Some goals appear intrinsically related or connected (e.g. clarification through negation and contrast of differences, humorous self-deprecation and negative evaluation).

In the words of Pollio *et al.* (1977: 18):

The various functions interrelate with one another and [that] no one function ought to be considered as a “cause” for any other. Rather the various functions are better thought of as in constant interaction and for this reason, we must never speak of one function as prior to or even as independent of any other. To a greater or lesser extent all functions are possible in any figurative expression; it is the speaker in his or her situation who gives prominence to one or another.

Since the interpersonal functions are more numerous and recurrent than other discourse goals for overstatement, we cannot but emphasise the central role the affective dimension of hyperbole plays in the understanding of the trope. I have examined how speakers use exaggeration to express a wide range of affective meanings such as interest, approval, disapproval, delight, sympathy, antipathy, humour and other affective reactions. Hyperbole, though, not only serves to fulfil interpersonal, affective functions but also propositional or content-based goals, such as clarification, contrast of differences, etc. Thus, this figure is employed to convey both information about the topic under discussion and to convey the speaker’s beliefs or feelings about the topic.

As with verbal irony, emotions appear to underlie most goals fulfilled by this figure. This is not surprising given that “the subjective nature of emotional experiences appears to

lend itself to figurative expression” (Fussell and Moss 1998: 113), since they are often difficult to capture in literal terms. Hyperbole is mainly used to express the speaker’s attitudes, emotions, feelings, etc. Recall that Falk (1990: 39) has emphasised that, instead of conveying factual information, they express the speaker’s attitude, emotional state and degree of involvement in what is being said. Similarly, Plett (1975a: 80-1) notes that hyperbole can be defined as a figure of affect. It implies the speaker’s emotional involvement and excites that of the hearer (Leech 1969: 170, Plett 1975b: 76). Because the interpersonal goals of hyperbole are more numerous, and evaluation is a central function for this figure, we can safely assume that understanding hyperbole “calls upon the social task of inferring a speaker’s beliefs, attitudes and intentions” (Dews and Winner 1997: 381). Hyperbole, like irony, therefore, must be primarily seen as “evaluative and social”, as opposed to metaphor which is primarily “descriptive and explanatory” (Dews and Winner 1997: 380).

With regard to the question: why should speakers prefer hyperbole over literal commentary?, our data seems consistent with the findings of previous research. In consonance with the inexpressibility hypothesis, exaggeration seems to accomplish some goals that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil literally (e.g. to make a generalisation, to round a number). In addition, when literal and overstated remarks attain the same functions, hyperbole appears to perform them to a greater extent or more successfully than literal comments (e.g. to express surprise). Finally, another advantage of exaggeration over direct, literal language is that although “no single phrase or use of language ever seems to have just a single function” (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), hyperboles appear to fulfil more discourse goals than their literal equivalents. All this may help explain why speakers often choose to express their thoughts indirectly or exaggeratedly, rather than using literal language, and why non-literal forms, such as overstatement, exist in language.

This goes to show that hyperbole is not simply a substitution for literal language, but rather “nonliteral utterances convey information that literal utterances do not” (Dews and Winner 1995: 4). As Dews *et al.* (1995: 348) have clearly put it for verbal irony:

In our view, however, defining irony simply as a substitution for literal language hinders our understanding of why people choose to use irony instead of literal language: There would be

no motivation to use nonliteral language if literal language could be used instead. Thus, it must be that irony is not equivalent to its literal paraphrase, however close that paraphrase is.

A speaker's choice of a hyperbolic over a literal expression is not simply a matter of style or preference. Thus, overstatement is not simply an imaginative and creative way to say something that could have been said literally.

Finally, I have examined the relation between literal and overstated forms. Here the notion of reiterability is crucial to explain how literal and hyperbolic expressions complement and reinforce each other. Rather than competing with or substituting the preceding version, it seems that literal and non-literal language clarify, explain and add to each other.

7. HYPERBOLE: TEXT FORMS AND INTERACTIONAL GENRES

7.1. Introduction

The present chapter addresses the use of hyperbole in different speech genres, a rather unexplored aspect of the trope. It aims to determine whether exaggeration is a matter of personal, individual style or if, on the contrary, there are correlations between interactional genres and the use of this figure. It explores the way contextual factors influence the use and frequency of overstatement.

Firstly, I will begin by examining which text form or mode the segment of text where hyperbole occurs belongs to, whether narrative, descriptive, procedural or argumentative-expository. Although traditionally these labels have been considered text types, they also apply to smaller textual units. In doing so, I expect to determine which text form attracts the most hyperboles. The results will be examined and explained in the light of the interactional genres found in our data.

Once the text forms for overstated utterances have been identified, genres at the level of the overall interaction where exaggeration is embedded will be discussed in order to determine in which interactional genre the use of exaggeration predominates. Although texts were originally selected according to BNC domain (business, institutional, educational-informative, leisure and informal), a very different picture emerges from our classification into speech genres: service encounters, learning encounters, decision making genre, etc. These genres will be defined and their main features described according to purpose, lexico-grammatical dimension and “situative structure” (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 8).

Since genres can be performed in different ways according to different variables (Duranti 1983), three defining generic dimensions: goal orientation, participant framework and transactional/interpersonal language use will be examined in isolation to discover which individual factors control hyperbole frequency and usage.

7.2. Textual classifications

There are many different ways of categorising texts or discourse types: “by situation, by function, by participants, by text, by substance or by a combination of these factors” (Cook 1992: 4). Although texts may be classified in multiple ways, in this chapter they will be classified according to the categories of text type and genre, whose literature, in both cases, is extensive. Some scholars seem to equate these two terms, regarding them as synonyms (e.g. Stubbs 1996), but I will maintain a distinction between them.

7.2.1. Textual typologies

Over the years, many different textual typologies have been devised. The term “text type” in text linguistics refers to a number of quite distinct phenomena on a variety of different levels (Fludernik 2000: 1). The sense of text type adopted here is reflected in the following quotation: “Classifications into text/discourse types”, say Östman and Virtanen (1995: 126), “are made on a text-internal basis, to indicate variation according to the organization and content of texts”.

Unlike genres, text types constitute a closed set with only a limited number of categories (Trosborg 1997). Traditional text types such as argumentative, narrative and descriptive have been widely discussed in the literature. In rhetoric, for example, four different kinds of discourse are usually distinguished: exposition, argument, description and narration (Brooks and Warren 1972: 44). Other text type categories such as predictive, conversational or rhetoric have only been proposed and discussed by a few scholars (e.g. Castellà 1992).

Kinneavy (1980) classifies texts in terms of modes of how reality can be viewed. His text types are cognitive categories that help to conceptualise, perceive and portray the world.

Narration: our dynamic view of reality looks at change

Evaluation: our dynamic view focuses at the potential of reality to be different

Description: our static view focuses on individual existence

Classification: focuses on groups

The problem with textual typologies is that “however the typology is set up, any real text will display features of more than one type. This multifunctionality is the rule rather than the exception” (Hatim and Mason 1990: 138). Thus, Werlich (1976: 19), among others, bases his text typology on what he calls “dominant contextual focus”, which refers to text type at the macro level, the dominant function of a text type in a text.

Based on cognitive properties, Werlich (1976) distinguished five idealised text types or modes, namely descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative and instructive text. He suggests that texts correlate with innate biological properties of the human mind.

Texts, conceived of as assignable to text types, primarily derive their structural distinctions (text structuring) from innate cognitive properties. Accordingly, the five text types [description, narration, exposition, argumentation and instruction] correlate with forms and ranges of human cognition. They reflect the basic cognitive processes of contextual organization. (Werlich 1976: 21)

Werlich’s (1976) deeply influential typology has been adopted and adapted by Hatim and Mason (1990), mainly for translation purposes. They list the following properties associated with each of the text types mentioned above (p. 159).

Differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in **space** (description)

Differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in **time** (narration)

Comprehension of general concepts through differentiation by **analysis** and/or **synthesis** (exposition)

Judging: the evaluation of relations between and among concepts through the extraction of similarities, contrasts and transformations (argumentation)

Planning of future behaviour (instruction)

Hatim and Mason (1990: 140) define text type as “a conceptual framework which enables us to classify texts in terms of communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purpose”. While communicative purpose is the aim of a text, rhetorical purpose is made up of strategies which constitute the mode of discourse realised through text types. They discuss text types under the headings of argumentative, instructional and expository. The latter category includes both narrative and descriptive texts.

Argumentative text types have as contextual focus the evaluation of relations between concepts. In the expository text type, the contextual focus is either on the decomposition (analysis) into constituent elements of given concepts, or their composition (synthesis) from constituent elements. Hatim and Mason (1990) include descriptive and narrative texts as two important varieties of this kind of conceptual exposition. Thus, description, instead of “concepts”, handles “objects” or “situations”, while narrative texts arrange “actions” and “events” in a particular order (p. 155). In instructional text types, on the other hand, the focus is on “the formation of future behaviour” (p. 156). There is an attempt to regulate through instruction the way people act or think. They distinguish two sub-types, namely instruction with option (e.g. advertising) and instruction without option (e.g. contracts). Hatim and Mason’s (1990: 158) text typology features in the figure below.

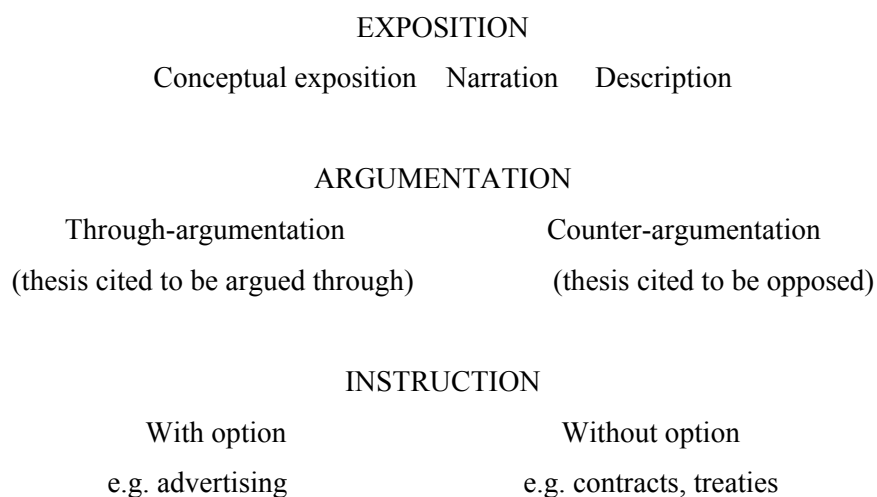


Figure 7.1. Hatim and Mason’s (1990: 158) typology of texts

In discussing the multifunctionality and hybrid nature of texts, these scholars, following Werlich (1976), also talk about “dominant contextual focus”.

The usefulness of this concept is that it helps to resolve some of the problems inherent in the multifunctionality of texts. It is sometimes claimed that texts are too fuzzy to yield distinct typologies, and that more than one purpose is always being attended to in a given text. However, although we recognise multifunctionality as an important property of texts, we submit that only one predominant rhetorical purpose can be served at one time in a given

text. This is the text's dominant contextual focus. Other purposes may well be present, but they are in fact subsidiary to the overall function of the text. (Hatim and Mason 1990: 146)

7.2.2. Mode analysis for hyperbolic utterances in the BNC data

It is important to note that while the above-mentioned authors discuss text types on a global text-internal basis, here I am primarily concerned with these textual forms at the level of the utterance or discourse segment where hyperbole is embedded. Thus, the term “text form” or even “mode” (following Chandler 1997: 11) seems more convenient for the purposes of my analysis. It also makes clear that the object of study is overstated utterances rather than items.

Text types may be defined on the basis of cognitive categories or linguistic criteria (Trosborg 1997). Here in order to define a segment or utterance (where hyperbole is contained) as an instance or token of a particular mode, its cognitive properties were examined.

Five main modes were distinguished in our analysis, namely description, narration, instruction, assessment and exposition-argumentation. Because of the close connection and overlapping between exposition and argumentation, I will not attempt here to separate them.

It is also worth mentioning that multifunctionality not only applies to global texts, but occurs at the utterance level too. This hybrid nature implies that different modes or text forms combine or co-occur in a single stretch of language. As Reiss (1971: 32) correctly notes there are many “intersections and mixed forms”, but only one mode will predominate. In the words of Hatim and Mason (1990: 147): “a perceptible dominant focus is always present while other purposes remain subsidiary”. Thus, a distinction between dominant and secondary modes will be drawn, but only the former type will be considered in extracting percentages.

7.2.3. Analysis and results: hyperbolic modes in the BNC data

The table below depicts the number of occurrences and percentages per mode for overstated utterances in our data.

Text form or mode	Occurrences	Percentages
Procedural	14	5%
Assessment	22	7%
Narration	27	9%
Description	53	17%
Argumentation-Exposition	194	63%

Table 7.2. Mode frequencies for hyperbole in the BNC data

Basically, the **procedural mode** makes reference to instructions. The focus is on the formation of future behaviour. It can be defined as an attempt to regulate the way people act through instruction. The instructive text form is based on the action-demanding sentence.

In the texts examined, this mode can be divided into two groups according to the degree of direction or indirection of the utterance. In the extract below, Frances performs a command in a rather direct and straightforward way.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCIS>: I'm hungry.

KALEY>: Mama [...].

FRANCES>: I'm gonna get, do you want to wee wee? You have a wee [...]

BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: You want to draw? Well, go in the sitting room where your drawing pad is. Come on. Want to draw [...]. Come round here then. Come and get this paddy off. Come on, we'll just get the paddy on before teatime. What's the [...]? *Shut up a minute*. I don't care if you're starving or not, you're not getting anything before [...]. Lie down. Well, why don't you just absolutely fold him up? [...] yourself. Well, share it. [...]

FRANCIS>: Mm?

FRANCES>: You [...] I'm gonna fold it up.

FRANCIS>: Okay.

FRANCES>: And then I'll back you.

The next excerpt contains what might be considered a polite command, by virtue of Storer's superordinate position and the proposal or suggestion form (*let's*) of his utterance.

Text K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

STONE>: The other, the other thing is I've discussed this with CPOs as regards the signs, if a scheme folds then we take the sign down, there are arguments for and against,

PS000>: No, No.
STONE>: [...] say yeh or nay at the moment.
PS000>: No.
STONE>: But if the sign's left up, surely that's erm
PS000>: deterrent
STONE>: towards crime prevention, on the other hand it might make some people realise that if they're no longer a scheme then they don't get the er the
PS000>: Yeah.
WILLIAMS>: Once a co-ordinator's retired or resigned, who do you actually communicate with to find out if the group wants to continue playing?
STONE>: Well, it should be in the file and I asked for this and keep it before me when a scheme is set up, A) we have a map which I must have sent out [...] letters,
PS000>: Em.
STONE>: I've received very few replies so the signs can be erected and B) either a deputy co-ordinator or the deputies that should come in, now some, some oblige a lot of them, don't
STORER>: Right, well, let's find one or two of these schemes that appear to have lapsed, send some letters to the names in the file, if we don't get any positive response within a couple of months, *let's go and take the signs down er and then wait for the squeals*
PS000>: [...]
PS000>: [...]
STORER>: We'll do it ourselves, although the council are the only people who can put them up anyone can take them down,
PS000>: All you need is a pair of wire cutters

The results from our analysis, however, suggest a rare use of hyperbole for instructional purposes. This is clearly reflected in the educational domain, where this mode prevails since instructions from teachers to students are pervasive in classroom interaction but rarely performed through hyperbole in our data. Out of the five BNC domains, this is the category where the trope is most rarely encountered (38 occurrences in 10,799 words).

Assessment, although not very common in our data, is the term used to refer to a group of listeners' reactions to speakers' contributions which involve some overstated form of evaluation, whether positive or negative. This category, since it cannot be considered a text form or mode properly, has to do with the reception process. There are two main reasons that help explain the absence of this category in traditional textual taxonomies: firstly, the intensive focus on the production process and on the role of the speaker in the creation of messages; secondly, and even more importantly, the long standing idea that written language is the norm and speech only a reflection of the written medium.

This category (of difficult categorisation) mainly consists of response and follow-up moves. The evaluative forms are often brief and contained in rather short turns. They can be defined as emotive or attitudinal reactions to the speakers' words. They may be used to acknowledge or to accept the outcome of the preceding interaction, to show appreciation of

speakers' contributions, to agree with the speaker's expressed proposition, etc. It is important to bear in mind that although other forms of evaluation through exaggeration feature in our data (indeed, evaluation is a prominent function of the trope), here we are solely concerned with their occurrence in the reception process.

McCarthy (2003) has examined a set of high-frequency short listener response tokens in everyday conversations extracted from the CANCODE corpus. Some of them are clearly exaggerated evaluations (e.g. *great, wonderful, lovely, excellent, perfect*, etc.) and overlap with the items considered under our heading of assessment. As in this dissertation, he treats as responses items which occur either in the response or follow-up move. He analyses them in terms of interpersonal mechanisms such as conversational support and convergence and as items showing "a concern on the part of listeners towards attending to the relational aspects of conversation" (p. 59). McCarthy (2003: 35-6) concludes that these response tokens "do more than just acknowledge or confirm the receipt and understanding of incoming talk (and project engagement and interactional bonding with interlocutors)".

The first extract below exemplifies a negative evaluation response move, whereas the latter can be defined as a positive evaluation follow-up move.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

DEANNE>: Mm. I mean, crumble, I like crumble.

SANDRA>: I've just stopped baking cos I'm dieting, I have

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: stopped baking!

DEANNE>: Well, I must admit, I have, I mean I don't do ... well ... I used to make quite nice cakes, since I've had this new cooker mine won't ri I mean they rise, there's no doubt about that, they rise, but I can take them out, put them on a cooling rack and watch them deflate!

SANDRA>: Deflate. Oh!

DEANNE>: [laughing] You know! They just

SANDRA>: ***Sickening!***

DEANNE>: go down and ... well, that irritates me, so I've, so I've give up that. The only thing I can make is my normal, what I call a family fruit cake, which is very simple and quick, i well not quick really but, I usually have it on when the Sunday roast's doing so ... but erm ... and that's about it, you know. They rai they do fine but

SANDRA>: I can't resist it, once I've made it, I can't resist it.

Text JJC > Estate agency: interview

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, is there a home telephone number for you?

CLIENT>: Erm, yes, it's erm would be [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, and is there a day-time telephone number, a work telephone number?

CLIENT>: Yes, you could probably ring me at work, yep, that's more convenient so that's [...]
ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, any extension on that or do we come straight through to you?
CLIENT>: That'll come direct.
ESTATE AGENT>: *That's smashing okay.* Now you just said you've got your own property to sell and that's on the market at the moment, okay? Erm, have you had any advice on mortgage and what we should be able to obtain on the mortgage side of things?
CLIENT>: Er, yes, we have actually but erm
ESTATE AGENT>: Is that from your own building society or
CLIENT>: Well, we were actually going to be going through the Halifax, but have you got any other suggestions?

Since **narration** is mainly related to time perception, it is concerned with sequences of events. It deals mainly with changes in time, i.e. with actions and events. This mode aims to inform about the occurrence of (usually past) actions and events, arranging them in a particular sequential order, as in the next excerpt.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWEE>: We took the children, when we had the bus ... we took the children to Southend That was the first time they had all been out together ... and the owner of the Kersal ... and the person responsible ... on the council for ... the erm ... maintaining of, of Southend, such as the Chairman, they put ... the Kersal at our disposal! And *before the children left ... they were given a carrier bag with ... all sorts of things that you could think of* ... and to see the delight on those little children's faces! ... It was worth all the hard work ... that we had put into it ... because ... it got that we used to use the town park towards the latter part of Barnardos Day ... and all the men that we had gathered together ... used to have to erect ... every piece of fence ... to enclose ... like it is now, the park, is enclosed now with, with fencing The men that were helping us did that all voluntarily! And mis, the ... the constructors here ... they loaned us different equipment and we worked from Monday to Friday getting the ... things ready ... we worked all day Saturday doing the show, and we worked all day Sunday clearing the field! It was very hard work but it was worth it.

Narration is the third genre in attracting a higher number of exaggerations in our data, although compared to the argumentative-expository mode, its frequency seems almost negligible. The use of the trope in narrative contexts has been emphasised by different authors and probably because of this I had initially expected a higher frequency for this mode. With 27 occurrences, it only stands for 9% of overstated utterances in our data. This is not an accurate picture, though. Narration is also embodied in other exaggerations where its use has been considered subsidiary, namely narrative descriptions and persuasion though the narration of a personal experience. The actual percentage should be 16%. Yet, the scarcity of narrative hyperbole may also be explained by the low frequency of

narratives in our data. As will be shown in the genre theory section, the narrative genre can only be found embedded within other speech genres in the BNC texts examined.

Description is closely related to spatial perception. It basically deals with factual phenomena (e.g. objects and people). It depicts or portrays objects or situations. It requires, says Newmark (1988: 50), “the mental perception of adjectives and images”, since it informs about qualities, characteristics, states, spatial locations, etc. Let us take the following excerpt.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Kaley, don't cry. Brett, give Kaley a cuddle now.

BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: Yes, you villain. Milk. ...

FRANCIS>: Ee, you've gotta [...]

FRANCES>: You what?

KALEY>: Brett [...] on the head.

FRANCES>: You, naughty boy. Now get off. Did you hit Kaley? You kiss her better now. Kiss Kaley this minute. Give her a kiss. Kiss it now. That's it, shake hands. Right [...]. I'll tell you what we need to do with you.

KALEY>: What?

FRANCES>: Those fingernails done. Yes, you should look when you fell over *they were all broken*. ... What did, oh my, ... Look at them, *they're all broken*. How long did daddy say he was gonna be, Francis [...]

FRANCIS>: [...] minute.

FRANCES>: Oh [...]. The chicken isn't cooked.

FRANCIS>: Did you tell him?

FRANCES>: No.

Description is the second mode or text form with the highest number of hyperboles. It accounts for 17% of overstated utterances in our data. Not in vain, the use of descriptive exaggeration has been noted by numerous scholars (e.g. Spitzbardt 1965, Pomerantz 1986, McCarthy and Carter 2004). The percentage given, however, underestimates the importance of this mode in the texts examined, since it does not include those occurrences in which description is assigned a secondary role, for example when it is aimed at persuading. The percentage which actually reflects its importance is 24%.

Percentages suggest an overwhelming presence of the **expository-argumentative mode** (63%), which often responds to persuasion. Christmann and Mischo (2000: 241) have demonstrated that the use of “figures of speech enhances the persuasive effect or impact of arguments, provided that no violation of argumentational integrity occur”.

Persuasion is aimed at prompting the listener(s) “to act, think or feel, in fact, to react in the way intended by the text” (Newmark 1988: 41). It often has as its goal or interim goal, “not a proposition but an alteration in emotional state or in the disposition to approve or disapprove of conduct or character” (Dascal and Gross 1999: 109). It is not surprising, therefore, that this goal is often represented by argumentation and exposition.

Argumentative forms or texts are here defined, following De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), as “those utilized to promote the acceptance or evaluation of certain beliefs or ideas as true vs. false, or positive vs. negative. Conceptual relations such as reason, significance, volition, value and opposition should be frequent” (p. 184). Given this definition, the link with persuasion whose goal is “to reinforce or change the beliefs, attitudes, or actions of H” (Dascal and Gross 1999: 112) becomes clear.

In argumentation, speakers aim to justify by argument some proposal, action or situation. The speaker is often involved in a passionate appeal for or against a particular thesis. Reasons for or against some topic are put forward, because the ultimate aim is always to win the audience round to the speaker’s side. Thus, within this mode and following Hatim and Mason (1990: 158), a distinction between through- and counter-argumentation will be drawn. In through-argumentation a thesis or argument is cited to be defended or argued through (p. 152). By contrast, in counter-argumentation a thesis is cited to be attacked or opposed. This is also the term employed to refer to refutations of some other speaker’s claims by providing arguments against. Both argumentation formats are specially prominent in the parliamentary debate, since government and opposition are often involved in defences and attacks by challenging and refuting each other’s claims.

In the extract below we can find examples of both argumentative formats: the through-argument variant whereby the speaker (J8JPS000b) embarks on the substantiation of a particular thesis (link poverty-drug abuse) and the counter-argument variant where a thesis is cited to be opposed (lack of drug addicts in rich areas). The speaker (J8JPS000) actually sustains the opposite case, that there is no such link between drug abuse and economic status.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000b>: Well, I just wonder you, there has got to be some kind of ... relationship between the fact that most people who take drugs live in really run down deprived areas. I mean, I think tha that you have to look at that, *because people have got nothing to do!* Er, I

mean, *lots of people have got nothing to do* and are unlikely to be employed during that time.

J8JPS000>: *So you think, you think people who live in, in well off areas, there's lots to do, don't take drugs?*

J8JPS000b>: No!

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: You don't think that?

J8JPS000b>: Oh, well, you know ... No, I don't think that, but I think that you have to ... I mean, there has to some kind of relationship between ... I'm not saying it's anything to do with the personalities or anything like that but

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS000b>: *it's got something to do with the fact that ... people have got nothing to do in those areas, and no cha, no prospects, no chance of getting a job* and it's actually quite a purposeful way of spending your time.

J8JPS008>: I think that's really patronizing! You're saying that [...]

J8JPS000b>: No, but I don't mean to be patronizing.

J8JPS008>: if I help with addict that they need to compensate for, for ... er, things missing in their lives, perhaps they just like it.

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS000b>: Yeah! Well, maybe. I mean there's nothing wrong with ... I mean people do just like.

It has also been noted that evaluation predominates in argumentative texts. This is not surprising given that praise and criticism are often used to defend or refute arguments. Note how Mr Taylor uses praise as an argument to justify and secure funding below.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Can I say first of all to the honourable lady that yes, of course, I welcome er the particular initiatives er and indeed I have visited it as I think she will know, er and I'm very pleased to congratulate all those concerned in setting it up. We have, of course, made it clear that those TECs who were piloting ... er the out of school childcare initiative ... er will continue er to be funded er along with all other TECs from 1994-5, and although of course I cannot preempt the TEC's judgement and take a view on that particular scheme, er I can say that funding will continue for TECs for that purpose.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Ian Taylor.

MR IAN TAYLOR>: *Would my honourable friend er recognise that just up the River Thames from er the South Thames TEC is the Surrey TEC **which is doing an excellent job with local industry in re-skilling particularly younger people?*** And this partnership with industry, not just dependent on what the Government does, but what industry itself does to try and help people get back into jobs with the new challenges that are coming from the difficulties that are presented by ... higher calibre needed particularly for school leavers and other, and will he w would she welcome the Surrey TEC's initiative?

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Er, yes, I have pleasure indeed in worre er in welcoming the er Surrey TEC's initiative er and indeed similar initiatives er in other TECs up and down the country.

Exemplification of a particular thesis is another common argumentative technique. In the fragment below, Mr Forsyth exemplifies how the social chapter has exported jobs out of Germany and the success of government policies in attracting industry to the United Kingdom.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Would he agree with me that the social contract, the absence of a social contract ... certainly hasn't damaged er rates of take-home pay?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er ... Madam Speaker, I entirely agree, I entirely agree with my ho honourable friend er the absence of the social chapter in Britain accounts in part for our higher levels of employment and the reforms which we carried out in the 1980s and the figures speak for themselves, as do the er people who speak for industry, *for example, when Black & Decker announced their intention to bring their operations er fully into Britain, out of Germany*, a company spokesman said anyone familiar with this sit situation in Germany will grasp that because of costs it is become very difficult to do business there. If members opposite had their way, it would be very difficult to do business here.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Bill Campbell-Savours.

MR BILL CAMPBELL-SAVOURS>: Would ... would the minister ... answer a question on a matter of concern to businessmen in the county of Cumbria?

Speakers may attempt to gain credibility by grounding their claims on knowledge and experience, by appealing to expertise. In the excerpt below, the general practitioner tries to validate his claims (*they take ages to come back, the people they're actually dealing with are waiting months and months and months*) by claiming a lot of experience in that subject matter (*I mean, we have dealings with solicitors for all sorts of things...*).

Text G5M > Medical consultation

GP>: I mean we, we haven't heard anything directly, I'm only glad that the police are actually telling you something.

PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah.

GP>: [cough]

PATIENT>: It, it was a big shock that day, when we had that phone call.

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: But it was I, you know, to know that you haven't got to fight,

GP>: That's right, yeah.

PATIENT>: t to take him to court.

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: Erm

GP>: But it's a long process. I mean, *we have dealings with solicitors for all sorts of things*, asking for reports and we send a lot of notes away to have a lot of er [...] medical opinion reports and *they take ages to come back*. And that's a, these are the preliminary things that the solicitor must go through before they get near court, so

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: *the people*

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: who it's actually, *they're actually dealing with are waiting months and months and months* and er

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: it looks like that in your case.

Besides, Pomerantz (1986: 219) has demonstrated that a common practice used in legitimising claims involves “Extreme Case formulations”. She illustrates how hyperbole can be used in a variety of ways for persuasive purposes. It may be used to defend against or to counter challenges to the legitimacy of complaints, accusations, justifications and defences. In order to legitimise claims, says Pomerantz (1986: 228), “in both accusing and defending, participants often present their strongest cases, including specifying Extreme Cases of their claims”. In the excerpt below, to justify her complaint and depict the complainable situation as worthy of such complaint, the speaker portrays the offence and the suffering with extreme case formulations. The extract is also illustrative of the multifunctionality or hybridisation of utterances, since the speaker complains, through the narration of a personal experience, about doctors’ irresponsible behaviour in prescribing tranquillisers rather freely.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS003>: Rec, erm the lady behind was stating that recent a, I mean recently I had about, er went through a bereavement, lost

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS003>: my brother who I was very close to ... went to the doctor ... and, *instantly he, pres, er prescribed Tamazepam tablets for me*, knowing that I myself am a single parent so I have ... a responsibility.

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS003>: I've my daughter to look after. *Didn't ask me anything!* Just looked at me ... saw how I was, prescribed the Tamazepam tablets, and *I had a terrible experience with those* ... and that's only in the last year!

J8JPS000>: And so, how's that affe, I mean, what do you think about that? Because at the end of the day, are we not responsible for ourselves? I mean, you don't have to take drugs!

J8JPS003>: But you're taking a, a, a GP's word ... for it, that these tablets that he's given you are gonna help you through the emotional pain

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS003>: that you are going through. They done nothing for me ... at all!

In justifying too, says Pomerantz (1986: 228), speakers use Extreme Case formulations to portray the circumstances that precipitated their actions as demanding those actions.

Hyperbole may also be used “to propose the cause of a phenomenon” (p. 227). In such cases, people claim they are or are not responsible for the state of affairs in question. Often, it is used to dilute responsibility by attributing the state of affairs to some other agent, as in the following extract where the instructor, rather than the masseur’s daughter, is blamed for failing her driving test.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: And to rub on there and it helps to calm it down. They do say that essential oils will often work quicker than a tablet. I mean, I've never timed them. [laugh]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Cos it depends how you feel. But that's what they do say, that it, it sometimes works quicker. So if you're going or when my daughter had a driving test I was [laughing] massaging neroli all over her in the hope that she would calm down.

ADMINISTRATOR>: [laugh]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Did she pass?

MASSEUR>: Well, only the third time.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laugh] She just went haywire as soon as she saw the instructor.

PS000>: [laugh]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...]

MASSEUR>: It wouldn't be so bad, [laughing] er she's not a nervous type normally and *it's the only person that's sort of made her go completely nervous*. So neroli again is good for the skin.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [sigh]

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: You ma when you smell

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: It is lovely, isn't it? Yeah, it is relaxing.

Extreme case formulations are also used “to propose that some behavior is not wrong or is right, by virtue of its status as frequently occurring or commonly done” (p. 220). Proportional measures reporting the frequency of prevalence of practices are used to propose and substantiate the rightness and wrongness of such practices. Let us take the next fragment by way of illustration.

Text FMB > Science lesson: year 10

TEACHER>: Right, now, listen folks. [...] sh, sh, sh, sh, sh. Can I [...] remind you please, if you're answering a question, can you please put your hand up so I can select [...]. Some of you know [...] Now way back a couple of weeks ago when we were doing the group seven the one that's spelt F C L B R I A T. Hands up who can remember what any of those stand for without looking on er [...]

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: You forgot the first rule: put your hand up. Right, fluorine is the actual element, fluoride is the stuff that's in?

PS000>: Toothpaste.

TEACHER>: Toothpaste, very good. *You never put your hand up*. Right, CL.

PS000>: Please, sir is [...] chloride

TEACHER>: Chloride is the, is when it's joined up with something, chlorine is the element. And what do we get chlorine in?

PS000>: Swimming baths.

TEACHER>: Swimming baths to?

PS000>: To take away all the nasty.

According to Castellà (1992; quoted in Hurtado Albir 2001: 464), the aim of expository texts is to explain or to inform about ideas or concepts with a didactic aim. Expository texts tend to be explanatory: they explain objects and ideas in their interrelations. In exposition, the emphasis falls on the analysis or synthesis of constituent elements of concepts, rather than on arguing in favour of or against a particular thesis.

Here, however, I will not attempt to draw a distinction between exposition and argumentation, since, as Castellà (1992: 235; quoted in Hurtado Albir 2001: 465) himself notes, “no se han resuelto todavía los problemas para distinguir la explicación de la argumentación”. Similarly, Hatim and Mason (1990) remark that “the difference between these two types can sometimes be subtle and therefore difficult to perceive”. Boundaries between these two modes are difficult to establish. It is hard to distinguish between neutral or analytical exposition and hortatory exposition since often skilled rhetoricians and “expert arguers succeed in debating contentious issues through seemingly detached analysis” (Hatim and Mason 1990: 164).

In the following extract, the masseur relies on exposition to explain the properties of the blue oils but the aim, rather than didactic, is persuasive: to sell Body Shop products. As in advertising, the masseur’s exposition is governed by “suggestivity”, one of the principles Reiss (1976) lists to arouse addressees’ interest and succeed in persuading them. Here the masseur provides arguments or motivations to get her audience buy the oils.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Now you can see Body Shop's here, I've got them in a nice box. Now they look better, they all used to be one colour before but we've now extended the range ... and so they've put them in different colour bottles. Now the red range at the top here is all the oils to make you relax. ... And all the oils at the bottom, *the blue ones are to make you refreshed, happy, revived*, we hope. So if you ever go in and you want to have a oil that relaxes you, you look at all the red ones. Again, you must have one that you like the smell of. Also with

essential oils, they come from plants, leaves, ... twigs, roots, or parts of flowers and plants. If you were to use essential oil neat, that's the little drops of oil, it's too strong and it will hurt, well, it won't harm you but it won't, it might set up irritations. You must always mix it with an oil. And if you went say to 's where they sell essential oils, theirs are pure oils. You must always buy what they call a carrier oil to help mix the oils. Now ours, we've helped you by already mixing it, so ours have got three percent of essential oil to a carrier oil, which in our case happens to be grape seed oil, which is a very light carrier oil.

Similarly, in the seminar conference below exposition is at the expense of persuasion. It is used as a means of argumentation to defend a particular thesis, namely the superiority of MRC protocols over other prognostic routes. In particular, the introductory part is aimed at justifying the investigation presented. It clearly responds to what Swales (1990: 141) in his CARS (Creating a Research Space) model calls the “establishing a territory” move.

A first step in this move is claiming centrality, as in *patients with superficial bladder cancer provide an enormous amount of our workload*. Thus, the issue of research appears to be the focus of current interest in the field. According to Swales, centrality claims are appeals to the discourse community whereby members are asked to accept that the research about to be reported is part of a lively, significant or well-established area.

Another important element in establishing a territory is the review of items of previous research, where the author provides specification of previous findings and an attitude towards those findings, as in: *Many people have looked at this before and they've come up with various prognostic markers, some of which are extremely complicated*.

Text JNR > Seminar presentation at conference

PS4FW>: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. We're all aware that for *for their number, patients with superficial bladder cancer provide an enormous amount of our workload*, and *for reasons partly of ... husbanding our precious resources* and also *because lots of these patients come up with negative checks*, reducing the amount of irritation and upset to them it would be useful if we could do less [...] than we do. Many people have looked at this before and they've come up with various prognostic markers, *some of which are extremely complicated*. But perhaps the ... erm the simplest ... erm ... prognostic routes were ... suggested by the MRC working parties which [...] general urology which was mentioned in the last presentation. ... They combined ... erm the four hundred and fifty odd erm ... four hundred and seventeen, sorry, patients in or several MRC studies and looked at them from the point of view of ... erm prognostic markers for occurrence and they came up with two factors which overridingly were more important than the others. The first one was the result of the three-month check cystoscopy, either positive or negative ... and the second one the number of tumours at presentation, either single or multiple. ... And from these two factors you can ... erm form three prognostic routes. A low risk route ... will have a single tumour at diagnosis and a negative three-month cystoscopy. An intermediate risk group with multiple tumours at diagnosis or a positive three-month cystoscopy. And a high risk group, multiple tumours at diagnosis and a positive three-month cystoscopy. ...

The two excerpts seem to suggest that the basis of any argumentative text form has to be provided by expository passages, by the explanation of facts, concepts, developments or processes.

The prevalence of this mode at the level of hyperbolic utterances is not surprising given that by far the most recurrent text form in the corpus for all texts is the expository-argumentative form. With the exception of two texts (KPC and F7Y), this mode features extensively in all BNC texts examined. On the other hand, this pervasiveness can be explained in terms of speech genres. Not without good reason, as will be shown in section 7.3., learning encounters and debate and argument interactions are the dominant genres in our data. The former normally takes the form of an exposition, whereas the latter relies heavily on argumentation. In addition, other genres such as decision-making also make considerable use of expository-argumentative forms.

7.2.3.1. Multifunctionality

Utterance hybridisation in our data accounts for 15.4% of overstated utterances. Table 7.3. depicts the number of occurrences and percentage for each mode combination. Percentages have been calculated on the total sum of hyperbolic utterances in the transcripts examined.

Hybrid modes	Occurrences	Percentages
Argumentation/Exposition + Description	21	6.7%
Argumentation/Exposition + Narration	18	5.8%
Instruction + Argumentation/Exposition	5	1.6%
Narration + Description	4	1.2%

Table 7.3. Frequency of hybrid text types for hyperbole in the BNC data

The most common pattern is an expository-argumentative form making use of description (6.7%) or narration (5.8%). This is not surprising, since as De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 184) point out: “In many texts, we would find a mixture of the descriptive, narrative, and argumentative function”. In these cases, narration and description remain subsidiary. They are the tools used to persuade. The explanation for these combinations is

that persuasion is essentially discursual. “Persuasion may be the goal, but in order to achieve it, a variety of rhetorical purposes may be employed: one can persuade by narrating, describing, counterarguing, etc.” (Hatim and Mason 1990: 145).

In a similar vein, Pomerantz (1986: 219) claims that a major resource for persuasion are the practices of description, and adds that “one practice used in legitimizing claims involves describing with Extreme Case formulations”. A state of affairs is portrayed as believable, obvious, compelling, unreasonable, illogical, etc. in the way a description of it is formed. In the following excerpt, the first hyperbolic utterance is an argumentative description to justify his mistake; the other two overstated sentences are descriptive expositions.

Text F8J > Newcastle University: lecture on word processing

LECTURER>: F10 ... takes you through the document one sentence at a time ... so you can work your way through the document one sentence at a time. So it's not actually a next paragraph, it's one sentence.

PS000>: Unbelievable, isn't it?

LECTURER>: So you're okay so far?

PS000>: Well, mine doesn't seem to go through the [...].

LECTURER>: Does it?

PS000>: Yeah. For F9.

LECTURER>: Yes, true! It is one paragraph at a time, so it is correct.

PS000>: I hope so.

LECTURER>: I was having a job to recognise what was a pa ... Er, a paragraph as far as *Microsoft Word* is concerned is the space between two ... hits of the return key, okay? Whereas a sentence ... is, is the space between er the beginning of er, er between two full stops. A new way of using the English language, **when you're word processing is absolutely another world!** Okay. Erm ... if you go shift F9, or shift F8 ... it goes through the document, I think, one sentence at a time. Yep! And shift F7 takes you back through the document one sentence at a time. ... Shift F9 selects the current line, we've not er stated I think. ... Yeah, shift F9 ... er ... accepts the current line where the cursor is, is located. And probably the most useful key of all ... when you're doing global formatting, is shift F10 and you select the whole document. So if you wanna select all the text you've written, she shift F10 selects the whole document. And essentially, you only will change the appearance of the text which is appearing in your vers video. So if you actually want to italicize something, you want to make it bold, you le you have to select it first and then you can carry out the ... tha, the function. So, if everybody selects the text that they want of their document and we'll just play around with it ... *show you what a mess you can actually create using these formatting keys!* So everybody have document and hit shift F10 ... and they're on page nine now ... if we go, hold down the alt key and type B ... and you'll just see er a shimmer go down the screen ... and ... then you don't actually see anything, but if you alt U, everything appears underlined ... alt K ... converts everything into small capitals ..., alt S strikes through everything ... and alt I ... italicizes all the words. If you don't press your arrow ... you'll see what a mess you've created in your document! **You've made the text bold ... capitalized, struck through, underlined, and totally illegible! So you've now actually taken all that nice typing that you've done and rendered it totally illegible!** Fortunately, this is not permanent. So if you

select all the text again, shift F10, and press the alt space bar, then all of that formatting is removed ... and it takes you back to your text as it was.

Less common are the patterns of instruction mixed with argumentation for persuasive purposes (1.6%) or narrative description (1.2%) which appears in the interview fragment below.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWER>: What did you ... why did you move to Harlow?

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, my husband ... had a job here ... we moved from Highbury in, in London ... because his firm moved ... from Highbury in London to ... here ... and erm ... got so ... we had to move with my husband because of his job, you see? And er ... but my husband was down here ... er ... a good year before we moved down here ... because ... there wasn't accommodation available ... for us to move with i ... him, you see? So erm ... he travelled ... backwards and forwards for ... a year prior to us ... coming to live here permanently.

INTERVIEWER>: What did you think of it when you first moved here?

INTERVIEWEE>: [laughing] Well, ... it really was so different from ... a built-up place ... but er ... um, when, but the day that we came in ... it was ... mm, pouring with rain ... *everywhere was muddy* ... and er ... of course, i i ... there were only erm ... one part of this town ... this area, rather ... that ... had been occupied because all the other parts were all fields. There was just the erm ... Broomfield Staffield ... Tanys Dell ... erm ... Glebelands ... and that was the ... all the area that was built up when we came here.

7.3. The notion of genre

Since the literature on genre is extraordinarily extensive, I will not attempt here a thorough review of the subject matter, rather I will concentrate on the essential aspects of genre theory. The first step is to draw a clear distinction between text types and genres, since some researchers seem to equate them.

Whereas “genre” and “register” refer to text-externally definable classes of text (such as fairy tale, news report, diary), used for a specific purpose, in a specific communication situation, with often particular interlocutor roles (e.g. story-teller and audience), classifications into text/discourse types are made on a text-internal basis, to indicate variation according to the organization and content of texts. Discourse types are prototypical categories, and text-internally characterizable discourse types may be found in several text-externally defined genres or registers. (Östman and Virtanen 1995: 246)

The word *genre*, says Chandler (1997: 1), comes from the French (and originally Latin) word for “kind” or “class”. This is an area that has constantly received attention in literary studies. Indeed, *genre* was traditionally seen as an exclusively literary term (Cuddon 1977: 285) and only in the last twenty or thirty years has it been used in non-literary spheres (Pennock Speck 2000: 9). Since then, *genres* have been discussed in various disciplines: rhetoric, theology, corpus linguistics, conversational analysis, etc.

In linguistics, the last thirty years have seen interesting attempts at defining and describing *genre*, but before the term became common currency in linguistics, several scholars, such as Crystal and Davy (1969), were using the term “*style*” to refer to basically the same field of research. In particular, their book on *stylistics* was one of the first to account for differences between *genres*.

Among the many approaches to *genre* analysis, two can be said to stand out as the most insightful and descriptive in the literature. On the one hand, several British and American researchers work on *genre* from within the field of ESP (e.g. Swales 1990, Widdowson 1975). Indeed, *genre* theory has been very much studied in ESL teaching. On the other, the work of the functional systemic school based mainly in Britain and Australia (e.g. Kress 1985). The former, says Pennock Speck (2000: 10), seem more interested in the empirical study of *genre* analysis, while the later delve more deeply into the nature of *genre* in general.

Genre theory within the Australian context is heavily influenced by the systemic-functional theories of language developed by Halliday (1978). His work on the relationship between language and its social context was essential in the development of the Australian approach to *genre* theory, which is represented by the Sydney School. Much of the descriptive work in defining *genre* types has been undertaken by this Australian *genre* school. The systemic functional *genre* model proposes that “a *genre* is a staged, purposeful activity (Martin, Christie and Rothery 1987), structured as it is because it serves certain important social goals” (Christie 1999: 761).

The problem is that *genre* is by no means an easily definable notion. There is no general consensus concerning its definition. In this sense, Chandler (1997: 2) argues that “defining *genre* ... is a theoretical minefield”, and adds that there is often considerably theoretical disagreement about the definition of specific *genres* too.

Conventional definitions of genres, says Chandler (1997: 2), tend to be based on the notion that “they constitute particular conventions of content (such as theme and setting) and form (including structure and style) which are shared by the texts which are regarded as belonging to them”.

The central argument of RGS (Rhetorical Genre Studies), by contrast, is that genres are best understood “as typified actions in response to recurring social contexts” (Freedman 1999: 764), a definition which emphasises the socially-rooted nature of genres.

John Swales stands out as one of the most important figures in the area of genre theory. The three key elements defined by Swales (1990: 58) in his theory of genre are: “discourse communities”, “communicative purpose” and “task”. He defines genre as a type of communicative event comprising the discourse itself, its participants, the role of that discourse and its context of use. Communicative purpose acts as a defining criterion and constitutes the rationale for the genre. Indeed, most genre analysts regard communicative purpose as the principal criterion for genre identification and definition.

Genres have traditionally been regarded as fixed forms, but contemporary theory emphasises that “both their forms and functions are dynamic” (Chandler 1997: 4). They change and evolve (Stubbs 1996: 11), or in other words, “genres are dynamic, fluid and blurred” (Freedman 1999: 766).

7.3.1. Speech genres

There are spoken and written genres, but while the literature on written genres is extensive, speech genres have been rarely discussed. Genre, says McCarthy (1998a: 9), is an ill-defined notion in the study of spoken language in general. Apart from well-studied genres such as service encounters and narratives, many of the everyday forms of talk we engage in remain unclassified in generic terms (p. 26). Apart from individual studies of service encounters (e.g. Ventola 1987), casual encounters (e.g. Ventola 1979), narratives (e.g. Labov 1972) and language-in-action conversations (e.g. Ure 1971), there are few comprehensive studies integrating a wide range of speech genres.

As with all written texts, spoken language produces a variety of conversational genres (Pridham 2001: 77). Carter and McCarthy (1997: 8) who define genres as “episodes of speech of which participants (if interaction is successful) have a shared view of their nature

as social encounter”, have devised an interactional genre taxonomy. It is aimed at redressing the balance, since “no satisfactory classification of ‘text types’ for spoken language was available to parallel existing texts typologies for written language” (McCarthy 1998a: 8). Without claiming comprehensiveness, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 10) distinguish eight main conversational or speech genres, namely:

Narrative: A series of everyday anecdotes told with active listener participation.

Identifying: Extracts in which people talk about themselves, their biography, where they live, their jobs (or job aspirations), their likes and dislikes.

Language-in-action: Data recorded while people were doing things such as cooking, packing, moving furniture, etc., where the language is generated directly by the actions being carried out.

Comment-elaboration: People giving casual opinions and commenting on things, other people, events, etc. around them and in their daily lives, without any set conversational agenda.

Service encounters: Extracts in settings involving the buying and selling of goods and services.

Debate and argument: Data in which people take up positions, pursue arguments and expound on their opinion on a range of matters, with or without some sort of lead-figure or chairperson.

Language, learning and interaction: Language in use in the context of institutionalised and informal learning.

Decision-making/negotiating outcomes: Data illustrating ways in which people work towards decisions/consensus or negotiate their way through problems towards solutions.

Pridham (2001), for example, only discusses four of these conversational genres: comment and elaboration, language in action, service encounters and learning encounters.

In terms of descriptive studies, Günthner and Knoblauch (1995: 4) stand out for analysing communicative genres in the process of their interactive production (i.e. in their conversational and sociocultural context), “instead of taking oral genres as monological static texts”. Structurally, they define genres as “a *complex communicative pattern of elements* which can be located on three different structural levels: *the level of internal structure, the situative level and the level of external structure*” (p. 8). The three levels are defined in the following terms.

Whereas the internal structure is comprised of linguistic signs of communicative action and the external structure of the “situated” elements referring to the institutional structure of a society, the *situative level* of communicative genres consists of those elements which are part of the ongoing interaction, i.e. the “interaction order”. This includes the interactive exchange of utterances between different actors as well as the situative sociospatial relation established by means of the interaction. (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 8)

7.3.2. Speech genre analysis of BNC texts

The fact that we have opted to analyse the entirety of texts, rather than fragments, enables us to address the issue of speech genres now. The study of genre is one of the reasons why “discourse analysis cannot be limited to description of abstracted parts of discourses like single sentences, but needs to describe both text and context” (Cook 1992: 5).

To a large extent, the impetus for categorising texts and discourses came from the practical needs of corpus linguists (Östman and Virtanen 1995: 246). The problem is that for the most part corpus classifications are rather intuitive. Such taxonomies are primarily situation-based and so “correspond to our intuitive feelings about whether texts/discourses are of the same type or not” (p. 246).

In the BNC, spoken texts are said to be classified according to domain (i.e. subject matter): business, educational-informative, leisure, institutional and informal. Some of them cannot even be considered themes properly. The problem with such formal typologies is that content *per se* is not enough to classify texts, since it is a very general notion. In the words of Chandler (1997: 2): “Themes, at least, seem inadequate as a basis for defining genres, since as David Bordwell notes, ‘any theme may appear in any genre’ (Bordwell 1989: 147)”.

In this section, therefore, I will try to classify the BNC texts examined into genres. Since our data focuses exclusively on speech, only spoken genres, following Carter and McCarthy’s (1997: 10) taxonomy, will be discussed here. The aim is twofold: firstly, to define each genre found in our data and explore their main features; secondly, to determine which genre attracts the most hyperboles and so in what ways the purpose and context of interaction exert an influence on the use of this figure. Here again, in order to extract percentages, the units considered are hyperbolic utterances, not items.

Sometimes, genre identification proved far from easy, since some genre tokens in our data are less prototypical than others. In this sense, Chandler (1997: 2) highlights that it is difficult to make clearcut distinctions between one genre and another: genres overlap and there are “mixed genres”. Some texts would be widely regarded as being more typical members of a genre than others (Chandler 1997: 3), but although features of a genre may vary, “the underlying genre pattern is usually maintained” (McCarthy and Carter 1994: 26).

In terms of description, genres will be defined according to communicative purpose, lexico-grammatical features (e.g. deixis, ellipsis, discourse markers, vague language, etc.) and situative structure.

Genres, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 8-9) have claimed, vary in their surface grammatical manifestations such as ellipsis and discourse markers, but these merely mark the socially-determined differences of purpose, degree of shared knowledge, institutionalised “rules of speaking” (e.g. in classrooms, debates, etc.), roles and relationships between the participants, and so on.

At the situative level, special attention will be devoted to “*the interactive organization of conversation* – as described by conversation analysts” (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 14). By stressing the dialogical character of communicative processes, Conversation Analysis has had an important influence on genre research (p. 4). Among the CA factors under investigation are the turn-taking organisation, turn length, adjacency pairs, preference structures, number of participants, power relationships, etc. In doing so, we expect to exemplify how conversational analytic methods can be productively combined with the study of speech genres.

Communicative genres frequently show particular constraints regarding their sequential organisation (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 14). This sequential distribution is the field of research of Conversational Analysis. The main objective of CA is “to uncover the sociolinguistic competences underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of social interaction” (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 183).

Finally, some defining genre variables such as goal orientation, participant relationships or the transactional/interactional dimensions will be isolated to be examined individually. The aim is to determine more specific patterns of hyperbolic use, since some generic features may vary.

7.3.3. Analysis and results of speech genre analysis in the BNC data

The BNC transcripts examined comprise six of the eight genres contained in Carter and McCarthy’s (1997) interactional typology: service encounters, decision making conversations, learning encounters, debate and argument genre, language-in-action and comment-elaboration interactions. Table 7.4. portrays how the classification of BNC domains and texts has been redistributed into speech genres¹⁹.

BNC domain	Text code & description	Speech genre
Business	FM3 (Body Shop presentation)	Service encounter
	G5M (Medical consultation)	Service encounter
	JJC (Estate agency interview)	Service encounter
	K6X (Constabulary meeting)	Decision making/Negotiating outcomes
Leisure	F7Y (Oral history interview)	Informal learning encounter interview
	J8J (Television discussion)	Debate and argument in TV chat show
Educational-informative	F8A (College of Food: lecture)	Learning encounter
	F8J (Lecture on word processing)	Learning encounter
	FMB (Science lesson: year 10)	Learning encounter
	JNR (Seminar presentation)	Learning encounter
Institutional	JSH (House of Commons debate)	Debate and argument
Informal	KPE (conversation with Grace)	Language-in-action
	KB6 (conversation with Angela)	Comment-elaboration
	KB7 (conversation with Ann)	Comment-elaboration
	KBA (conversation with Anthony)	Comment-elaboration
	KPC (conversation with Frances)	Language-in-action
	KP9 (conversation with Craig)	Language-in-action
	KDV (conversation with Sandra)	Comment-elaboration

Table 7.4. Distribution of BNC domains and texts into interactional genres

Note here that some BNC domains coincide with our genre taxonomy (e.g. BNC educational domain and learning encounters), although this is not the norm.

¹⁹ See the appendix for a full examination of the genre tokens present in our data.

Apart from these six genres, the narrative and identifying genres also feature in our data but with a subsidiary role and embedded within some of the aforesaid genres. This is the case of text F7Y, a learning encounter token which contains prominent bits from the identifying and narrative genres. This shows how genres merge into each other and defy exact definition. In this sense, Fairclough (1995: 76) notes that an example of the difficulties we can come across when trying to describe genres is that there are genres that include other genres. Similarly, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 10) recognise that “no speech genre can be entirely discrete”. In particular, they claim that narrative is such a core genre that narratives can be embedded within other main generic categories and overlap occurs between and across other genres. However, although some texts may contain different genres, a perceptible dominant genre is always present while the others remain subsidiary.

Since the classification into interactional genres was done after the corpus for analysis was compiled, not all speech genres are equally represented in our data. Although inadvertently unequal quantities of genres were collected. The table below shows the word size and percentages for genres in our data.

Speech genres	Word size	Percentages
Service encounters	7,012	13.4%
Decision making/Negotiating outcomes	3,615	6.9%
Learning encounters	15,777	30.2%
Debate-argument	15,573	29.8%
Language-in-action	4,314	8.2%
Comment-elaboration	5,899	11.3%

Table 7.5. Size and frequency of speech genres in the BNC transcripts examined

As the table shows, the dominant genre in our data is that of learning encounters, closely followed by the debate and argument genre.

The chart below details the word size and number of hyperbolic utterances contained in each BNC text or speech genre token.

Text code	Speech genre	Word size	Utterances
FM3	Service encounter	3,977	31
G5M	Service encounter	1,914	15
JJC	Service encounter	1,121	8
K6X	Decision making/Negotiating outcomes	3,615	13
F7Y	Informal learning encounter in interview	4,978	39
J8J	Debate-argument in chat show	5,339	28
F8A	Learning encounter	3,516	9
F8J	Learning encounter	2,174	13
FMB	Learning encounter	3,496	5
JNR	Learning encounter	1,613	6
JSH	Debate-argument	10,234	48
KPE	Language-in-action	301	5
KB6	Comment-elaboration	1,142	10
KB7	Comment-elaboration	825	8
KBA	Comment-elaboration	273	6
KPC	Language-in-action	2,245	15
KP9	Language-in-action	1,768	22
KDV	Comment-elaboration	3,659	29

Table 7.6. Size and number of overstated utterances per text/genre token

But what really is at stake here is the question: in which genre is the trope most recurrent? Table 7.7. depicts the frequency of hyperboles per speech genre in our data.

Speech genres	Occurrences	Percentages
Service encounters	54	17.4%
Decision making/Negotiating outcomes	13	4.1%
Learning encounters	72	23.2%
Debate-argument	76	24.5%
Language-in-action	42	13.5%
Comment-elaboration	53	17.1%

Table 7.7. Number and percentage of overstated utterances per genre in our data

These percentages, however, do not reflect which genre attracts the most hyperboles, given that the different genres vary considerably in terms of size. Since there is not a balanced distribution across the different speech genres, a weighted average was calculated in order to determine in which one the use of exaggeration was proportionally more frequent. The results and the procedure followed to calculate such weighted average are represented in the table below²⁰.

Speech genres	Word size	Hyperboles	Procedure	Frequency	Procedure	Percentage
Service encounter	7,012	54	54 x 100	0.77	0.77 x 100	19.5%
			7,012		3.94	
Decision making	3,615	13	13 x 100	0.35	0.35 x 100	8.8%
			3,615		3.94	
Learning encounter	15,777	72	72 x 100	0.45	0.45 x 100	11.4%
			15,777		3.94	
Debate-argument	15,573	76	76 x 100	0.48	0.48 x 100	12.1%
			15,573		3.94	
Language-in-action	4,314	42	42 x 100	0.97	0.97 x 100	24.6%
			4,314		3.94	
Comment-elaboration	5,899	53	53 x 100	0.89	0.89 x 100	22.5%
			5,899		3.94	
				3.94		
Total	52,190	310		0.59		≈ 100%

Table 7.8. Frequency and percentages per genre in our data

As the right-hand percentages reveal, the genre where hyperbole is most recurrent in our data is that of language-in-action (24.6%), closely followed by that of comment-elaboration (22.5%). These two genres together stand for almost half of the overstated utterances in our data. Service encounters are the third genre in attracting a higher number of hyperboles. By contrast, learning encounters and debate-argument interactions show a relatively low presence of exaggerations, although the lowest percentage for the trope is

²⁰ I am greatly indebted to Dr. Juan José Nebreda for helping me to calculate and understand the above statistics.

found in the so-called decision-making genre. Hyperbole is not very recurrent in problem-solving tasks, despite Pollio *et al.*'s (1977: 15) claim that “figurative language plays an important role in structuring and ultimately in solving problems”. The results seem to suggest that although exaggeration shows up in “cases in which a speaker intends to teach and/or learn, to convince, as well as those in which the intention is to solve problems” (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), this trope, unlike metaphor, does not play a key role in such situations. It might be that speakers often prefer to resort to other figures of speech such as metaphor in those cases.

It could also be argued that hyperbole is closely associated with informal encounters or situations. Notice that the two genres which attract most overstated utterances in our data, namely language-in-action and comment-elaboration correspond to or solely feature in the BNC informal domain. In this sense, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 74) note that the comment-elaboration genre is frequent in informal conversations between speakers in the same family or enjoying close relationships. Similarly, the language-in-action genre, at least in our data, displays a similar type of participant relationships. Indeed, the actual difference is whether the speech is mainly determined or not by the activity at hand. Not without reason, in the comment-elaboration tokens, some speakers are also engaged in activities (e.g. eating, cutting somebody's hair, etc.), but these activities do not determine the language used. It might be that a determinant factor for the use of this figure is the formality or informality of the situation.

7.3.4. Speech genre description

The term **service encounters** describes a wide range of conversations whose aim is mainly transactional. This kind of transaction, where requests for service are made by one person to another, has been called a service encounter (Pridham 2001: 69). This transaction may involve goods, services or information. They can be defined as “conversations where people want to get things done” (*ibid.*). Tokens of this genre in our transcripts are the estate agency interview (JJC), Body Shop presentation (FM3) and medical consultation (G5M).

It has been argued that “each genre appears to have a unique structural pattern of its own” (Pridham 2001: 63), and Eija Ventola (1987) identifies four elements that are obligatory in Western service encounters, namely an offer of service, a request for service,

a transaction and a salutation. Apart from the transactional exchange, say McCarthy and Carter (1994: 26), service encounters may frequently contain unpredictable interactive sequences “to establish or consolidate purely social relationships”, as will be illustrated later in this chapter.

In the CANCODE corpus, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 8) have demonstrated that apart from ellipsis, in service encounters, stretches of conversation often rely very heavily on discourse markers. These utterance indicators organise the structure of the genre (Pridham 2001: 73). This is true of the three genre tokens encountered in our corpus, where discourse markers, such as *okay, right, now, so, well, I mean, you know, you know what I mean, you see, etc.*, abound. Below is an illustration of the accumulation of these markers.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: The washing and that. Erm ... but it does bring you back with things. I always think of, er, as I say new bread always brings me back ... a lot of memories. **So** smell is very important, erm ... s and this is why it's called aromatherapy. It tries to make you feel better by the sense of smell. You can massage them on your hands, on your temples, or you can use it as a what they call steam inhalation. Put it in a bowl of water ... a few bowl of hot water, a few drops, like you do if you got a cold, and just breathe in. **So** these are ... that's how you use aromatherapy. And it help, *it doesn't say it'll definitely cure you of anything*, but it will help maybe to alleviate some problems. You have to have an open mind I always think with these things. **Right. Now** you can see Body Shop's here, I've got them in a nice box. **Now** they look better, they all used to be one colour before but we've now extended the range ... and so they've put them in different colour bottles. **Now** the red range at the top here is all the oils to make you relax. ... And all the oils at the bottom, *the blue ones are to make you refreshed, happy, revived*, we hope. **So** if you ever go in and you want to have a oil that relaxes you, you look at all the red ones. Again, you must have one that you like the smell of. Also with essential oils, they come from plants, leaves, ... twigs, roots, er parts of flowers and plants. If you were to use essential oil neat, that's the little drops of oil, it's too strong and it will h, **well**, it won't harm you but it won't, it might set up irritations. You must always mix it with an oil. And if you went say to 's where they sell essential oils, theirs are pure oils. You must always buy what they call a carrier oil to help mix the oils. **Now** ours, we've helped you by already mixing it, **so** ours have got three percent of essential oil to a carrier oil, which in our case happens to be grapes erm grapeseed oil, which is a very light carrier oil. **So** ... I'll start with the first one and I'll pass it round and just ... *put either the relaxing on one hand and the reviving on the other* and you'll have one hand relaxed, the other one [laughing] doing this.

Stubbs (1983: 69) has claimed that the function of a discourse marker is “to relate utterances to each other or to mark a boundary in the discourse”. Discourse markers are words or phrases which are normally used to mark boundaries in conversation between one topic or bit of business and the next (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 13). They do not

primarily carry any information or propositional content. In this sense, Pridham (2001: 30) emphasises that “on its own, a discourse marker has no meaning”. However, all speakers use them to perform the essential task of structuring their messages and of signalling to their listener(s) how they wish their words to be taken (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 14).

The genre termed **decision-making** or **negotiating outcomes** refers to conversations where “people work towards decisions/consensus or negotiate their way through problems towards solutions” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 10). In our data, this genre is represented by the Nottingham constabulary meeting (K6X). Here the speakers have to arrive at a number of decisions mainly regarding the neighbourhood watch scheme. Although there is an authority figure (Storer), they have to negotiate their way to the important decisions. There are some examples of the problem-solution pattern, “where problems are presented and possible ways of solving them are evaluated by the participants” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 150).

“The language features of a genre”, says Pridham (2001: 77), “reflect the purpose and context of that genre”, and a defining feature of this genre, already noted by Carter and McCarthy (1997: 144), is the use of hedges and mitigating devices such as *perhaps*, *probably*, *I think* to soften the speaker’s position. Hedging is a general term used to describe the strategy when a speaker wishes to avoid coming straight to the point or to avoid speaking directly (p. 16). They allow speakers to soften the force of their utterances. In the words of House and Kasper (1981: 166), they are politeness “markers which play down the impact X’s utterance is likely to have on Y”.

Learning encounters is one of the most prominent genres in our data. It has been defined as “language in use in the context of institutionalised and informal learning” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 10). Naturally, this genre often occurs within the educational context, in the form of lessons (FMB), lectures (F8A and F8J), conferences (JNR), etc. Obviously, the expository mode is pervasive in this genre.

The basic unit of organisation of classroom discourse is a tripartite exchange system or “elicitation sequence” (Rees-Miller 2000: 1102). This unit was proposed and identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) in their analysis of classroom interaction. It is commonly known as “exchange” and consists of three moves: initiation, response and follow-up or feedback. This is what discourse analysts have termed an IRF exchange:

Initiation (I) an utterance, mainly teacher-led

Response (R) mainly a pupil response/reply

Feedback (F) mainly a follow-up comment by the teacher which also often evaluates or rephrases or expands what the pupil has said. (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 124)

This BNC fragment is exemplary of IRF exchanges:

TEACHER>: And I?	Initiation
PS000>: Iodine.	Response
TEACHER>: Very good, <i>excellent</i> .	Feedback

Lessons and lectures are often characterised by marked differences in the participants' speaking styles. Teachers have more power and control than pupils, and this, says Stubbs (1983: 44), should be identifiable in their language. Thus, in our data, although outnumbered by students, "teachers take most turns" (Pridham 2001: 73), defined as "every instance of talk between two subsequent speaker changes" (Strässler 1982: 75). The teacher also asks most of the questions, with students' contributions mainly taking the form of answers to the teacher's questions (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 124). Teachers often ask pseudo-questions to which they already know the answer, and they evaluate pupils' response in line with their own expectations (Stubbs 1996: 27). Besides, teacher's turns are longer than the students', because teachers tend to use complete, fully-formed clauses, whereas students' contributions are usually short and elliptical and can only be understood in the context of teachers' utterances (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 124).

Often the structure of classroom interaction is tightly teacher-led. In our data, this is not only reflected in the frequency of teachers' interventions but also in the use of discourse markers "to regulate what is said, when topics are to be changed and how the statements of others are to be reformulated and summarised" (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 124). In the words of Stubbs (1983: 44):

Much classroom talk is characterized by the extent to which one speaker, the teacher, has conversational control over the topic, over the relevance or correctness of what pupils say, and even over when and how much pupils may speak. In the traditional chalk-and-talk classrooms, pupils have correspondingly few conversational privileges.

Stubbs (1983: 50-2) has listed the main functions teachers use to monitor classroom talk, namely attracting or showing attention, controlling students' amount of speech, checking or confirming understanding, summarising, defining, editing, correcting and specifying topic.

The seminar presentation at a conference shows a rather different structure. It is tightly controlled by the chairperson, "who has rights to talk first, to talk after each other speaker, and can use turns to allocate next speakership" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 45) as well as to control the participants' amount of speech. During his presentation, the speaker is given exclusive claim to the floor. Talk here takes the form of a platform monologue. There is no feedback, since audiences hear in a way special to them: "the role of the audience is to appreciate remarks made, not to reply in any direct way" (Goffman 1979: 12). Direct queries and replies must be omitted or postponed to the time when the speech is over (Goffman 1981: 176). Except during the question period (typically structured as question-answer sequences), the audience rarely gets the floor (Goffman 1979: 12). Markers of tentativeness and hedges to mitigate statements and dilute the speaker's responsibility also abound (e.g. *I think, I believe, perhaps*). Indeed, hedging is one of the features associated with scientific writing (Hyland 1996: 433, Lewin 1998: 89). The recommendation to hedge claims can be traced back to one of the earliest rhetoricians of scientific reports, Robert Boyle (c. 1650), who saw hedging as one of many stylistic devices to project both honesty and modesty (Shapin 1984; quoted in Lewin 1998: 92).

Some learning encounters, such as lectures and seminars, can be defined as "talk from the podium". This is closely related to the concept of "purpose for audience", whether private or public (Stubbs 1996: 11). In this sense, Goffman (1979: 13) claims that "orators and actors provide a ready contrast to a conversation's speaker, the former having audiences, the latter fellow conversationalists".

However, as Carter and McCarthy (1997) have noted, this genre not only embodies learning in institutional settings but also more informal learning encounters. This is the case of text F7Y: an informal interview with a retired teacher about Harlow history conducted by two students for a school project. This is a less prototypical or more peripheral genre token, since it contains fragments from other genres, illustrating thus that "genres can be combined" (Stubbs 1996: 12). On the one hand, the interviewee talks about her biography: her present and past, her jobs, where she lives, etc. (Identifying) and in

doing so she recounts her personal experience in building Harlow town (Narration). Sentences or events in the story are typically connected by means of “and” or “and then” to show the narrative sequential order of events.

The text is also representative of the interview genre, which has been extensively studied from a discourse analysis perspective in news interviews (e.g. Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, Fairclough 1995, Greatbatch 1998). The role of interviews is basically “the communication of information or opinion” (Greatbatch 1998: 166). Its structure corresponds to the question-answer sequence format. Participant roles are predetermined: the interviewer’s task is to elicit information and opinion through questions which the interviewee must answer. This is reflected in turn size differences: interviewer’s turns are usually short, whereas the interviewee makes extended contributions. But although in terms of speech the dominant speaker is the interviewee, it is the interviewer who structures the interaction. Interviewers’ questions are closely related to the stance of neutrality or objectivity they should maintain. In our data, the interviewer tries to restrain her role to making questions and refrains from overt affiliation with or disaffiliation from the assertions and opinions expressed by the interviewee.

The **debate and argument genre** is defined as interactions where “people take up positions, pursue arguments and expound on their opinion on a range of matters, with or without some sort of lead-figure or chairperson” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 10). Obviously, argumentation is the dominant mode for such genre and hyperbole, which is a special sort of argumentative resource, is here “used to gain particular ends and to win or retain support for special procedures or states” (Swartz 1976: 101).

Two instances of this genre feature in our data: text J8J, which is a chat show or television discussion programme on drug abuse, and text JSH, a House of Commons debate on political, social and economic matters. In particular, talkshows²¹, says Gregori Signes (2002: 153), are defined as “a public forum, a commonplace medium for socialising perspective-taking and critical thinking, where social theories on various social matters can be built or rebuilt”. This text contains several narratives, proving once more that “texts often exhibit the conventions of more than one genre” (Chandler 1997: 3). Underlying each story, which illustrates an example of the situation evoked by the topic of the programme, is an argumentative motive. In such a context, “the activity of storytelling functions as

²¹ For a thoroughly detailed discussion of the talkshow genre see Gregori Signes (2000a, 2000b).

argument-initiator, which may then be used to build theories on social matters” (Gregori Signes 2002: 154). Not without good reason, the narrative genre is “considered by many to be the prototypical or *core* genre” (McCarthy and Carter 1994: 33).

Although with slight variations, both texts share a number of special features. In both cases there is an authority figure: host for talkshow and chairwoman for parliamentary debate, respectively. The turn-taking system is predetermined. The host or chairwoman has rights to talk first, to talk after each other speaker and can use her turns to allocate next speakership. They allot turns and control the turn-taking system. Besides, in the House of Commons debate, the ordering of all turns is preallocated, by formula, by reference to “pro” and “con” positions (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 45). In structural terms, both texts mainly respond to the question-answer sequence format. Topics are usually dealt with extensively. They follow a set conversational agenda. Although in the talkshow programme it might seem less rigid, or rather less obvious, despite the illusion of spontaneity, the host’s questions have all been planned beforehand.

Another defining characteristic of this genre is the strong preference for disagreement and confrontational sequences. Challenges and verbal attacks between the government and the opposition parties are constant. This is not surprising given that this confrontation is even reflected in the House spatial disposition. The structure often responds to the pattern: attack-defence or statement-denial/challenge. With regards to the talkshow, “confrontational sequences”, says Gregori Signes (2000b: 201), “may be seen as the norm, and as a generic feature”. This finding is in tune with several studies suggesting a preference for disagreement in the argumentative style (e.g. Schiffrin 1984). On the other hand, as in decision-making interactions, hedges and markers of tentativeness abound in this genre too. They are used to mitigate opinions and to protect the speaker’s face (e.g. *I think, probably, perhaps, I suppose*).

But there are also important differences between these two genre tokens. The style, for example, is radically different. Whereas the ministers’ speech is highly formal, the studio audience in the discussion programme use a rather informal and even ungrammatical language. The role of the chairwoman and host is essentially different: madam speaker’s role is restricted to turn allocation, while the host not only allots turns, but also and more importantly, elicits information and opinion through questions.

These similar and distinct peculiarities between the two genre tokens are in line with McCarthy and Carter's (1994) genre conception. Rather than a uniform, invariant organisation, they talk about a combination of obligatory and optional elements. The existence of optional features, they say, means that there are a range of available choices which allow language users to vary the form of their language within a generally fixed generic structure (p. 27).

The **language-in-action genre** is defined as "language used when people are doing something. The language, therefore, accompanies the task in hand" (Pridham 2001: 65). It refers to the "language used in the execution of a task in which the participants are directly and materially involved" (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 66). In turn, this means that the conversation is very dependent or tied to the immediate situation (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 58, Pridham 2001: 67).

Since the language used is almost all dependent on what the people are doing at that moment (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 58), Ure (1971: 443) notes that one of the features of the genre is its "unintelligibility". She claims that without a copious notation of the situation in which it is produced, including the action accompanying the text, it is unintelligible.

In our data, three texts have been considered tokens of this particular genre, namely KPE, KPC and KP9. In text KPE, a group of students are doing their homework or school assignments. Text KPC is a conversation between Frances and her three children while cooking, setting the table, changing nappies and playing. Finally, KP9 is a conversation among a group of people working at a restaurant, getting ready to open. All these texts share a common feature: their speech is mainly generated by the activities they are doing, although speakers "may feel free to introduce other more incidental topics which may or may not be elaborated upon" (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 66).

Following Cornbleet and Carter (2001), I will divide this genre into two main categories. In both cases, the speech accompanies the activity, but the language may have different functions: it may be part of the activity (e.g. KPC) or it may have a far more social function (e.g. KPE and KP9). In the latter case, "the activity is used as a social focal point for interaction rather than a vital element to get something done" (p. 69).

At the lexico-grammatical level, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 13) have demonstrated that in language-in-action interactions there is much deictic reference (e.g. *this*, *that*, *here*,

there, it, etc.), because “the objects and other phenomena being dealt with are normally immediately visible to all speakers”. In the extract below, deixis can also be explained by the fact that the language of young children “revolves very much around themselves and anything which they directly come into contact with. It is so immediate that children’s language is often referred to as *the here and now*” (Cornbleet and Carter 2001: 20). In addition, speakers use discourse markers to organise their activity (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 59). As shown in the excerpt below, such indicators “accompany people’s actions and mark the stages of the process they are trying to complete” (p. 62).

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

BRETT>: No more, no cake.

KALEY>: No cake.

FRANCIS>: No, no.

FRANCES>: Oh no, no, no.

FRANCIS>: No, no, no cake.

FRANCES>: Dear me.

FRANCIS>: January [...] ... [children shouting]

FRANCES>: **What you shouting at**, Brett? Where're the matches for the birthday cake? ... Kaley, I'm just going to put **this** in the bin. Watch that Brett doesn't touch anything on the table.

KALEY>: Right. ...

FRANCIS>: **There's** his eyes.

FRANCES>: Whose eyes?

FRANCIS>: Jack Spratt.

FRANCES>: Ooh! ...

KALEY>: Some people have got work to do.

FRANCES>: **Right**, who's gonna help set the table for daddy? Come on then. **Knives and forks**.

FRANCIS>: **Done this last time**.

FRANCES>: **Okay**. ... Brett, come out of the window.

FRANCIS>: I didn't know what **it** was.

FRANCES>: What?

FRANCIS>: Making that funny noise.

FRANCES>: And, what was **it**?

FRANCIS>: It's when somebody comes in mm ...

FRANCES>: **Well, then**.

KALEY>: We're all going to sing [...]

FRANCES>: You're gonna sing what?

KALEY>: [...]

FRANCES>: Steady.

KALEY>: Wait till I [...]

FRANCES>: **Right, well**, you sing it first. I think I've forgot the words. ... Get off the table. You can't have any cake until teatime. ...

KALEY>: [singing] Just happy, happy they're [...] hat on and he's coming out to play.

FRANCES>: And is **that** a picture of the sun?

KALEY>: Yes.

There is also much ellipsis, since speakers can see exactly what is going on. Thus, speakers need not describe things right in front of them or actions that are taking place. According to Carter and McCarthy (1997: 67), “ellipsis is a linguistic concomitant of informality and easy-goingness in conversation”. This seems to confirm the hypothesis that this genre is typical of informal situations, since “ellipsis in almost all cases marks a degree of informality between speakers” (p. 15). It is not surprising, therefore, that this genre features exclusively in the BNC informal domain.

Pridham (2001: 68) has schematically summarised the main features of this genre:

- People using language in action frequently do not mention what is directly in front of them. They have no need to because they share the same context.
- They refer to what they can see with words such as “that”, “there”, “it” and “here”. This is called deictic reference.
- There can be much ellipsis.
- There can be more silence than normal while activities take place.

The **comment-elaboration genre**, says Pridham (2001: 63), is one of the most common conversational genres, usually found in informal conversation between speakers who know each other well. It is frequent in informal exchanges between speakers in the same family or enjoying close relations (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 74). It is not surprising, therefore, that this genre predominates in the BNC informal domain.

It consists of “people giving casual opinions and commenting on things, other people, events, etc. around them and in their daily lives, without any set conversational agenda” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 10). This is what Eija Ventola (1979: 267) terms “casual encounters”: everyday encounter situations where two or more participants meet without a specified purpose. However, McCarthy (1998a: 31) makes clear that “casual conversation is no less goal-driven than any other type of talk, even though the goals may be multiple, emergent and predominantly relational”.

Four texts have been identified as tokens of this genre in our data, namely text KB6 (two friends chatting while one cuts the other’s hair), KB7 (a couple chatting as they are having lunch), KBA (an informal conversation among working mates) and KDV (two friends chatting).

The most common features of this genre are:

- Topics switch freely.
- Topics are often provoked by what speakers are doing, by objects in their presence or by some association with what has just been said.
- There does not appear to be a clearly defined purpose for the conversation.
- All speakers can introduce topics and no one speaker appears to control the conversation.
- Speakers comment on each other's statements.
- Topics are only elaborated on briefly, after follow-up questions or comments from listeners.
- Comments in response to a topic often include some evaluation.
- Responses can be very short.
- Ellipsis is common.
- The speakers' co-operation is often shown through speaker support and repetition of each other's vocabulary.
- Vocabulary typical of informal conversation will be present, such as clichés, vague language and taboo language. (Pridham 2001: 64)

The excerpt below may serve to illustrate all these defining characteristics.

Text KBA > Conversation recorded by Anthony

CHRIS>: I'll be watching Jaws tonight [...]

KEVIN>: [...] watching [...]?

CHRIS>: Yeah.

KEVIN>: [...]. Looks a bit fucking crap like the rest of them but [...]

PS000>: That ... one and two were quite good.

CHRIS>: They got Mr Bean on Saturday as well.

PS000>: Mm.

CHRIS>: Is it Mr Bean on Saturday? Is it?

KEVIN>: Three's ... a load of crap. That's the 3D one.

PS000>: [...]

CHRIS>: This one though I think it's not, I think it's just the people having nightmares about it.

ACHMED>: I don't know. It's supposed to be down in th, that, him following that, following that family, innit? Supposed to be [...]. Supposed to be following the family wherever they go on the beach.

CHRIS>: Is it?

ACHMED>: Something like that. ... Michael Caine's in it. Although er it looked pretty pathetic [...] it was on. We had a preview of it at home.

DAVE>: Fucking miss erm ... We missed Carrot, Carrot was on last night, weren't it?

CHRIS>: Mm, Jasper, yeah.

DAVE>: Yeah, fucking, my Mrs said it was really funny.

CHRIS>: I like Mr Bean [...]

PS000>: [...]
DAVE>: Mr Bean, that's fucking brilliant, that is.
CHRIS>: He just cracks me up. I tell you what, I can sit there ... two things I like [...] no three. ... A good film
DAVE>: Yeah.
CHRIS>: I mean a good film. ... Cartoons.
DAVE>: Oh fuck, yeah [...]
CHRIS>: I love cartoons. Tom and Jerry I like.

7.3.5. Analysis of individual genre parameters in the BNC data

Since genres are subject to variation, three defining generic dimensions will be examined in isolation in order to discover if individual factors exert an influence on the frequency and usage of exaggeration in conversation. The parameters submitted to scrutiny are: goal orientation, participant framework and transactional/interpersonal language use. These parameters collectively, and together with local lexico-grammatical features, are said to be complementary in defining particular genres. In the words of McCarthy (1998a: 2):

Genre will always remain a difficult notion to pin down because social activity is prone to so much variation. What is apparent is that seen as a whole, behaviour is integrated: the transactional, the interactional, the goal-orientation, the relationship among participants, and the local lexico-grammatical details all complement each other.

They will be isolated here in order to discover more specific patterns of use for this figure of speech.

7.3.5.1. Transactional vs. interactional dimension

Language is a communicative means, “but the transmission of informative messages is not its only function. It is also used for establishing and maintaining contact between people” (Ventola 1979: 276). Thus, a distinction must be drawn between transactional and interactional uses of language.

Brown and Yule (1983) describe conversation as being either transactional or interactional. Transactional language is used to exchange or to obtain goods and services, whereas interactional language is aimed at socialising. Similarly, Richards (1990)

following Brown and Yule (1983) differentiates two kinds of conversational interaction – those in which the primary focus is on the exchange of information (i.e. the transactional function of conversation), and those in which the primary purpose is to establish and maintain social relations (i.e. the interactional function of conversation). “In transactional uses of conversation”, says Richards (1990: 68), “the primary focus is on the message, whereas interactional uses of conversation focus primarily on the social needs of the participants”.

The aim here is to find out which variable attracts the most hyperboles, whether transactional, interactional language use or a combination of both. The BNC texts were classified accordingly, as shown in table 7.9.

Text code	Transactional/Interactional	Word size	Utterances
FM3	Transactional/interactional mixture	3,977	31
G5M	Transactional/interactional mixture	1,914	15
JJC	Transactional/interactional mixture	1,121	8
K6X	Transactional	3,615	13
F7Y	Transactional/interactional mixture	4,978	39
J8J	Transactional	5,339	28
F8A	Transactional	3,516	9
F8J	Transactional	2,174	13
FMB	Transactional	3,496	5
JNR	Transactional	1,613	6
JSH	Transactional	10,234	48
KPE	Interactional	301	5
KB6	Interactional	1,142	10
KB7	Interactional	825	8
KBA	Interactional	273	6
KPC	Interactional	2,245	15
KP9	Transactional/interactional mixture	1,768	22
KDV	Interactional	3,659	29

Table 7.9. Distribution of transactional/interactional variables per text in our data

The nature of interaction can be said to be transactional if the language is used in the process of conducting business and getting things done (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 18). The transcripts examined yield numerous instances: business meeting (K6X), classroom interactions (F8A, F8J, FMB), seminar conference (JNR) and parliamentary debate (JSH). It contrasts with interactional speech, which is aimed at “establishing or maintaining a relationship” (Cornbleet and Carter 2001: 27). Interactional language, say Carter and McCarthy (1997: 17), is “language which is primarily personal and social in orientation. Its effective use normally allows social and interpersonal relations to be maintained”. Thus, it is not surprising this category pervades the informal BNC domain (KPE, KB6, KB7, KBA, KPC, KDV).

Transactional/interactional combinations in our data appear mainly in service encounters (FM3, G5M and JJC). In this sense, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 94) have noted that in many service encounters “the interactional (personal/social) language is just as important as transactional (‘business’) language”. Let us take the following example where the reference to weather conditions in this estate agency interview is a clear example of phatic talk. It has no purpose other than to establish a personal relationship.

Text JJC > Estate agency: interview

BUYER>: Erm, right I'm new to the area and I'm sort of wanting to move into the Garden City.

ESTATE AGENT>: Great. Take a seat. **Is it still as cold out there as it looks?**

BUYER>: *Absolutely freezing out there.*

ESTATE AGENT>: **Oh, yuk, oh, horrible, horrible.** Okay, so you're looking for a house or

BUYER>: Well, I'm actually, I'd like something cottagey if at all possible, but erm I'm quite open minded at the moment, erm, I'm so new to the area, I'm actually in Brookmans Park at the moment

ESTATE AGENT>: Right.

BUYER>: but my house is on the market.

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, has that been on there long?

BUYER>: It's been on for about the past month.

ESTATE AGENT>: And what sort of response are you getting on that?

BUYER>: Not too bad, had a couple of people round in the last week and one seems quite keen.

ESTATE AGENT>: All fairly encouraging then.

BUYER>: Yeah, you know, quite hopeful so what I, as I say, what I'm really looking for is, I've got a preference for older properties but you know try not to pin myself down to too much at the moment. I've got about a hundred and thirty to spend [...] so ideally, I'd like a cottage old style but I do need three bedrooms.

ESTATE AGENT>: OK, right.

There are other environments of use for this mixture in our data. Thus, in talking about interactional speech, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 17) claim: “In some contexts, such as service encounters or even sometimes in formal interviews, it is combined with transactional language to soften and make less forbidding the business of getting certain tasks done”. This may help explain its presence in the informal learning encounter interview (F7Y). Text KP9 also combines both language types because apart from getting things done in the restaurant, the language is used for socialising.

The next table shows the extension and hyperbole occurrence of the three variables in our data.

Transactional/Interactional variable	Word size	Utterances
Transactional	29,987	122
Interactional	8,445	73
Transactional-interactional mixture	13,758	115

Table 7.10. Length and hyperbole occurrence per transactional/interactional variables in our data

Again, in order to determine proportionally which of the three categories attracted the most hyperboles (given that they vary considerably in terms of size), a weighted average was extracted. The results are represented in the table below.

T/I	Word size	Hyperboles	Procedure	Frequency	Procedure	Percentage
Transactional	29,987	122	122 x 100	0.40	0.40 x 100	19.13%
			7,012		2.09	
Interactional	8,445	73	73 x 100	0.86	0.86 x 100	41.14%
			3,615		2.09	
Transactional /Interactional	13,758	115	115 x 100	0.83	0.83 x 100	39.71%
			15,777		2.09	
Total	52,190	310		2.09		≈ 100%

Table 7.11. Weighted average for transactional/interactional variable in our data

The table reveals that the interactional type of conversation attracts the most hyperboles in our data (41.1%), closely followed by those interactions where there is a mixture of transactional/interactional speech (39.7%). The category which seems less hyperbole-prone is the transactional one, which only represents 19.1% of overstated utterances in the texts examined. Note that this percentage is doubled by the other two groups: interactional and transactional/interactional language use. This might suggest that indeed the high number of hyperboles in the transactional/interactional conversations is probably due to the relational, rather than transactional, sections in those texts. Note here the one-to-one correspondence between the interactional use of language and the BNC informal domain. This connection between a higher frequency of hyperbole and informality is a recurrent idea which will be repeated throughout the whole chapter.

7.3.5.2. Goal orientation

Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) have emphasised that genre is primarily characterised by the communicative purpose it is intended to fulfil. In discussing goal orientation, I am primarily concerned with the overall goal of the conversation in which hyperboles occur in our data, rather than with individual speech acts or rhetorical functions at the local level.

The wide diversity of goals encountered in our data (e.g. to chat, to sell, to teach/learn, to make decisions, to debate political, economic and social matters, etc.) can be grouped following the CANCODE genre-approach into three typical goal-types, namely: provision of information, collaborative tasks and collaborative ideas. The three terms are defined in McCarthy (1998a: 10) as follows:

Provision of information is predominantly unidirectional, with one party imparting information to others. The role of information-giver may, of course, rotate among participants but the dominant motivation for the talk is information giving (e.g. an enquiry at a tourist information office). *Collaborative tasks* show speakers interacting with their physical environment while talking (e.g. two people packing a car prior to a journey). *Collaborative ideas* are concerned with the interactive sharing of thoughts, judgements, opinions and attitudes.

The BNC texts in our data were classified according to these three goal types, in order to determine which one was more hyperbole-prone. Naturally, goal types, as McCarthy (1998a: 10) notes, “are broad and refer to predominant rather than exclusive traits”. The table below shows the classification of BNC texts according to goal-types.

Text code	Goal orientation	Word size	Utterances
FM3	Provision of information	3,977	31
G5M	Provision of information	1,914	15
JJC	Provision of information	1,121	8
K6X	Collaborative ideas	3,615	13
F7Y	Provision of information	4,978	39
J8J	Collaborative ideas	5,339	28
F8A	Provision of information	3,516	9
F8J	Provision of information	2,174	13
FMB	Provision of information	3,496	5
JNR	Provision of information	1,613	6
JSH	Collaborative ideas	10,234	48
KPE	Collaborative task	301	5
KB6	Collaborative task	1,142	10
KB7	Collaborative ideas	825	8
KBA	Collaborative ideas	273	6
KPC	Collaborative task	2,245	15
KP9	Collaborative task	1,768	22
KDV	Collaborative ideas	3,659	29

Table 7.12. Distribution of goal orientation variables per text in our data

The next table shows that in terms of length and hyperbole occurrence the dominant goal-type is collaborative ideas, closely followed by information provision. However, this does not truly reflect which goal-type accumulates most exaggerations since the different texts and genres vary considerably in terms of size.

Goal orientation	Word size	Utterances
Provision of information	22,789	126
Collaborative ideas	23,945	132
Collaborative task	5,456	52

Table 7.13. Length and occurrence of overstatement per goal-type in our data

Again, in order to determine proportionally which of the three categories attracts the most exaggerated utterances (given that there is not a balanced distribution across goal-types), a weighted average was extracted.

Goal orientation	Word size	Hyperboles	Procedure	Frequency	Procedure	Percentage
Provision of information	22,789	126	126 x 100	0.55	0.55 x 100	26.82%
			22,789		2.05	
Collaborative ideas	23,945	132	132 x 100	0.55	0.55 x 100	26.82%
			23,945		2.05	
Collaborative task	5,456	52	52 x 100	0.95	0.95 x 100	46.34%
			5,456		2.05	
Total	52,190	310		2.05		≈ 100%

Table 7.14. Weighted average for goal-types in our data

The figure suggests a higher frequency of hyperbolic utterances in the collaborative task category (46.3%). This percentage almost doubles the frequency of the other two goal-types: collaborative ideas and provision of information, which share exactly the same percentage (26.8%). Again, it is notable that the only BNC domain where the collaborative task goal-type features is the informal one. It might be that when interacting with their physical environment speakers feel that because of the physical immediacy there is less risk of misunderstanding hyperbole.

7.3.5.3. Participant framework: power and relationships

Another crucial dimension to genre theory is the relationship among participants in terms of power differences, since “both office and status tend to determine how a person talks and is talked in conversation” (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994: 46).

In discussions of politeness systems, power refers to the vertical disparity between the participants in a hierarchical structure (Scollon and Scollon 1995: 42).

One person may be said to have power over another in the degree that he is able to control the behavior of the other. Power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behavior. (Brown and Gilman 1960: 255).

This section aims to analyse whether the relationships among participants in our data are symmetrical or asymmetrical in order to discover whether the factor “power” determines how exaggeration is used in conversation. Tables 7.15. and 7.16. display the classificatory results.

Symmetrical relations are defined as those “in which the participants are considered to be equals or near equals” (Scollon and Scollon 1995: 44). The participants see themselves as being in equal social positions or non-hierarchic roles. By contrast, in the hierarchical or asymmetrical system, “the participants recognize and respect the social differences that place one in a superordinate position and the other is a subordinate position” (p. 45).

Differences in power are related to the institutional or non-institutional character of the talk. In the words of Stubbs (1996: 102-3):

Much discourse analysis studies face-to-face casual conversation between social equals, since this is arguably the most frequent and most basic kind of social interaction. However, many of the interactions which are crucial to people’s lives take place within social institutions – such as schools and universities, doctors’ surgeries and hospitals, police stations and courtrooms – where very different language conventions operate. And much of this talk, in meetings, examinations (of many kinds), consultations, interviews, negotiations and so on, has the purpose of reaching a decision.

Similarly, Scollon and Scollon (1995: 46) claim that the “hierarchical face system is quite familiar in business, governmental, and educational organizations”. This illustrates that “institutions are intimately related to texts and genres” (Stubbs 1996: 59).

Text code	Power relationships	Size	Utterances
FM3	Hierarchic roles (saleswoman-clients)	3,977	31
G5M	Hierarchic roles (doctor-patient)	1,914	15
JJC	Hierarchic roles (estate agent-client)	1,121	8
K6X	Hierarchic roles (police super/subordinates)	3,615	13
F7Y	Hierarchic roles (interviewer-interviewee)	4,978	39
J8J	Hierarchic roles (host-audience/experts)	5,339	28
F8A	Hierarchic roles (teacher-students)	3,516	9
F8J	Hierarchic roles (teacher-students)	2,174	13
FMB	Hierarchic roles (teacher-students)	3,496	5
JNR	Hierarchic roles (chairman-speaker-delegates)	1,613	6
JSH	Hierarchic roles (chairwoman-ministers)	10,234	48
KPE	Non-hierarchic roles (student-student)	301	5
KB6	Non-hierarchic roles (friend-friend)	1,142	10
KB7	Non-hierarchic roles (family members)	825	8
KBA	Non-hierarchic roles (worker-worker)	273	6
KPC	Hierarchic roles (mother-children)	2,245	15
KP9	Non-hierarchic roles (worker-worker)	1,768	22
KDV	Non-hierarchic roles (friend-friend)	3,659	29

Table 7.15. Classification of BNC texts into symmetrical and asymmetrical relations

Power relationships	Word size	Utterances
Hierarchic roles	44,222	230
Non-hierarchic roles	7,968	80

Table 7.16. Length and hyperbole occurrence per symmetrical and asymmetrical roles

Both tables reveal that by far the most recurrent system of participants' relations in our data is asymmetrical. This power difference is even reflected in the turn-taking system and speech organisation.

Power relations	Word size	Hyperboles	Procedure	Frequency	Procedure	Percentage
Hierarchic roles	44,222	230	230 x 100	0.52	0.52 x 100	34.21%
			44,222		1.52	
Non-hierarchic roles	7,968	80	80 x 100	1	0.80 x 100	65.78%
			7,968		1.52	
Total	52,190	310		1.52		≈ 100%

Table 7.17. Weighted average for symmetrical and asymmetrical relations in our data

Table 7.17. above shows that although asymmetrical/hierarchic roles are the dominant system of participant relationship in our data, proportionally non-hierarchic relations are more hyperbole-prone. In other words, the use of exaggeration is higher when the situation is non-institutional and the participants are equals. It is noteworthy that the percentage for non-hierarchic relations (65.7%) almost doubles that of hierarchic relations (34.2%). This is because when participants are equals the tone is more informal and the atmosphere, relaxed. Again, a connection between informality and the use of hyperbole can be established here. Note once more that symmetrical participant relationships only occur in the BNC informal domain. This is not surprising given that “in the case of casual conversation the overriding social roles are non-hierarchic” (Ventola 1979: 269).

By contrast, in asymmetrical power relationships participants often refrain themselves from using exaggeration, especially those in subordinate or lower positions. They use “independence strategies in ‘speaking’ up” (Scollon and Scollon 1995: 46), whereas hyperbole is typically an involvement strategy.

There is a strong link between formal/informal style and symmetrical and asymmetrical power relations. As Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994: 46) clearly put it:

The formal-informal continuum is a measure of how much attention people pay to their speech. When they speak most naturally and casually, their style is informal, which is appropriate when the social setting is informal and the speakers are of more or less equal

status. In contrast, the more carefully we attend to our speech production, the more formal it becomes, which is appropriate in formal contexts and between people of different status/office.

Thus, different speech styles reflect perceptions of the social roles of the participants in speech events (Richards 1990: 73).

On the other hand, the kind of relation established among participants is another factor worth considering. In setting up the CANCODE corpus, the research team identified five broad types of relationship among participants, namely transactional, professional, pedagogical, socialising and intimate. Such relation-types “are broad and refer to predominant rather than exclusive traits” (McCarthy 1998a: 10). All BNC texts were classified according to these relation-types in order to determine if the use of hyperbole was particularly associated with any of them. The classification of BNC texts into relation-types appears in table 7.18.

Transactional relationships were defined as “those where speakers display needs or imperatives and move towards satisfying those needs in a goal-oriented fashion outside the contexts of professional, socialising or intimate relationships” (McCarthy 1998a: 9). On the whole, this relation-type correlates with service encounters (FM3, G5M and JJC), where speakers transact goods, information or services.

Professional relationships are to be found in “talk between professional colleagues in professional situations” (*ibid.*). Instances in our data include the constabulary meeting (K6X), parliamentary debate (JSH), seminar presentation at a conference among experts (JNR), and interactions among colleagues (at restaurant and factory for texts KP9 and KBA, respectively).

Pedagogical relations are those between teachers and their students (F8A, F8J, FMB but also F7Y) as well as student-student interaction (KPE). This relation-type more or less corresponds to learning encounters in our data.

Socialising relations accord with “social or cultural activities entered upon by participants but not in professional or intimate settings” (McCarthy 1998a: 10). Only an instance of this relation-type could be found in our data: a TV discussion programme (J8J).

Finally, intimate relations, says McCarthy (1998a), pertain between family members or close friends in private, non-professional settings (*ibid.*).

Text code	Participant relationships	Size	Utterances
FM3	Transactional (saleswoman-clients)	3,977	31
G5M	Transactional (doctor-patient)	1,914	15
JJC	Transactional (estate agent-client)	1,121	8
K6X	Professional (policemen)	3,615	13
F7Y	Pedagogical (retired teacher-students)	4,978	39
J8J	Socialising (host-audience/experts)	5,339	28
F8A	Pedagogical (teacher-students)	3,516	9
F8J	Pedagogical (teacher-students)	2,174	13
FMB	Pedagogical (teacher-students)	3,496	5
JNR	Professional (chairman-speaker-delegates)	1,613	6
JSH	Professional (chairwoman-ministers)	10,234	48
KPE	Pedagogical (students)	301	5
KB6	Intimate (close friends)	1,142	10
KB7	Intimate (family)	825	8
KBA	Professional (work-mates)	273	6
KPC	Intimate (family)	2,245	15
KP9	Professional (work-mates)	1,768	22
KDV	Intimate (close friends)	3,659	29

Table 7.18. Classification of BNC texts into relation-types

Participant relationships	Word size	Utterances
Transactional	7,012	54
Professional	17,503	95
Pedagogical	14,465	71
Socialising	5,339	28
Intimate	7,871	62

Table 7.19. Length and hyperbole occurrence per relation-type in our data

The table above shows that the relation-type which predominates in terms of size and attracts most exaggerations in our transcripts is the professional category, though closely followed by pedagogical relations. Socialising with a single text token is the least

represented participant relationship. But the figures above do not reflect proportionally which relation-type attracts most hyperbolic utterances. In order to answer this question, a weighted average needs to be calculated.

Relation-types	Word size	Hyperboles	Procedure	Frequency	Procedure	Percentage
Transactional	7,012	54	54 x 100	0.77	0.77 x 100	24.83%
			7,012		3.1	
Professional	17,503	95	95 x 100	0.54	0.54 x 100	17.41%
			17,503		3.1	
Pedagogical	14,465	71	71 x 100	0.49	0.49 x 100	15.80%
			14,465		3.1	
Socialising	5,339	28	28 x 100	0.52	0.52 x 100	16.77%
			5,339		3.1	
Intimate	7,871	62	62 x 100	0.78	0.78 x 100	25.16%
			7,871		3.1	
Total	52,190	310		3.1		≈ 100%

Table 7.20. Weighted average for relation-types in our data

As the table shows, the group where hyperbole prevails is that of intimate relationships. It stands for 25.1% of hyperbolic utterances in our data. This may be explained by the fact that here the relation among participants is more informal and relaxed than in any other category. Besides, since the participants know each other well (being family or close friends) and there is a high degree of common ground, there is less risk of misunderstanding and so speakers feel freer and safer in using exaggeration. Note here again that intimate relations only feature in our data in the BNC informal domain. This strong connection between informal interaction and overstatement has been a recurrent theme throughout the chapter.

After intimate relations, the transactional category, which corresponds to service encounters, stands out as the most important one in attracting hyperbole. In transactions, the high percentage of hyperbolic occurrence (28.8%) is probably due to the importance given to relational/interactional aspects in such genre. For this reason, models of genre that

look upon relational episodes as things that disturb the normative flow of the transactional elements of the genre are misleading and misguided (McCarthy 1998a: 29).

In professional, pedagogical and socialising relations the use of the trope is less frequent. There is not much difference between these three relation-types. Although I had initially expected a higher frequency for hyperbole in socialising relationships (since this group is conceptually close to intimate relations), the lower percentage (16.7%) seems to suggest that when people share less common ground or do not know each other so well, there is more risk of misunderstanding hyperbole and so speakers tend to restrain their use. A possible explanation for the percentages given for professional and pedagogical relations is that in working environments (teaching included) people try to be more formally objective.

7.4. Discussion

This chapter has addressed the issue of texts forms and speech genres, aspects of the trope that have rarely been discussed in the literature on exaggeration. Although hyperbole has been associated with individual modes and written genres, what is needed is a comprehensive study integrating a wide range of such elements in speech. Thus, a contrastive analysis reveals certain patterns of use for the trope.

In terms of text forms, for example, it can be argued that although the aesthetic value of figurative expressions has been widely studied, hyperbole rather responds to argumentative or explanatory purposes. This is in tune with Sell *et al.*'s (1997: 103) classification of the trope as a persuasive non-literal form, since it aims to “get the listener to know or believe something”. Thus, hyperboles often have as their centre a speaker intending to persuade, that is, intending to reinforce or change the beliefs, attitudes or actions of hearers. Although such usage, since hyperbole is a purely subjective act, may surprise those for whom hyperbole is solely a synonym of literary device, this is by far the mode in which the trope predominates. This suggests that argumentative structures need not rely exclusively on objective fact. In the words of Swartz (1976: 101):

Hyperbole provides a means for focusing attention on specific aspects of reality (whether social or physical) in such a way as to bring about awareness of values and norms associated

with those aspects in an emotionally charged way. In focusing attention on some aspects of reality rather than others, it structures that reality in ways open to manipulation by users.

The pervasiveness of this mode in our data is in accordance with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1994: 448) claim that superlativeness or hyperbole responds most often to argumentative purposes. As in classical rhetoric, it follows an argumentative or justifying method. They consider a trope to be argumentative, "if it brings about a change of perspective, and its use seems normal in relation to this new situation" (p. 271). For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 16), rhetoric or the art of persuasion is a theory of argumentation. It is defined as the study of discourse techniques, among which hyperbole, metaphor and other tropes feature, that bring about people's adherence to a particular thesis (p. 34). Whatever the goals of the rhetorician, says Crocker (1977: 42), his/her tropes must persuade persons of the truth of his/her position.

This chapter has also addressed the nature and defining characteristics of spoken genres. Six different kinds were identified in our data: decision making, debate-argument, language-in-action, comment-elaboration, service and learning encounters, plus the narrative and identifying sections embedded within some of these genres. Given the wide variety of contexts of use and interaction environments, the corpus examined can be said to be sufficiently representative of the everyday use of hyperbole in contemporary English. The possibility of representing an adequate coverage of everyday genres is one of the advantages of using large corpora. In the words of McCarthy and Carter (2004: 177): "A large corpus [...], where data is collected in a wide variety of settings, offers a considerably more powerful tool for attesting occasions of hyperbole and other tropes".

The notion of genre "proves to be a useful analytical tool with respect to the description of communicative patterns in everyday interactions" (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 1). Thus, for genre analysis, not only quantitative but also qualitative analytical methods were employed. Apart from purpose, genres were described in terms of lexico-grammatical characteristics and "situative structure" (Günthner and Knoblauch 1995: 14), illustrating how Conversational Analysis methods can be productively combined with the study of speech genres. This is because "the language features of a genre reflect the purpose and context of that genre" (Pridham 2001: 77).

The analysis of conversational genres shows that the two genres which attract the most hyperboles are language-in-action and comment-elaboration interactions. This suggests that exaggeration is not a matter of personal style only. Contextual factors such as purpose, language functions or participant relations and roles determine hyperbole frequency and use. There is a strong tendency to associate the trope with physically immediate activities (collaborative tasks), interactional or relational usage and informal and equal participant relationships. A recurrent theme throughout this chapter points to the strong connection between hyperbole and informality. When the context in general is informal, there is a higher preference for the use of the trope. Not in vain, exaggeration pervades the BNC informal domain. This is in consonance with Carter and McCarthy's (1997: 113) litotes: "deliberate bizarre exaggerations ... are not uncommon in informal conversation".

8. OTHER RELEVANT ASPECTS OF HYPERBOLE: INTERACTIVITY AND PERFORMED NARRATIVES

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter I focus on one of the aspects of figurative language that only in the last decade has been taken up by researchers, namely the study of figures as interactional devices. Very much in line with studies that advocate examining the role of conversational interactivity in figurative language use, the collaborative nature of hyperbole as a trope jointly created between speaker and hearer will be examined here. In order to analyse the interactive dimension of this figure, both the production and reception process will be examined, paying special attention to listeners' responses and contributions to hyperbolic utterances. In doing so, I expect to answer the question: how do listeners react verbally to hyperbole? Among the range of possible verbal responses to overstatement, hearers' take-up and continuation of hyperbole or any other non-literal form will be highlighted, since they often bring about bursts of figurative language. Finally, I examine the use of this figure as a performance feature in narratives.

8.2. Object of study and materials in figurative language research

Although figurative language has received considerable attention from many different disciplines, most of this interest, with a few exceptions, has been primarily directed at explaining how figures of speech are comprehended, given their non-literal nature. Since these studies have almost invariably concentrated on the psychological processes activated in understanding, it is not surprising that nowadays a crucial limitation in figurative language theories is the production process of figures of speech, as joint activities between addresser and addressee.

To date, figures of speech have been largely regarded as acts by the speaker alone, thus overlooking listeners' active role in providing responses and further contributions to the emergence of figurative contexts. In this sense, it is worth highlighting that although the reception process, in terms of the psychological processes activated in understanding, has

been widely studied, hearers' verbal reactions to figures of speech have been almost systematically neglected. This can be explained by the fact that "In language pedagogy, listenership has been seen as a question of 'listening comprehension', i.e. the processing of messages, rather than the way in which speakers characteristically respond to them" (McCarthy 1998b: 111-2). There is some research on the hearer's emotional reactions to various forms of ironic speech, namely overstatement, understatement, rhetorical questions, sarcasm, irony and satire (e.g. Leggitt and Gibbs 2000), but these affective reactions were not evidenced by listeners' verbal replies. In the experiment in question, participants were instructed "to imagine themselves in each situation, take the perspective of the addressee, and imagine how they would feel when the speaker said what he or she said" (p. 6).

The fact that the object of study has traditionally been the figurative sentence, either in isolation or in the context of artificially constructed texts, may also help explain that the collaborative nature of figures has been overlooked and that non-literal forms have not been analysed so far interactively in conversation. As Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 64) correctly note: "It's quite wrong to take naturally occurring speech and isolate utterances because a great deal of the language interrelates and interweaves across longer stretches of the exchange". In turn, this practice is due to the long-standing adoption of communication paradigms, such as the intentional view of discourse, which exclude the crucial role of listeners and readers in both the creation and interpretation of meaning.

Figures of speech and tropes have a long history of study, going back to Aristotle, as rhetorical devices in written texts. Since rhetoric practice has traditionally been associated with the production of persuasive speech, and later, with aesthetics and literature, only relatively recently has the study of figurative language been switched into the domain of everyday language. Indeed, rhetorical scholars have often listed striking examples from literary masterpieces, particularly poems, to illustrate figures. Even though they are ubiquitous features in everyday speech, not a great amount of empirical research exists into figures in naturally occurring conversation. Suffice it to say that the bulk of psycholinguistic research over the last twenty years has mainly utilised artificial texts as stimulus materials.

In short, across all fields of research, the data or test materials are almost invariably instances of figures abstracted from any actual interactional context. There has been little

systematic research into the use of figures in conversation, McCarthy and Carter (2004) being a most notable exception for the study of hyperbole. An adequate characterisation of figures, however, may be best attained by investigation of their basic site: conversation (Clift 1999: 523).

8.3. Joint activity view of discourse

Gibbs (1999a: 44-5), in his book *Intentions in the Experience of Meaning*, distinguishes four different views of communication, each of which places a different emphasis on meaning. The encoding/decoding paradigm describes meaning as an inherent property of messages. In the intentionalist perspective, meaning is bounded to the speaker's intention. The perspective-taking paradigm views meaning as determined from the addressee's point of view. Only the dialogic paradigm characterises meaning as an emergent property of participants' joint activity.

According to the encoding/decoding, intentionalist and perspective-taking paradigms, communication, says Gibbs (1999a: 45), consists of speakers' and listeners' autonomous acts: "All of these paradigms view speakers and listeners acting autonomously as they separately figure out what to say and how to infer what is meant". However, in the dialogic view of communication, which Gibbs himself adopts, discourse is a process in which participants collaborate to produce shared meanings. Under this perspective, feedback is not simply a mechanism by which addressees help speakers generate more informative messages, but is an intrinsic part of the process by which the meanings of messages are established. Thus, Gibbs concludes that discourse is a joint activity in which speakers and listeners co-operate and co-ordinate to reach mutual understandings of each other's, and their joint, intentions.

Labov and Fanshel (1977: 30) have taken a similar position in claiming that conversation is not a chain of utterances, but rather "a matrix of utterances and actions bound together by a web of understandings and reactions". Accordingly, Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 23) have argued that the terms "recipient", "receiver" and "listener" are misleadingly passive, since the receiver "has a very active role to play. In conversation, he or she helps to shape the discourse as it goes along, influencing what is said and how it's said".

The assumption in this chapter is that discourse is a joint activity carried out by an ensemble of two or more participants trying to accomplish goals together (e.g. Goffman 1971, 1981, Sacks *et al.* 1974). The idea is that “conversations, stories and other discourses are not created by speakers acting autonomously. Rather, they are the emergent products of an ensemble of people working together” (Clark 1994: 986). In emphasising the social nature of discourse, Clark has correctly noted that “discourse is an activity carried out by two or more participants working jointly, and that requires coordination at all levels of planning and execution” (pp. 1017-8) since “failures of coordination regularly lead to breakdowns in the joint activity” (p. 989).

Indeed, the turn-taking system is “a resource provided by conversation’s thoroughly interactional character” (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 44).

For it is a systematic consequence of the turn-taking organization of conversations that it obliges its participants to display to each other, in a turn’s talk, their understanding of other turns’ talk. More generally, a turn’s talk will be heard as directed to a prior turn’s talk, unless special techniques are used to locate some other talk to which it is directed. Regularly, then, a turn’s talk will display its speaker’s understanding of a prior turn’s talk, and whatever other talk it marks itself as directed to. (*ibid.*)

Studies of the joint activity of speakers and listeners all underline significance of listener response and the effects of response on the way speakers construct their turns (McCarthy 2003: 43). Research into listeners’ behaviour reinforces the notion of conversation as jointly produced. Responding is an important area of investigation, “which linguists have often down-played in favour of a concentration in speaking turns as primary/initiating, rather than responsive, input” (p. 36). However, as McCarthy (2003: 40) reports: “To neglect the listener, and to focus only on the main speaker, Schegloff states, leads to a tendency to consider the discourse as ‘a single speaker’s, and a single mind’s, product’ (p. 74)”.

Only in the last few years has this joint activity view of discourse been subscribed to figurative language theories and listeners’ active role in figuration been examined, but the sparse literature that exists has mainly focused on metaphor and irony, often considered the master tropes, while the study of other figures such as overstatement has been set aside. Much literature on the interactive and collaborative character of figures of speech can be

found in the field of psychotherapy, as an attempt to understand how clients and therapists conceptualise and negotiate subjective experiences in non-literal ways.

8.4. Interactive nature of figures of speech

McMullen (1989) examined the spontaneous production of figurative descriptions of emotions in a large corpus of therapeutic discourse. Her data consists of six cases of psychotherapy, one successful and one unsuccessful case from three therapists, totalling ninety-five therapy sessions. She was primarily concerned with metaphor, and overtly disregarded the study of hyperbole in her transcripts. This study revealed features of clients' figurative language that were more frequently and consistently found in the successful than in the unsuccessful cases, namely the elaboration of major therapy themes via bursts of figurative language or development of a metaphor over time and the existence of central metaphors as evinced by the use of several conceptually related figures that fit that metaphor – what she terms “variations of a central metaphor” (p. 214).

She devotes special attention to the emergence of bursts of figurative language, defined as “three or more instances occurring within a 3-min interval and within two client or therapist communication units” (p. 210), and which may consist of repetitions of the same figure or the use of different figures to elaborate a theme. Particularly interesting is the distinction she draws between “client- or therapist-introduced figures” as well as her discussion of the take-up and repetition of those same figures by the other participant (p. 216). In this sense, she notes that sometimes therapists used figures introduced by the client and usually just repeated them after they had been used. Similarly, “figures introduced by the therapist also appeared to be particularly apt for the client and were taken up and used several times by the client” (p. 219). Repetition is here understood as a form of acceptance or concurrence with the figure introduced by the other participant. She also discusses examples where metaphors were not accepted or were challenged by the therapist, suggesting thus that “he did not (and would not) completely share this client's figuratively expressed conceptual world” (p. 216).

Similarly, Ferrara (1994) in her *Therapeutic Ways with Words*, emphasises, from a discourse analysis framework, the interactive nature of conversation and shows how language is mutually constructed as people interweave pieces of their own and others'

sentences, metaphors and narratives. She devotes an entire chapter to the collaborative creation of metaphor, to how addresser and addressee interactively construct metaphorical statements in psychotherapy. She illustrates how the same metaphors, variations on them, arise again and again during the course of a therapy session, not only repeated by the client but expanded upon in a variety of ways by the therapist. She also provides other examples in which metaphors were less readily understood and the ensuing discussion focused on clarification rather than expansion.

Angus (1996) has also examined the use of metaphor in transcripts of therapeutic discourse. His study suggests that metaphors are often used by both clients and therapists, irrespective of outcome group, whether good or poor-outcome dyads, although clients are more likely to contribute metaphor phrases to therapy discourse than are their therapists. The most interesting finding from this study, though, is his consideration of interactive and elaborated metaphor phrases, which were slightly more frequently found in the good- than in the poor-outcome therapy sessions. “Therapists and clients in the good-outcome dyads tended to cocreate and reuse a core set of metaphoric phrases and themes in their therapeutic conversations” (p. 75). This is consistent with Angus and Renie’s (1988) finding that metaphors initiated and elaborated in therapy sessions are jointly developed by both client and therapist. Therapists in good-outcome therapy relationships developed and carried forward metaphor phrases initially introduced by their clients, in such a way that therapist and client together “coconstruct an organized, comprehensive life narrative” (p. 76). Angus (1996: 779) explains this collaborative dimension of metaphor as follows: “This coconstructive extension of a metaphoric scene suggests that both client and therapist were engaged in a collaborative interaction which in turn signified the development of shared understanding between the therapist and the client”.

He has also noted that conceptually related figures emerge and re-emerge in the course of a therapy session, and “this amplification and extension [...] across a range of interpersonal relationships” (p. 78) often results in “the coconstructive germination of a salient metaphor theme” (p. 77) or core therapeutic field.

By remaining within this metaphor scenario, client and therapist build a shared network of meanings and develop a sense of shared purpose and focus in the therapy relationship. Both of these outcomes are essential ingredients of what psychotherapy researchers term a working therapeutic alliance (Horvath and Greenberg 1994; quoted in Angus 1996: 81)

Similarly, Fussell and Moss (1998: 130-2) have addressed the role of conversational interactivity in figurative language use. These scholars examine the interactive construction of figurative expressions and message comprehension in a corpus of emotional and affective communication. In their experiment, movie clips depicting characters undergoing emotional experiences were shown to participants. For each clip, the task was to describe a target character's emotional state so that the addressee, who had not seen the video clip, could understand what the character was feeling. They found numerous examples of joint productions containing figurative language, such as repetition of speakers' figurative utterances and listeners' prediction of what is implied by a figurative expression. In addition, the study shows how the presence of feedback enables speakers and hearers to ensure that terms and expressions, having both literal and figurative interpretations, were understood correctly. Another interesting finding is that listeners also commonly responded to figurative expressions with "a reformulation in other figurative terms" or "they suggested figurative paraphrases" (p. 132).

Although in 1981 Alice Myers Roy had already noted that "irony can also be a joint effort among conversationalists" (p. 420), Haverkate (1990: 108) was probably the first to suggest studying hearers' reactions to verbal irony in noting that "at the level of discourse it would be interesting to investigate the relation between the interactional attitude of the ironic speaker and the reaction to it by the hearer". In this vein, a recent major contribution to the discussion of irony is that of Clift (1999), who examines irony within a Conversation Analysis framework, paying particular attention to shifts in footing. "The speaker's adoption of a particular perspective –of, say, animator, or author- is what Goffman 1979 terms his 'footing' vis-à-vis what he is saying" (pp. 531-2). Clift takes an interactive perspective in addressing hearers' reactions to ironic utterances, with laughter and/or the continuation of irony been typically the response of the addressee to recognised irony. It is interesting to note here that many of her examples are instances of hyperbolic irony, since footing often shifts "toward the extreme" and invokes "extraordinary, impossible worlds" in ironic contexts (p. 540). Such ironies, she says, "are marked by their extremity, and indeed they often make use of extreme case formulations (Pomerantz 1986) to emphasize the impossibility of what is being asserted" (p. 538).

Gibbs (2000) in his study of irony in informal talk among friends, consisting of sixty-two 10-minute conversations, has also analysed listeners' responses to irony and how

speaker and listener actively collaborate to create ironic scenes in which each participant plays a specific role. His account of verbal irony includes five main forms: hyperbole, understatement, sarcasm, rhetorical questions and jocularity, although a closer look at hyperbolic utterances reveals that they are indeed instances of hyperbolic irony. Even though sometimes addressees ignored the intended irony or changed the subject right away, clues in the data such as laughter, literal remarks indicating understanding of the speaker's ironic intent and the take-up and continuation of irony by participants, says Gibbs, are crucial to demonstrate this collaborative construction of irony. As Gibbs (2000: 25) himself notes:

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this project were the large degree to which addressees responded to a speaker's irony by saying something ironic in return. This result had not been previously noted, but suggests how irony is as much a state of mind jointly created by speakers and listeners, as it is a special kind of figurative language. The give-and-take nature of irony also illustrates the importance of collaboration in psychological models of speaking and listening (Clark, 1996). Yet people's conceptual understanding of various people, events, and objects as being ironic (Gibbs, 1994; Lucariello, 1994) underlies a great part of why speakers choose to express their beliefs and attitudes via different forms of ironic language. These ironic conceptualizations are often part of speakers' and listeners' common ground such that people will create ironic routines to exploit, and indeed celebrate, their mutual recognition of life's ironies.

Although focusing on their sequential distribution in conversation, Drew and Holt (1998) have also inquired into the interactional role that idiomatic expressions play in language. In their data, a corpus of 200 instances of speakers using figurative expressions extracted from telephone calls, a clear distributional pattern was found: idioms occur regularly in topic transition sequences, and specifically in the turn where a topic is summarised, thereby initiating the closing of that topic. In this pattern, "following a turn in which a speaker produces a figurative expression, the co-participants briefly agree with one another, after which one or the other introduces a new topic in conversation" (p. 499). Thus, Drew and Holt treat figurative expressions "as one of those linguistic components of turn design through which speakers manage, collaboratively, certain sequentially embedded activities" (p. 497). The production of an idiomatic summary, followed by each

of the speakers declining to develop the topic further, and the subsequent introduction of a next topic, is considered a topic transition sequence “through which co-participants collaboratively disengage from a current topic and move to a next” (p. 505). Finally, Drew and Holt consider the interactional use of idiomatic expressions in the context of instances where their use fails to secure topic closure, manifesting some conflict between the participants (e.g. disagreement, disaffiliation, etc.). They found two main situation types where a speaker’s attempt to close a topic with an idiom did not result in closing that topic. The first involves instances where the expression itself happens to occasion further topically connected talk. The second type involves failure by the recipient to agree with the position summarised in the prior speaker’s figurative idiom and even sometimes with the recipient responding to the co-participant’s figurative summary with one of his/her own. As Drew and Holt (1998: 513-4) clearly put it:

In other instances, however, the differences between participants become more manifest at the interactional surface of talk. Although one speaker may attempt to close the topic by producing a figurative summary, this is not accepted by the recipient. The recipient withholds the kind of minimal agreement associated with the standard topic transition sequence, with the result that the co-participants do not achieve a topic termination and transition to next topic. Instead, the topic becomes protracted until further attempts are made to get the other’s agreement, often through additional figurative summaries.

Drew and Holt (1988) have also analysed the use of idioms to sum up and bring complaints to a close. They examine the sequential/interactional work being managed by the use of idiomatic expressions in a corpus of recordings of naturally occurring conversations and of talk in more institutional contexts (e.g. psychotherapy sessions, business and sales meetings). This study reveals that idioms are used not randomly but most notably when one speaker is complaining to another. Typically, a complaint is formulated idiomatically at a point where there is some conflict or lack of alignment between complainant and recipient. “The absence of overtly affiliative responses”, they say, “constitutes an environment in which complainants may anticipate that they cannot rely on recipients’ support” (p. 410). Thus, idioms are directed to unsympathetic recipients and introduced in contexts, where up until then, the listener has withheld sympathising or affiliating with a complainant. Their data also reveal that idioms are specially well suited

to sum up a complaint in such a way as to enhance its legitimacy and simultaneously bring the complaint to a close. When listeners withhold affiliation, “an idiomatic formulation of the complaint may be used to bring the matter to a close on a point with which the other may concur, to bring speaker and recipient into some kind of alignment before changing the topic” (p. 412).

It seems that these approaches are equally valid for the study of hyperbole, since exaggeration is implicit in many of the figures discussed above. Indeed, many of the transcribed examples in the aforementioned studies contain exaggerated utterances. Yet, this collaborative character of hyperbole has only been discussed in regard to interpretation. Fogelin (1988: 23), for instance, has emphasised “the respondent’s participatory role in making sense of figurative language”, in explaining that figures such as irony, overstatement and understatement demand of the listener a kind of inward, corrective response which is mutually recognised by speaker and hearer. Similarly, Clark (1996: 143) argues that hyperbole depends on “a kind of joint pretence in which speakers and addressees create a new layer of joint activity”.

To date, only McCarthy and Carter (2004: 149) have advocated that “an interactive approach to hyperbole is indispensable for its proper understanding”. Indeed, this is the only published research focusing on exaggeration in naturally-occurring speech among adults. They highlight the interactive dimension of overstatement in claiming that “listener reaction is crucial to its interpretation and success of hyperbole depends on the listener entering a pact of acceptance of extreme formulations, the creation of impossible worlds and/or apparent counterfactuality” (p. 149). The study reveals that key, recurring items such as “listener acceptance tokens (*yes, yeah, mm*, and so on), laughter, and listeners’ own further contributions to the emerging hyperbolic context” are crucial to the interpretation of overstatement as a joint activity between participants (p. 175).

In the words of McCarthy and Carter (2004: 153):

Any full account of hyperbole must have an interactive dimension. As with other acts of linguistic creativity, hyperbole is validated in interaction and can only be described adequately by including the listener’s contributions to the unfolding act, rather than being examined as a single, creative act by the speaker alone, or solely within the domain of intentionality, whether on the part of the speaker or listener.

Indeed, listener take-up, whereby “the listener reacts with supportive behaviour such as laughter or assenting back channel markers and/or contributes further to the counterfactuality, impossibility, contextual disjunction, etc.”, is a powerful cue for hyperbole identification (p. 162).

8.5. Analysis of listeners’ responsiveness to hyperbole

Since hyperbole needs to be viewed as a dynamic and collaborative act, involving both the speaker and listener, not only the production but also, even more particularly, the reception process of the trope will be examined. In order to explore the active role that listeners may play in the construction and understanding of hyperbole, recipients’ verbal responses to exaggerated utterances in our transcripts will be scrutinised. In doing so, I expect to contribute to fill this gap in figurative language theories, since “Listernership as an interactive function of discourse is remarkably under-researched” (McCarthy 1998b: 111).

The aim is to explore the role of conversational interactivity in hyperbole creation and comprehension, by examining listeners’ subsequent turn(s) at talk. It is to be noted that comprehension here is solely concerned with understanding or misunderstanding of the trope as indicated by listeners’ verbal responses, rather than with the psychological processes operating on figurative language understanding. My interest here is to examine whether addressees give any behavioural indication that they understood or misunderstood the speaker’s exaggeration.

For the treatment of recipients’ responses and turns in our texts, the distinction between two-party and multi-party conversations is a relevant one.

The ratified hearer in a two-person talk is necessarily also the *addressed* one, that is, the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over the speaking role. But obviously two-person encounters, however common, are not the only kind; three or more official participants are often found. In such cases it will often be feasible for the current speaker to address his remarks to the circle as a whole, encompassing all his hearers in his glance, according them something like equal status. But more likely, the speaker will, at least during periods of his talk, address his remarks to one

listener, so that among official hearers one must distinguish the addressed recipient from *unaddressed* ones. (Goffman 1979: 9)

Accordingly, for a given overstated utterance, the response can be either simple (i.e. if a single participant is addressed) or complex (i.e. when there are multiple addressees). In practice, though, unaddressed participants may (and indeed often do) contribute responses to the speaker's message too. I shall not attempt here to distinguish between addressed and unaddressed participants, rather all responses directly affected by or related to the speaker's turn where hyperbole features will be examined here. Since the reply for a single speaker's message may be multiple, percentages have been calculated on the basis of listeners' responses, rather than on the number of hyperbolic utterances analysed. Thus, although 310 utterances were examined, given that there are 32 multiple responses, all of them double or involving two distinct listeners, the total sum of responses in the data amounts to 342.

It is also to be noted here that given that a single speaker's turn may consist of several overstatements, a single response by the listener may sometimes count as evidence for different exaggerated utterances. At times, though, they may be classified differently depending on which overstated utterance is being examined in relation to the recipient's turn.

The existence of 23 compound responses, which consist of two or more response types and/or subtypes within the same evidence class, whether positive or negative, further complicates the analysis. All of them are positive evidence responses, except for an instance falling into negative evidence. Most compound replies in the data examined involve two different response types and/or subtypes, with the exception of two instances displaying three. Within the framework of positive evidence, two response types, namely back-channel communication and relevant next contribution, seem particularly prone to such combinations, either with other subtypes within the same response type or with members from the other type of reply. Examples of some such multiple responses will be offered later in this chapter.

The presence of different "speech exchange systems" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 7) in our data (e.g. debates, interviews, meetings, conferences, talk shows, etc.) deserves special mention too, since "rules for turn taking differ according to the type of speech event" (Richards and

Schmidt 1983: 141). All of them differ from conversation (and from each other) on a range of turn-taking parameters (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 45), such as the allocation and length of turn.

8.5.1. Some limitations in the analysis

At this point I shall deal with a number of limitations encountered in the analysis. The first is the presence of inaudible stretches of speech, represented as [...] in the BNC transcripts. There are 30 instances in which the listener's response proved totally imperceptible for the transcribers, and so is missing. Such unknown replies have been classified under the heading of "inaudible response".

The impossibility of analysing some aspects of non-verbal communication proved a major limitation for the study of listeners' responses in the BNC texts too, since discourse includes much more than the sentences uttered (Clark 1994: 986). People make use of a variety of verbal and non-verbal elements of behaviour. "In conversation, for example, there are alternating utterances, together with continuous facial expressions, gestures, shifts of gaze and other non-verbal acts on the part of both speaker and listener" (Argyle 1967: 30).

In particular, the visual channel is very significant, since often non-linguistic aspects of communication reinforce or complement language, but they may also replace speech.

In the management of turn-taking, in the assessment of reception through visual back-channel cues, in the paralinguistic function of gesticulation, in the synchrony of gaze shift, in the provision of evidence of attention (as in the middle-distance look), in the assessment of engrossment through evidence of side-involvements and facial expression – in all of these ways it is apparent that sight is crucial, both for the speaker and for the hearer. (Goffman 1979: 6)

It seems that non-verbal communication is particularly suited as feedback and comprehension-indicating devices. In this sense, Chovil (1991) notes that in face-to-face conversation, back-channel responses also include head nods, smiles, raised eyebrows and frowns. Similarly, Goffman (1976: 262) refers to the smiles, chuckles, headshakes and knowing grunts through which the hearer displays appreciation as "bracket confirmations".

Since the BNC transcripts hardly ever provide evidence of non-verbal aspects of communication, the term “responses” in this chapter mainly refers to verbal replies.

8.5.2. Taxonomy of listener responses to overstatement: positive vs. negative evidence

Naturally, when we speak, “we seek some response from those who can hear us, but not a specific reply” (Goffman 1979: 11). Within the reception process, two broad types of listeners’ verbal responses to overstatement can be clearly distinguished in our data, namely positive and negative evidence, which in turn fall into different response types and subtypes.

The first table below depicts both evidence types, as well as inaudible responses, in the texts examined in terms of frequency and percentages. The second chart illustrates how occurrences are distributed among the different BNC domains.

Evidence Type	Occurrences	Percentages
Positive evidence	205	59.9%
Negative evidence	107	31.2%
Inaudible response	30	8.7%

Table 8.1. Distribution of evidence types in terms of occurrences and percentages

Evidence	Informal	Leisure	Business	Educational	Institutional
Positive	60	48	60	21	16
Negative	35	20	13	6	33
Inaudible	4	3	10	8	5

Table 8.2. Distribution of evidence type occurrences across BNC domains

Positive evidence, indicating understanding and acceptance of speaker’s intent, was the most recurrent pattern of listener’s response to exaggeration. It accounts for 59.9% of replies in our data, almost twice the number of negative evidence responses. This kind of evidence operates both at the level of message comprehension and co-construction of overstatement. Arguably, simply by signalling a correct understanding of the speaker’s

exaggeration, listeners accept and share such a non-literal frame, although naturally there are other more creative and active ways of collaboration, such as the take-up and continuation of hyperbolic speech.

Positive evidence responses refer to any form of agreement, sympathy, affiliation or other expression of contiguity or alignment between the co-participants. It signals the recipient’s concurrence with the prior speaker’s turn – in this study, the one where hyperbole is embedded. Agreement, after Drew and Holt (1998: 506), “is meant broadly, to include topically fitted or appropriate responses”, which evidence both understanding and acceptance of the speaker’s words. Negative evidence, on the other hand, which accounts for 31.2% of listeners’ verbal responses to hyperbole in our data, involves some manifest lack of interest, accord, affiliation or understanding between speaker and recipient as far as the hyperbolic remark is concerned.

8.5.2.1. Types and subtypes of listeners’ responses

As mentioned above, positive and negative evidence fall into different response types, which in turn may consist of different subtypes, as illustrated in the chart below. Percentages have not been calculated, only the number of occurrences is given, due to the presence of compound responses (i.e. replies involving more than a response type and/or subtype).

POSITIVE EVIDENCE	Response types and subtypes	Occurrences
		Back-channel communication:
	Appreciation back-channel marker	64
	Laughter	28
	Collaborative completion	7
	Relevant next contribution:	94
	Relevant answer to yes/no questions	9
	Relevant literal remark	63
	Take-up and continuation of figures	22
	Relevant non-verbal response	6
	Indirect appreciation/acceptance	28

NEGATIVE EVIDENCE	Challenged hyperbole	30
	Ignored hyperbole:	65
	Ignored hyperbole without topic-shift	14
	Ignored hyperbole through topic-shift	43
	Response omission/refusal	8
	Misunderstood or unheard hyperbole:	11
	Request for clarification	2
	Request for ratification	4
	Request for repetition	5
	Inappropriate non-verbal response	2

Table 8.3. Repertoire and distribution of response types and subtypes in our data

How these evidence and response types, as well as inaudible responses, are distributed along the different BNC domains (i.e. informal, leisure, business, educational-informative and institutional) is shown in table 8.4.

Responses/Domains	Informal	Leisure	Business	Education	Institution
Positive Evidence	70	52	62	21	22
Back-channel communication	33	26	34	5	1
Relevant next contribution	33	23	17	∅	21
Relevant non-verbal response	1	∅	∅	5	∅
Indirect appreciation/acceptance	3	3	11	11	∅
Negative Evidence	36	20	13	6	33
Challenged hyperbole	9	2	3	1	15
Ignored hyperbole	20	15	9	3	18
Misunderstood/unheard hyperbole	6	3	∅	2	∅
Inappropriate non-verbal response	1	∅	1	∅	∅
Inaudible Response	4	3	10	8	5

Table 8.4. Distribution of evidence and response types across BNC domains

At this point, I will discuss and exemplify the repertoire of replies to hyperbole in our data.

8.5.2.1.1. Positive evidence responses

As Clark (1994: 993) correctly notes, positive evidence has two common forms, namely back-channel responses and relevant next contributions. Back-channel communication, totalling 99 instances in the transcripts, is the most recurrent type of listener response. This term refers to noises (which are not full words) and short verbal responses made by listeners which acknowledge the incoming talk and react to it, without wishing to take over the speaking turn²² (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 12). It is divided into three subtypes: appreciation back-channel markers, laughter and collaborative completion.

Appreciation back-channel markers, also called back channel responses, continuers, confirmation tokens, accompaniment signals, etc. are, in terms of frequency, the most prominent or representative subtype within back-channel communication. They point to the turn in which the recipient shows appreciation or briefly agrees. Acknowledgements like these often take quite minimal forms such as *yes*, *yeah*, *yep*, (or *no*, *nay*, where appropriate), *oh*, *aha*, *mm*, *right* or some such object. Rather than claims for a turn, they signal a correct understanding and/or acceptance of the speaker's message so far and prompt the speaker to keep talking. The following excerpt, where overstated utterances appear in italics, may serve to illustrate these back-channel or acceptance tokens (in bold-face).

Text G5M > Medical consultation

PATIENT>: And then we had a phone call from the police, about a month ago

GP>: Oh, right, good.

PATIENT>: saying that it had gone straight to court, it was in court, you know

GP>: Oh, right.

PATIENT>: but we haven't heard anything.

GP>: Oh, well, I mean they may have been adjourned or a

PATIENT>: Even though

GP>: it may have been referred to a higher court.

PATIENT>: You think so?

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: Erm

GP>: I mean we, we haven't heard anything directly, I'm only glad that the police are actually telling you something.

PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah.

GP>: [cough]

²² Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between back-channels and full speaking turns (McCarthy 1998a: 176).

PATIENT>: *It, it was a big shock that day, when we had that phone call.*

GP>: **Mm.**

PATIENT>: But it was I, you know, to know that you haven't got to fight,

GP>: That's right, yeah.

PATIENT>: t to take him to court.

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: Erm

GP>: But it's a long process. I mean, *we have dealings with solicitors for all sorts of things*, asking for reports and we send a lot of notes away to have a lot of er [...] medical opinion reports and *they take ages to come back*. And that's a, these are the preliminary things that the solicitor must go through before they get near court, so

PATIENT>: **Yeah.**

GP>: *the people*

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: who it's actually, *they're actually dealing with are waiting months and months and months* and er

PATIENT>: **Yeah.**

GP>: it looks like that in your case. We,

PATIENT>: [...]

GP>: we may well have to provide the medical report on your behalf, yet.

PATIENT>: God.

GP>: But n no-one has approached me to do so.

PATIENT>: No, no.

Laughter is also a common form of acceptance and affiliation between co-participants. An utterance can have a range of possible responses, and for some utterances laughter may be among them (Jefferson 1979: 80). Since humour has been pointed out as a prominent goal of exaggeration (e.g. Long and Graesser 1988, Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Colston and O'Brien 2000b), it is not surprising that laughter is often an appropriate response to hyperbole. By laughing the listener emphasises the alignment with the speaker.

Out of 28 occurrences of laughter in response to overstatement, eleven seem to respond to the following pattern: laughter by the recipient is an acceptance of the speaker's invitation to laugh. As Jefferson (1979: 93) claims:

Laughter can be managed as a sequence in which speaker of an utterance invites recipient to laugh and recipient accepts that invitation. One technique for inviting laughter is the placement, by speaker, of a laugh just at completion of an utterance, and one technique for accepting that invitation is the placement, by recipient, of a laugh just after onset of speaker's laughter.

Speaker's laughter, however, need not necessarily occur at completion of the utterance, but at any point within his/her turn. This sort of sequence whereby speakers themselves

indicate that laughter is appropriate, by laughing, and the recipient thereupon laughs is what Jefferson points to with the formulation “invitation to laugh and acceptance” (p. 80). The following extract is illustrative.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

ANN>: I've used quite a few buckets of water washing walls.
STUART>: Washing the walls and ... [...] ... What's going on outside? ... Car or lorry or something going by, by the sound of it. ...
ANN>: About that little ... flat in ... [...] in Albany Road.
STUART>: Yeah.
ANN>: You have to realize that ... *we're never gonna get away from work. Cos when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori* and **[laugh]**
STUART>: **[laugh]**
ANN>: It's when you walk up that way you know you're getting near it.
STUART>: Yeah.
ANN>: cos you can smell it. Won't bother you?
STUART>: No. Not really.
ANN>: Mhm.
STUART>: [...] fact it'll be quite handy in a way really, you know, *it's*
ANN>: [...]
STUART>: *handy to live on the ... on your ... right next to work in a way*

The two examples in the excerpt below, where the interviewee invites laughter through laughing herself and the interviewer laughs afterwards, may also serve to illustrate the nature of compound responses. Apart from laughing, the listener makes a relevant next contribution, a topically fitted literal question in the first case and employs a back-channel or acceptance token in the second.

Text F7Y > Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview

INTERVIEWER>: Do your children still live in Harlow?
INTERVIEWEE>: Yes, ... not all of them. I have erm ... one daughter living here ... and a son living here ..., but my eldest daughter is in the United States. ... And ... my granddaughter is just finishing her last year of law. So ... what just i, well my ... eldest daughter away ... and she's been away this ... month ... twenty-six years.
INTERVIEWER>: That's a long time, innit?
INTERVIEWEE>: It is a long time.
INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.
INTERVIEWEE>: **[laughing]** *Seems like a lifetime!*
INTERVIEWER>: **[laugh]** ... **Have you ever been over to see her?**
INTERVIEWEE>: Yes, ... we were ... there last year because my granddaughter got married. We go quite frequent. My daughter's, you know,
INTERVIEWER>: Mm.
INTERVIEWEE>: wants us to go over as often as we can ... and we try and ... and often as we can. The only thing about it it's not ... [laugh] ... very inexpensive to go there.

INTERVIEWER>: [laugh]

INTERVIEWEE>: It's not just like [laughing] going ... going on a bus and ... but erm ... my daughter's very generous and ... seeing that we ... we get to her ... and we spend about three months ... with her. Cos you can't go and say well I'm only going for a couple of weeks!

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: **[laughing]** *Stay for the weekend!*

INTERVIEWER>: **[laughing]** **Yeah!**

INTERVIEWEE>: We would like ... we would like to go every week, you know.

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: But erm ... she phones us and ... you know ... Oh I had a ... card, erm letter from her yesterday with er photographs and things like that.

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

Needless to say, hearers may also laugh without an explicit invitation by the speaker to do so. Indeed, this pattern, which occurs 17 times in the data, is slightly more prominent than the former.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MRS. BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Tony Banks.

MR TONY BANKS>: Is the, is the minister, is the minister aware that Barclays have laid off or declared seven thousand redundancies, National Westminster has announced four thousand redundancies and yet *you still have to wait ages in the queue at the bank?* Why is that?

PS000>: [...] **[laugh]** Hear, hear.

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Perhaps the honourable member should do a competitiveness survey and go somewhere else for his queue. I don't know, but what I can tell the honourable gentleman is ... that even though there were losses in the banking industry for the last year ... there have been strongly offsetting rises in insurance and business services. It's generally good news in the financial sector. That is the message which the honourable gentleman might be telling both those in the queue and the cashiers.

Back-channel communication, though this only occurs rarely in the transcripts examined, may also take the form of a “collaborative completion” (Clark 1994: 994), whereby the recipient typically anticipates what the speaker means and completes his/her utterance or further extends it. “Finishing an utterance for another speaker and repeating their words”, says Pridham (2001: 48), “shows closeness and a real awareness of what they’re saying”. The fragments below illustrate how “a cooperative listener provides the speaker with the words s/he seeks” (Haiman 1997: 192).

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

ANN>: It's when you walk up that way you know you're getting near it.

STUART>: Yeah.

ANN>: cos you can smell it. Won't bother you?
STUART>: No. Not really.
ANN>: Mhm.
STUART>: [...] fact it'll be quite handy in a way really, you know, *it's*
ANN>: [...]
STUART>: *handy to live on the ... on your ... right next to work in a way*, cos you don't have to ... worry about
ANN>: **Getting there.**
STUART>: getting there so much, do you?

Text K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

COLLISHAN>: Yeah, I've had three applications all for the, it's only a small village albeit it's spread
PS000>: and that's a [...]
COLLISHAN>: you know, for the er village
PS000>: Well, have you spoken to Sergeant [...] to alleviate all the paperwork and
PS000>: Yeah, yeah.
PS000>: and incur any additional expense?
PS000>: Three, three farms and there's only te ten properties altogether in about two hundred yards
COLLISHAN>: But they're building some more, aren't they? building another seven
PS000>: Building some, yeah, *building some massive houses there.*
PS000>: **and a Happy Eater as well.**
COLLISHAN>: Well, that's it.
PS000>: [...]
COLLISHAN>: Do they include that in the scheme, some of them on the rate? I won't bother with that anyway, it's not our problem.
PS000>: Yeah.

So far I have discussed back-channel communication devices, whose defining characteristic is that they do not constitute a claim for a turn, rather they work to support the speaker in his/her words. They signal understanding and acceptance of the speaker's message and simultaneously prompt him/her to keep talking. They are "techniques used to show agreement with a speaker, with the desire to encourage further speaking" (Pridham 2001: 45). Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (1983: 138) have noted that their function may be interpreted as "giving encouragement to the other speaker without claiming the floor for talk". As Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 65) clearly put it:

As we interact in conversation, we continually give signals of reinforcement and encouragement. These back-channel signs indicate that we're paying attention, that we're interested, in agreement and so on. Turns don't normally stop for them – they tend to slide into the conversation and overlap the turns. In English, the words most frequently used are yeah, right, OK, mmm and, although they seem rather insignificant, we soon realise how

vital they are when they're missing. The totally silent listener will soon cause even the least sensitive speaker to stop talking, who is likely to infer lack of interest or sympathy.

Besides providing feedback about listeners' understanding of messages, conversational interaction allows for collaboration in the construction of messages themselves (Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs 1986, Sacks *et al.* 1974). Thus, the second most common form of positive evidence, closely following back-channel communication devices in terms of frequency, is a "relevant next contribution" (Clark 1994: 993). This type of response, involving further topically connected talk, features 94 times in our data. Typically, hearers initiate a contribution that is the appropriate next contribution given their understanding of the speaker's exaggerated words. The crucial property is conditional adequacy or relevance.

Three main subtypes of forms through which a relevant next contribution can be realised have been distinguished in the data examined. The first, although rare in our transcripts, consists of relevant answers to yes/no questions addressed to the recipient. They should not be confused with back-channel acceptance tokens of the type *yes, yeah, yep*, (or *no, nay*). They are usually preceded by tag questions, as in the excerpt below.

Text K6X > Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

STORER>: If anybody hears of any neighbourhood watch group meetings, I think make sure Paul knows about it so he can attend where possible.

COLLISHAN>: Yeah.

STORER>: Like him to go and look at the one at er the at er which seems to be a successful one.

COLLISHAN>: Well, I went to the [...] last week and I did say that I'd like to go to that one, I'll go to as many as I can.

PS000>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: What I would like and I'm sure it happens with the previous CPO er and I have been notified by telephone and I keep saying to them let me know, but I would like probably a memo from each CPO to say that there is a meeting on this particular night.

PS000>: Do you mean inaugural meetings?

COLLISHAN>: Well, an any meetings really because I think if I can er show my face at these meetings it might, er, I mean, I think whether or not it's because of the increase in burglaries or whether it's because of the publicity via David, *we seem to have had er a hell of a lot of er enquiries about the schemes*. More than normal Tracy, ain't it?

PS000>: **Yeah, I think so.**

PS000>: Yeah.

STORER>: Okay, er

JEFFERY>: It's amazing that he's [...]

PS000>: What you saying that for, Jed? How long you been saying that for?

JEFFERY>: Yeah, I know, but there has ain't there, you know but I say that and I live in an area where there's not a neighbourhood watch scheme and I ain't setting one up to until I retire.

Tag questions may act like regular questions and invite an answer, but they may have other functions, such as seeking confirmation, seeking convergence, drawing someone out or expressing various emotions, such as surprise, horror or disbelief (Cornbleet and Carter 2001: 65). Similarly, Pridham (2001: 19) remarks that “unlike other questions, tags are not always used to gain information, but rather to check out or to establish that the speaker and listener share the same mutual view of things”. In this sense, Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 66) argue that “tag questions very much reflect the interactive nature of conversation”.

The most recurrent response subtype within relevant next contributions, totalling 63 occurrences in the data examined, is a literal remark indicating understanding, concurrence and relevance with the speaker’s prior turn. The following excerpt may serve to illustrate the case as well as to exemplify the presence of bursts or clusterings of hyperboles.

Text KB6 > Conversation recorded by Angela

ANGELA>: Have you gotta have him today or not?

SUE>: No. Katie, I took out of school [...] and then she went back again.

ANGELA>: Oh. ... [...]

SUE>: Oh yeah, there, there's some people I wouldn't take them to. Do you know what I mean?

ANGELA>: Yeah, I know what you mean. ... [...] [laugh] *I'm so starving.*

SUE>: **Do you have a breakfast?**

ANGELA>: No.

SUE>: Oh. ...

ANGELA>: Yeah, [...] *a sandwich* [...] *in a minute.*

SUE>: How the hell do you keep so slim? *I've completely cut out* [...]

ANGELA>: Well, we've been rushing around, haven't we?

SUE>: Haven't got time to think about food.

ANGELA>: No. ... *Been here, there and everywhere*, you know what I mean?

SUE>: Yeah.

Repetition or paraphrase of the speaker’s exaggeration in literal terms²³ is also included here. These literal restatements, although rare in our data, are understood as forms of acceptance and concurrence with the figure introduced by the other participant. Let us take the following example.

²³ See chapter six for a review on the relationship between literal and hyperbolic language.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Yeah, so ylang-ylang is it's, it's very good, it's a good sort of all-round one.
ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.
MASSEUR>: But this has a much different smell ... to the others.
PS000>: Mm.
MASSEUR>: Eh?
PS000>: [...]
PS000>: [laugh]
MASSEUR>: You might like that one, it's sort of more
PS000>: Right.
MASSEUR>: erm ... it's not sort of flowery.
ADMINISTRATOR>: *Lovely. It's gorgeous.*
ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Yeah, i *they're not overpowering*, are they?
MASSEUR>: No.
PS000>: **They're delicate.**
PS000>: Mm.
MASSEUR>: No.
PS000>: [...]
MASSEUR>: I found we used to have them mixed with sweet almond oil and soya oil, which I find this one brings out their aroma much more the grapeseed oil. It's supposed to be erm a lighter oil. And of course with Body Shop it's more [laughing] environmentally easy to get.

Although to a lesser extent, another common response subtype for relevant next contributions, featuring 22 times in our data, is listeners' own further figurative contributions, which expand, continue or elaborate the preceding theme and contribute to co-construct or maintain the hyperbolic or non-literal frame introduced by the speaker. Thus, one can talk about the take-up and continuation of overstatement or figuration by participants. In our transcripts, this usually means the use of another form of exaggeration. The samples below may serve to illustrate the case.

Text JJC > Estate agency: interview

CLIENT>: Erm, right I'm new to the area and I'm sort of wanting to move into the Garden City.
ESTATE AGENT>: *Great.* Take a seat. Is it still as cold out there as it looks?
CLIENT>: *Absolutely freezing out there.*
ESTATE AGENT>: **Oh, yuk, oh, horrible, horrible.** Okay, so you're looking for a house or
CLIENT>: Well, I'm actually, I'd like something cottagey if at all possible, but erm I'm quite open minded at the moment, erm, I'm so new to the area, I'm actually in Brookmans Park at the moment.
ESTATE AGENT>: Right.
CLIENT>: But my house is on the market.
ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, has that been on there long?
CLIENT>: It's been on for about the past month.

Text KBA > Conversation recorded by Anthony

DAVE>: Fucking miss, erm ... We missed Carrot, Carrot was on last night, weren't it?
CHRIS>: Mm, Jasper, yeah.
DAVE>: Yeah, fucking, my Mrs said it was really funny.
CHRIS>: I like Mr Bean [...]
PS000>: [...]
DAVE>: *Mr Bean, that's fucking brilliant*, that is.
CHRIS>: **He just cracks me up.** I tell you what, I can sit there ... two things I like [...] no three. ... A good film
DAVE>: Yeah.
CHRIS>: I mean a good film. ... Cartoons.
DAVE>: Oh fuck, yeah [...]
CHRIS>: I love cartoons. Tom and Jerry I like.

This protraction in terms of figures may also take the form of a repetition or paraphrase in other figurative terms of the speaker's hyperbole, as in the following extract.

Text KPE > Conversation recorded by Grace

IAN>: Are you stuck?
GRACE>: Why?
IAN>: I'm asking, are you stuck?
GRACE>: Why?
IAN>: [...] are you stuck? Yes or no, are you stuck?
GRACE>: But, why? [...]
PS6U2>: If I ask somebody stuck? you're not gonna go why. Then I'm gonna say little bit.
GRACE>: A little bit?
IAN>: Yes.
GRACE>: So am I, a little bit.
IAN>: [...]
GRACE>: Why?
IAN>: Smelly bitch.
GRACE>: *That's all you can say, innit? Can't say nothing else.*
IAN>: **Can't say nothing else.**
GRACE>: [...] Can I have a pen?
IAN>: You got anything to say, say it out loud. Fucking bitch. Alright, if you've got anything to say ... don't smoke [...]. You understand English? [...] Are you cooperating properly?
GRACE>: God, I don't believe [...].

Note here that “agreement may also be stressed by *repeating* part or all of what the preceding speaker has said, in a conversation” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 112).

Less frequently, listeners responded with other non-literal forms such as metaphor, irony or idioms, either in isolation or in combination with hyperbole. In the following extract, where the listener is trying to tease Craig, the response is both ironic/sarcastic and humorous.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

PS000>: What is wrong with you two? You're so dumb!

CRAIG>: I hate him. Your Mum loves him. [laugh]

CLAIRE>: Come and give Aunty Barbara a big cuddle!

CRAIG>: *He gets on your nerves though.*

PS000>: **Oh, that little one**

CRAIG>: No!

PS000>: **that was there today? He was cute!**

CLAIRE>: What? Yeah.

CRAIG>: [singing] Doo doo, doo doo.

PS000>: [laughing] [...].

PAUL>: Ah, you're joking!

In the words of McCarthy and Carter (2004: 161):

The listener's response is seen in verbal feedback and any evidence of affective reaction or *reciprocation, which also has the potential to continue the creative sequence.* [...] this suggests bi-directionality, in that the speaker engages in a similar process of interpretation of listener feedback where *feedback expands or continues the trope.* [my emphasis]

Below is an example of relevant non-verbal response in the data examined. Part of the talk has been omitted for spatial constraints.

Text JNR > Seminar presentation at conference

PS4FW>: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. We're all aware that for *th for their number patients with superficial bladder cancer provide an enormous amount of our workload, and for reasons partly of ... husbanding our precious resources* and also *because lots of these patients come up with negative checks*, reducing the amount of irritation and upset to them it would be useful if we could do less [...] than we do. Many people have looked at this before and *they've come up with various prognostic markers, some of which are extremely complicated.* But perhaps the ... erm the simplest ... erm ... prognostic routes were ... suggested by the MRC working parties which [...] general urology which was mentioned in the last presentation. ... They combined ... erm the four hundred and fifty odd erm ... four hundred and seventeen, sorry, patients in er several MRC studies and looked at them from the point of view of ... erm prognostic markers for occurrence and they came up with two factors which overridingly were more important than the others. [text omission] So in conclusion adoption of the MRC follow-up, follow-up policy would have resulted in ... targeting of cystoscopic follow-up to higher risk group patients, a two percent increase in the cystoscopic resources required and delayed diagnosis of tumour progression in one patient, and as I've said I, I think that G3PT1 tumours should be excluded from ... er ... this type of protocol. Perhaps other uses of ... er this type of erm ... protocol would be to ... use ... flexible cyst er flexible check cystoscopy early in the lower risk group patients, and perhaps give the intermediate and higher risk group patients propolactic [...] chemotherapy. Thank you.

PS000>: **[Applause]**

PS4FX>: Er, I think it would be useful to have er Mr back and we could er ... discuss both of these papers together. [...] questions? [clears throat]. ... Microphone number one.

In this excerpt, applause indicates appreciation of the speaker's talk and might be considered a relevant and collaborative response by the audience, given the special speech exchange system of conferences. As Goffman (1979: 12) notes:

When talk comes from the podium, what does the hearing is an audience, not a set of fellow conversationalists. Audiences hear in a way special to them. [...] Indeed, and fundamentally, the role of the audience is to appreciate remarks made, not to reply in any direct way. They are to conjure up what a reply might be, but not utter it; "back channel" response alone is what is meant to be available to them. They give the floor but (except during the question period) rarely get it.

Finally, hyperbole may also be acknowledged and accepted in an indirect way. I refer here to cases of unchallenged overstatement. The total number of occurrences of this response type in the texts analysed is twenty-eight. They usually occur when the speaker him/herself shifts the topic or topic focus within the same turn, and the recipient's response is considered appropriate or relevant for such shifts in the communicative situation. Although the listener's reply is not directly affected by overstatement, but refers to some other utterance by the speaker, it is considered a form of appreciation, though indirect, since under normal circumstances recipients provide speakers with negative evidence signals in case of disagreement, misunderstanding, etc. The following extracts illustrate such indirect forms of appreciation/acceptance.

Text KPC > Conversation recorded by Frances

FRANCES>: Come on then fetch [...]. You get off those cakes or there's going to be trouble. Look, you can't have a cake. You've got to have some tea. Come here. Come on. Give mummy a cuddle.

BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: Give us a love. Oh don't bash me. Don't bash me. Which one does Brett want?

KALEY>: I know.

FRANCES>: Which cake does Brett want? Which one?

BRETT>: Pink.

FRANCES>: The pink one.

KALEY>: I [...] one.

FRANCES>: The chocolate one. He's not having it Kaley until after tea, not yet. *You can have it in a minute*, when daddy comes. You going to tell daddy you've been a good boy today?

BRETT>: **Yeah.**

FRANCES>: Had three [...] and a cocoa. ... What's Chloe doing? Don't hit her, be careful. I've read your home messages. No [...] after Tuesday. So what we gonna do with Kaley?

Text F8A > Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

LECTURER>: Right! Half an hour at the most. If I went and had ... a meal in the evening ... a la carte, how would you ... envisage it would take to go through that?

PS000>: An hour and a half.

PS000>: About [...]

LECTURER>: I it, it virtually, *you're virtually going to use the evening*. Number of covers.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: **Depends how many people you're erm ... chef's actually cooked for at the time.**

LECTURER>: Yes. Why would that reflect what you offer?

PS000>: Cos

PS000>: The time. How long it will actually be. How long the customer's actually sitting there for his meal.

LECTURER>: That's right! But also

8.5.2.1.2. Negative evidence responses

Four main types of negative evidence, whereby the listener's contribution is not related to the speaker's one as an expected follow-up, were found in the data, namely instances of challenged, ignored, misunderstood or unheard hyperbole and inappropriate non-verbal responses.

Challenged hyperbole points to situations where the recipient blatantly disagrees, dissents or objects to the speaker's words and his/her response negates, falsifies, attacks, questions or corrects the overstated account. In such cases, speaker and listener can be said to compete rather than to collaborate. There are thirty instances of challenged hyperbole in our data, mainly in the institutional setting. This is not surprising when considering the special nature of political debates, where the Government and the opposition adopt adversarial stances, attacking and refuting each other's claims, as the next excerpt shows.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: As ministers are still proclaiming that "back to basics" is the lodestar guiding Government policy while *the Prime Minister's dodging all questions about it*. Doesn't this show yet again that "back to basics" is making this Government a laughing stock?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: **My er ... the right hon, the right honourable lady I'm er ... I don't know whether I'm sorry to say or not, it's a bit out of date, my right honourable friend has just today ... given a clear explanation of the "back to basics" theme.**

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: **And he has er ... and he has once again ... once again made it clear, he has once again made it clear that that is particularly important in such areas as standards in education, law and order and the provision of public services.**

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: **And it applies also to the range of our increasingly successful economic and business policies.**

PS000>: [...]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mrs Beckett.

MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: I notice that yet again the Lord President's list and presumably the Prime Minister's ... doesn't include the standard of telling the truth about tax.

Instances of non-recognised or missed overstatement also fall within this response type, although their presence in the transcripts examined, namely four occurrences, is almost negligible. In such cases, the hearer's contribution signals that (s)he has missed or failed to recognise the speaker's overstated remark. Typically, listeners interpret the utterance literally, rather than in figurative terms. Thus, it is not rare to find that they correct the exaggeration to make the words fit the world. In the following excerpt the hearer corrects the speaker's overstated account by uttering a literal remark which depicts the real state of affairs.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

STUART>: Specially if you're phoning a posh restaurant.

ANN>: Yes.

STUART>: Or something like that. You tend to sort of ... I'd like to book a table for two

ANN>: [laugh]

STUART>: on Saturday night. Rather than say ... look, mush, I want a

ANN>: [laugh]

STUART>: I want a table, you know. ...

ANN>: [cough] ... Oh, I'd better go and wash our dishes, dear.

STUART>: Not many to do now [...] *done them all*.

ANN>: **Most of them. There's only yours.** Have you had

STUART>: What about

ANN>: enough to eat?

STUART>: Yes, thank you. Fine. I would have done it actually when, when I took the plate out, but the water in the bowl was cold. Thought it was hot but it was cold.

ANN>: I think I've used most of the hot water. I think I need to put the immersion on for just ... a little while.

Such cases are rare, though. In this sense, McCarthy and Carter (2004: 150) note “Such hyperbolic expressions usually pass without challenge by listeners, who accept them as creative intensifications for evaluative and affective purposes such as humour and irony, and who often make their own supportive contributions to the figure of speech”. Although “there may also be evidence of literal interpretations exploited for interactive/affective purposes” (p. 163).

There are other less explicit ways of dissenting or withdrawing agreement, for example, to ignore the speaker’s intended message. This is by far, with 65 occurrences, the most recurrent response type for negative evidence. There are different ways in which hyperbole can be ignored. Listeners may, for example, ignore hyperbole but still keep the topic of conversation going, as in the extract below where the listener, after being interrupted, ignores the speaker’s attack, retakes his own words and completes the utterance.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS000>: Yep. Over there.

J8JPS003>: There actually is a drug-wise ... project

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: that is run in the secondary schools in the first year ... where the children are talked to by the police and they see videos and they are a act,

J8JPS002>: *They must have terrible programmes!*

J8JPS003>: **they are act to,**

J8JPS002>: [...]

J8JPS003>: **they are, asked to respond to**

J8JPS002>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: **various situations and they**

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: **do role play**

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS003>: ***and all sorts of things to try and discourage them from this.***

J8JPS000>: You don't think that's a good ... thing?

J8JPS002>: I've, I've used ... well, I've decided not to use the drug-wise project. I worked in the east end for a year with young people, I think it's very, very moralistic, I don't like the idea of the police coming in and ... and teaching

J8JPS000>: What

J8JPS002>: the, the ... group work ... sessions. I to, I think it's a very

J8JPS000>: What, what, what would you pu

J8JPS002>: bad package!

But most commonly listeners ignored hyperbole through a shift in topic²⁴. With 43 instances, this is by far the most representative response subtype for cases of ignored hyperbole. Listeners may shift the topic of conversation, either by introducing a new topic or re-taking a former one. In this sense, Richards and Schmidt (1983: 139) claim that “topic nomination may not consist of raising an entirely new topic, but remind the listener of a previously discussed one”. The sample below exemplifies the former case.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

SANDRA>: They've got erm pilot scheme teaching the kids to drive, haven't they?

DEANNE>: Yeah, they said they have.

SANDRA>: Seems like erm a good idea actually.

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: Keeps them off the streets, doesn't it?

DEANNE>: Yeah! I've been talking to some of them about it, it's meant to be, cos I didn't know it was going on, and I saw them in the paper, says oh! I saw you in the paper! Did you see me as well miss?

SANDRA>: Oh! Oh!

DEANNE>: [laugh] ... Cos sometimes, some take a good picture and you know straight away the kids

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: and *others can, you know ... sit and stare at it for an hour still wouldn't know who it was.*

SANDRA>: **That [laughing] bird's really having a go, int it?**

DEANNE>: Oh he's comical

SANDRA>: He [...]

DEANNE>: he is! *He has us in fits* and the funny thing was we were sat listening to him the other night, all having us dinner, we're sat at table and it was ever so quiet listening to him and ... he sort of erm ... he mimics the other bird

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: he doesn't actually say, well he does say the odd word if you listen carefully, of his own

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: but other than that, he mimics everything this one does, but cos it's in a softer tone than when Cork does it, he ... sounds quite funny.

Note here that this response subtype is particularly frequent in the political debate examined, and so might be explained by the special nature of such a speech exchange system. Particularly important is the examination of the turn-taking system in debates, since they are at the opposite end of conversation, given that “local allocation and full preallocation are polar types” (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 46). Political debates constitute a very

²⁴ This is not to be confused with shifts in topic after forms of positive evidence. Once listeners have ratified the addresser's hyperbole, they may go on to identify a new topic in the same turn, thus defining their acknowledgement as the terminal move for the previous topic (Richards and Schmidt 1983: 138-9).

special exchange system where the chair allots turns and the ordering of all turns is preallocated, by formula, by reference to “pro” and “con” positions (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 45).

The linear array is one in which one polar type (which conversation instances) involves “one turn at a time allocation”; that is, the use of local allocational means, and the other pole (which debates instances) involves “preallocation of all turns”, and medial types (which meetings instance) involves various mixes of preallocational and local allocational means. (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 46)

Thus, some cases of ignored hyperbole through shifts in topic seem partly justified in this setting, since often the recipient to which the speaker’s turn is addressed is not given the chance of responding, but rather a different speaker is selected by the chairperson. The following excerpt is illustrative.

Text JSH > House of Commons debate

SIR JOHN PRESCOTT>: Will the Secretary of State make clear to the summit that after fourteen years of this Government we have seen unemployment treble to three million unemployed? That we have three million full time employer ployees replaced by three million part time and self employed, *with the worst trained and education labour force of any attending the summit?* Will he also ask the Americans how, as he claims, they've created eighteen million jobs with a minimum wage provision? ... And also make clear how much Britain is paying in family credit support to maintain low paid subsidised wages by the taxpayer in this country?

MR DAVID HUNT>: Still the honourable gentleman talks down Britain.

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: I think he has to ... I think he has to think very seriously before he starts to decry the achievements of this nation. For instance, I have given one which is *in the last ten years we have nearly one and half million more people in work than we had ten years ago*. That is a signal achievement. If I also say to him that the lesson we learn from the United States is not to go down the route that he and his party have signed up to, in signing up to a socialist manifesto for the European elections. He is proposing, which is the last thing you would find in the United States, statutory works councils, statutory minimum wage, compulsory working week. It's about time he dropped those proposals which would cost millions of jobs.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Alan Howarth.

MR ALAN HOWARTH>: **At the summit, will my right honourable friend enquire about the progress in the employment of disabled people and the advantages to the American economy in consequence of the Americans with disabilities act? Will he accept that in the United States of America, the land of free enterprise, it was concluded that voluntary arrangements would never sufficiently overcome discrimination against employment and will he respond positively to the view of the Employers Forum on Disability and the Law Society as well as three hundred and eleven honourable members of this House who have signed EDM number two that the**

time has now come for legislation to ban discrimination against in er disabled people in respect of employment in this country?

But neither should the singular and distinctive nature of politicians' speech be underestimated. Given the typically non-cooperative behaviour, where each fights for their own agenda and neither really answers the other party's questions adequately, it comes as no surprise that only in the institutional domain negative evidence responses exceed in number positive ones.

Another subtype within the framework of ignored hyperbole, this time by omission, is when the recipient refuses to respond to the speaker's words. Such cases, eight in our transcripts, are rare and usually occur when the participants are in adversarial positions or adopt unsympathetic stances, particularly when the speaker's message constitutes an attack or an FTA for the listener. Naturally, to identify this response subtype it was necessary to distinguish addressees from unaddressed participants. Addressees, says Goffman (1976: 260), are "those ratified participants who are addressed, that is, oriented to by the speaker in a manner to suggest that his words are particularly for them, and that some answer is therefore anticipated from them, more so than from the other ratified participants". In the next excerpt, the administration tutor, here the addressee, refuses to laugh or to make any further contribution to the speaker's overstatement, probably because rather than amused, she feels insulted or offended. In contrast, it is another participant who signals understanding and acceptance of the speaker's humorous remark by laughing.

Text FM3 > Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy

MASSEUR>: Do you like that, the lavender better?

PS000>: Well, yeah, I [...] I got [...] in a lavender bush when I was small so [...]

MASSEUR>: Oh, did you?

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...] you'll like the lavender one.

PS000>: [...] My brothers er, I mean, you know, this lavender bush and [...] ... Get in there.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: *Bet you smelled lovely when you came out.*

PS000>: [...] *compost heap.*

PS000>: **[laugh]**

PS000>: Yeah. [...] all right. ...

MASSEUR>: Another one which is very relaxing, and this one you'll find much stronger than the ... It's a different smell. Those two that we've had are fl are flowers. The ylang-ylang is a flower, but it's a tropical flower and it's this is called, can be called the Oil of Tranquillity. So *this g very good for things like shock ... like when my husband gets a telephone bill.*

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...] To my son, [gruffly] you have been on the phone again.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Or if you're frightened or if you're very anxious, if you're gonna do something important and you've not done it before and you get a bit anxious, you can use the ylang-ylang which is the Oil of Tranquillity. It's very calming.

The process of conversation involves monitoring to ensure that intended messages have been communicated and understood, and this involves correction of unsuccessful attempts where necessary (Richards and Schmidt 1983: 147). Thus, recipients are expected to provide speakers not only with positive evidence when they have understood something but also with negative evidence when they believe they have not (Clark 1994: 993).

Indeed, it has been suggested that because speakers can use listeners' responses to monitor their comprehension, the rate of figurative language use is higher in conversation than in non-interactive settings, since there is less risk of misunderstanding when feedback from listeners can be used to indicate that clarification is needed (e.g. Kraut *et al.* 1982, Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs 1986).

A few comprehension problems for hyperbole, totalling eleven, were identified in the data. Although rarely, listeners sometimes misunderstood the speaker's intended message and so were forced to request clarification or ratification. The recipient may doubt, for example, about whether to interpret the utterance literally or figuratively, and so "ambiguities invite negotiation or clarification with queries" (Van Brabant 1986: 420). The examples below are illustrative of the negotiation of meaning between speaker and listener when hyperboles were less readily understood and the ensuing discussion focused on clarification. The former involves a request for clarification, the latter a request for ratification or confirmation.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

ANN>: Mine's terrible because I've got a low voice, a deep voice anyway. Sound more like a man, I do. I do on the phone, don't I?

STUART>: Don't know really. I've not really heard you much on the phone.

ANN>: Used to telephone, didn't you?

STUART>: Well, yeah, but

ANN>: Didn't know it was me.

STUART>: Oh yeah, I knew it was you so it didn't make a lot of difference.

ANN>: People have told me on the phone that I sound [cough] cos I've got a deep voice I

STUART>: You sound different. ... Vera does.

ANN>: Does she?

STUART>: Mm. ... She sounds funny on the phone. *Most odd*. Phone her up and think ... that's not Vera I'm talking to. Doesn't sound like Vera. But it is ... although it doesn't sound like her. Funny, innit?

ANN>: **What, her voice is different?**

STUART>: No, it just sounds

ANN>: **Or does she talk different because she's on the phone?**

STUART>: No ... just sounds.

ANN>: Some people do. [clears throat] They put their phone voice on.

STUART>: Yeah. Yeah.

ANN>: Don't they?

STUART>: Yeah.

ANN>: Oh, I can't put any voice on, I've just got me own. [laugh]

Text JNR > Seminar presentation at conference

PS4FX>: Microphone three [...].

PS4G2>: Chelmsford. If I come to you ... at three months with a PT ... A tumour, that's grade one or two, how long would you be ... er willing to accept that I should have a recurrence before you treat it? How

PS4G0>: But you sorry a G2?

PS4G2>: A, a ... G1

PS4G0>: G1.

PS4G2>: PTA tumour. How, how soon should I get it treated? Does it matter [...]?

PS4G0>: [...] I think it probably ... it probably doesn't. I mean, the *r the risk of progression is I, I, I would think is minuscule* ... erm and erm [...] you're only talking about changes in size, not risk of ... of ... erm muscle invasion, and I think therefore

PS4G2>: **So if it's not causing me any symptoms, I should [...]?**

PS4G0>: No, what I'm say, what I'm saying is ... that, that leaving it for a few months probably isn't going to do you any harm. I mean, clearly it will continue to grow and therefore any [...] that you do will be, will be greater.

PS4G2>: [...]

PS4G0>: [...] the longer you leave it ...

At other times, problems of comprehension were simply triggered by the recipient's inability to hear the speaker's words, and so requests for repetition were typically uttered. The sample below is illustrative and curious because the speaker, probably in an attempt to facilitate comprehension, reformulates the hyperbolic remark in literal terms after Craig's request for repetition.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CLAIRE>: Yeah, they've bought us them out and they were dirty a minute ago, so I'm putting them back.

CRAIG>: I went to him ... alright Tom? He goes, shut up! [laugh]

CLAIRE>: Do you want us to put them back in now? *The customers have started rolling in?*

CRAIG>: Pardon?

CLAIRE>: **Do you want us to put them back in? Are there customers yet?**

CRAIG>: Ah, so you've nearly finished those lot?

CLAIRE>: You look tired.

JO>: I feel it. I had about ... Friday night I finished work here at twelve and then up again at [...] ... and I got about two hours sleep then and I started to [...].

There was evidence of two non-verbal responses, namely sighs, falling within the compass of negative evidence. The following excerpt is illustrative of this and of negative compound responses. After sighing, the listener challenges or casts doubts on the speaker's overstatement, probably out of modesty.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

DEANNE>: No just that he was ... you know, just a bit concerned that's the logo thing and I thought well what does it look like? I know it's a black raven on ... the thing and the [...] written over the top of it. ... The only thing is i it would have been nicer if it had of printed. I mean that sort of yo er, yo er, although, really you want them to see that cos they know what it's about then, then they'll read that, but, it would have been nice if that had of been ... darker
SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: like this, but that, I'd done, you know, you could do on the typewriter and that so

SANDRA>: No. That's brilliant!

DEANNE>: Well, I thought that was quite good.

SANDRA>: Well, it's eye-catching, isn't

DEANNE>: Mm!

SANDRA>: it? It's what you want.

DEANNE>: Just coloured in quick. I mean, it'll be a photocopied finally [...]

SANDRA>: Oh, I had to learn how to use that photocopier, ooh and a [...] and, oh my giddy aunt!

DEANNE>: Oh, well, it's all

SANDRA>: [laugh]

DEANNE>: experience, int it?

SANDRA>: She reckons she's gonna teach me computers.

DEANNE>: *Great stuff!*

SANDRA>: **[sigh] ... We'll see!**

DEANNE>: Well, we're just trying to get ours to work tonight, it's broke down.

SANDRA>: What, the computer?

DEANNE>: The, mm.

SANDRA>: [...]

DEANNE>: Er, I think it's the, the lead ... you know, that goes from the computer

SANDRA>: Oh yeah!

DEANNE>: to the plug?

Some of the negative evidence responses, namely challenged, ignored and misunderstood hyperbole may be realised through the use of hyperbole or any other figure of speech. Thus, one can talk here again about the take-up and continuation of figuration by participants too. As in the case of positive evidence responses, this usually means the use of another form of exaggeration, although two instances, one of irony and one of

metaphor, respectively, were also found in our data. The table below depicts the number of negative evidence responses via figures of speech in the transcripts examined.

Negative evidence response (sub)types via take-up of figures	Occurrences
Challenged hyperbole	12
Ignored hyperbole and topic-shift	4
Request for ratification	2

Table 8.5. Negative evidence responses via figurative language forms in our data

The excerpts below may serve to exemplify the use of figurative language in negative evidence responses. In the first extract, which is also remarkable for the accumulation of hyperboles to produce a comic effect, Claire challenges Craig's overstated description through the use of a humorous self-deprecating exaggeration. The hyperbolic event here is an extended scenario where participants jointly create humour.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CRAIG>: Who? [whispering] Yeah, oh, I don't like her.
 CLAIRE>: [...]
 CRAIG>: *She's got a moustache.*
 CLAIRE>: Well, Vicky has, but she can't help it.
 CRAIG>: No, *Vicky's got a beard.*
 CLAIRE>: **No, I've got a beard.**
 CRAIG>: [tut!] Oh. Teaspoon.
 PS000>: If you dry up and put them there now cos it's nearly [...].
 JO>: I got nice baggy arse here.
 CRAIG>: [laugh] ... *Are they ... riding jodhpurs*, aren't they?
 JO>: Yeah, well, such a shame.

In the next sample, an instance of ignored hyperbole through topic-shift, the general practitioner returns to a previously discussed subject via two consecutive hyperboles.

Text G5M > Medical consultation

GP>: *But you're still in limbo as far as the*
 PATIENT>: Yeah.
 GP>: *the civil action is concerned?*
 PATIENT>: Erm, even no second inquest, nothing.
 [...]

PATIENT>: It, erm, Mr who we see psychologist erm the first week I went to see him, Oh [...]. It t d [...] certainly, you know erm
GP>: Yeah. It's very
PATIENT>: Erm
GP>: hard.
PATIENT>: We, do you know, when we start doing something, we'll do it and even if we do things different [...] gonna say? We thinking well why are we doing it this way?
GP>: Mm.
PATIENT>: So er *everything's pulling at us*,
GP>: Yeah.
PATIENT>: you know. W, we seem as though we do something and we [...] w, *we are absolutely drained*
GP>: Mm.
PATIENT>: you get, we want to push ourselves.
GP>: That's right.
PATIENT>: But do you know, once we start doing something w, *we're just drained all the while*.
GP>: **In some ways you're in limbo, cos you've, you've got nothing to aim towards.** You've
PATIENT>: No.
GP>: got, I mean, if, even if you had a date to aim towards, even if it was six months hence, at least that would help you, you could
PATIENT>: Yeah.
GP>: aim towards it and work towards it.
PATIENT>: Yeah.

The last extract illustrates a ratification request through the continuation of overstatement.

Text G5M > Medical consultation

J8JPS000b>: Well, I just wonder you, there has got to be some kind of ... relationship between the fact that most people who take drugs live in really run down deprived areas. I mean, I think tha that you have to look at that, because *people have got nothing to do!* Er, I mean, *lots of people have got nothing to do* and are unlikely to be employed during that time.
J8JPS000>: **So you think, you think people who live in, in well off areas, *there's lots to do, don't take drugs?***
J8JPS000b>: No!
PS000>: [laugh]
J8JPS000>: You don't think that?
J8JPS000b>: Oh, well, you know ... No, I don't think that, but I think that you have to ... I mean, there has to some kind of relationship between ... I'm not saying it's anything to do with the personalities or anything like that but
J8JPS000>: Yes.
J8JPS000b>: it's got something to do with the fact that ... people have got nothing to do in those areas, and no cha, no prospects, no chance of getting a job and it's actually quite a purposeful way of spending your time.
J8JPS008>: I think that's really patronizing! You're saying that [...]
J8JPS000b>: No, but I don't mean to be patronizing.
J8JPS008>: if I help with addict that they need to compensate for, for ... er, things missing in their lives, perhaps they just like it.

The total amount of figurative responses in our data, whether positive or negative evidence responses, was thirty. All of them contribute to the emergence of non-literal contexts or frames. The basic difference between them is that whereas the use of figures in positive evidence responses can be said to reassure and further expand the speaker's hyperbolic act, in negative evidence responses rather than collaborating, the use of figures can be said to compete with the speaker's overstated account.

At this point I move on to examine the use of this figure as a performance feature in narratives.

8.6. Hyperbole in storytelling

8.6.1. The narrative genre

Everyday conversation thrives on narratives. As a convenient tool to analyse narratives I refer here to Labov's theory of narrative structure. According to Labov (1972), in an essay entitled "The transformation of experience in narrative syntax", which expands on Labov and Waletzky (1967), narrative is natural to both oral and written language and its structure can be divided into the following six components:

- Abstract (an initial link from previous discourse into the story; a brief summary of what the story is about)
- Orientation (the setting or context in which the story takes place: the who, what, where and when of the story)
- Complicating actions (the story events or "what happens" component of the story)
- Resolution (the result of the narrative: how the complicating action is resolved)
- Coda (a signal that the story has finished, a final link from the narrative back to the present interaction). "Codas bring the narrator and the listener back to the point at which they entered the narrative" (Labov 1972: 365).
- Evaluation (the teller's own assessment of the narrative events). It is "the point of the narrative, its *raison d'être*: why it was told, what the narrator is getting at" (Labov 1972: 266).

Not all these components, though, are always present in narratives. Abstracts and codas, for instance, are frequently omitted. It has also been noted that although these elements usually occur in the order given, evaluation can occur at any point of the story.

8.6.2. Hyperbole as a performance feature in narratives

In the literature on narratives of personal experience, the importance of evaluation, “as a way of turning a mere series of events into a story that reflects the teller’s personal and cultural values and point of view” (Wennerstrom 2001: 1187), has been widely stressed. Evaluation expresses the narrator’s personal assessment, attitude, stance or perspective toward the story events in progress. It plays, hence, a key role since “throughout the story, evaluation can explain how the speakers feel the story should be interpreted” (Pridham 2001: 20). Recall here that evaluation, both positive and negative, was a most prominent function accomplished by hyperbole. McCarthy and Carter (2004: 155) have also shown, in their corpus of naturally occurring conversations, that hyperboles often occur in general evaluations of situations, both positive and negative, and in performed narratives.

Another factor that helps explain the use of this figure in storytelling is foregrounding and interest intensification. In this sense, Pridham (2001: 20) highlights the use of different elements, among which hyperbole features, to bring a story alive: dialogue, tense shifts, descriptive detail, exaggeration, suspense, details of character’s feelings, etc. In particular, Pridham notes of hyperbole and intensification that they work “to heighten the story” (p. 119). Note here that conveying emphasis or intensification is an inherent function of overstatement too. This is also consistent with Selting’s (1994; quoted in Wennerstrom 2001: 1187) finding that the language of assessment or evaluation in conversational narratives, and often the climax of the story itself, are associated with an “emphatic speech style”.

Story vividness is closely related to another goal of exaggeration discussed in chapter six, namely interest intensification. The narrative genre seems especially well suited for the investigation of this function, since as Richards and Schmidt (1983: 144) claim: “In a warmly animated conversation, the talker does not tell tales as simple reportings of past events or bald statements of facts, but recounts a dramatic *version* of what happened, using dramatic devices such as irony, innuendo, sarcasm, humour and suspense”. Intensifying

interest for the listener has been characterised as a positive politeness strategy in Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-management or politeness framework. They observe that a "way for S to communicate to H that he shares some of his wants is to intensify the interest of his own (S's) contributions to the conversation, by 'making a good story'" (p. 106). This may be done, they add, by using "vivid present", directly quoted speech (rather than reported speech), overstatement, tag questions or expressions drawing H as participant into the conversation, such as "you know?", "see what I mean?", "isn't it?", etc. The exaggeration, say Brown and Levinson (1987: 107), "may redress an FTA simply by stressing the sincerity of S's good intentions, but there also seems to be an element of attempting to increase the interest of the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically".

Goffman (1974) has also emphasised that speakers do not just provide information to recipients but present dramas to an audience, employing means that are essentially theatrical. Thus, exaggeration plays a crucial role in the dramatisation of the narrative to intensify the interest of the story. Not in vain, as a working approach to identify emphasis and exaggeration, Falk (1990: 39) notes that "these are linguistic elements which belong primarily to the speaker's performance in the course of a conversation, and would be omitted in paraphrase or in re-casting into reported speech". Haiman (1997: 182-3) defines the notion of "performance" in the following terms:

Performance, or play-acting, is behavior *for an audience* in the same way that an image is an appearance for an audience. It is usually recognizable as such (unless the actors are very skilled) by one formal feature: exaggeration. [...] Exaggeration is the very essence of performance, as it is of parody.

This dramatisation or performance can also be related to the "emotional and dramatic nature" of evaluation in narratives (Wennerstrom 2001: 1188). In this sense, Wolfson (1982) notes that "performance features" in story-telling are a mechanism for encouraging the audience to view the situation through the teller's eyes and to thereby support his or her value judgements. Thus, hyperboles "function to create a dramatic effect, enhancing the story world so that the hearer feels him or herself to be 'at the scene', and therefore, as Wolfson (1982) says, more empathetic toward the story-teller's evaluation of the events" (Wennerstrom 2001: 1198).

In expressing evaluation, in conveying emphasis and intensifying listener's interest and attention – in all of these ways it seems that hyperbole is an important element in storytelling which helps turn the story into a performed narrative. Indeed, certain figures, says Nash (1985), are typically associated with the management of comic narrative: “Overstatement and understatement are major principles of comic staging” (pp. 169-70).

8.6.2.1. Performed narratives in our data: analysis of hyperbolic speech

Here the use of exaggeration as a performance feature in the narratives found in our data will be examined. The aim is to show how through the use of hyperbole and other performance features, narrators may turn a story into an entertainment or dramatic event. Some people just report or recount stories, while others turn them into a performance. They are simply better story-tellers, more entertaining, funnier or dramatic than others. Thus, performance can be defined as a matter of personal or individual speech style, but also in terms of appropriateness to context. Performed stories are unlikely to be found in certain contexts where their use would be considered highly inappropriate (e.g. a student giving an excuse to a professor as to why he/she missed a class).

The total number of performed narratives making use of overstatement in our data was eleven. In order to be considered relevant for the present study, narratives had to display at least two exaggerations. Yet, the accumulation of hyperboles for narrative effect was frequent, as the following excerpt shows.

Text KP9 > Conversation recorded by Craig

CRAIG>: They were up here last night.

CLAIRE>: [...]

JO>: Yeah, I went with them [...].

CRAIG>: Oh, wasn't it his erm ... where his aunty got married? Someone's dad. This bloke ... cos they were up here last night being really rowdy.

FRANK>: Mm, mm!

CRAIG>: Cos he, cos

FRANK>: I can box.

CRAIG>: Yeah. Cos yo, the one in the tie was a right wanker!

FRANK>: Oh yes. Yeah, *he was holding loads of glasses*.

CRAIG>: It was his Dad who got married.

FRANK>: Ah?

CRAIG>: It was his Dad who got married.

FRANK>: *He was an obnoxious git!*

CRAIG>: It was [mimicking] Oh! Come over here [...].

CLAIRE>: [laugh]
CRAIG>: [laugh] ... [mimicking] Can we really [...]?
PAUL>: I think that's right. [laugh]
CRAIG>: What?
PAUL>: I put, I put the cake there anyway.
CRAIG>: No, but he was erm
FRANK>: Jo's [...]
CRAIG>: *He kept whistling at all the girls*, going shut up! You've already been told once. *He's gonna come over in a minute and get him!* He goes
CLAIRE>: Oh!
CRAIG>: you know, telling him [...], *he was stubbing all the cigarettes out, drinking all the drinks on the table*. He was a right yobbo!
CLAIRE>: Sorry.
CRAIG>: [laugh] ... Beg your pardon.
JO>: You could have said that a bit louder. [laugh]
CRAIG>: I think I might. [laugh]
JO>: [laugh]

The extract may also serve to illustrate how narratives are often created by two narrators, telling a story to a third person, as a sort of duet (Polanyi 1989, Tannen 1984). The storytellers, Frank and Craig, build and develop each other's ideas and almost compete to give Claire the full details of the event.

The traditional division into first- and third-person narratives is also relevant here. In the data, there were only two instances of second-hand narratives. This is consistent with Falk's (1990: 48) finding that exaggeration "is much more likely to occur in first-person narratives, than in second-hand narratives [...], for participants in events acquire a special right to exaggerate".

But there was further evidence in our data, other than exaggeration, that the speaker was engaged in what is termed a performed narrative, as opposed to a simple replay of events. Quotations, for example, are performance or dramatic elements too. By quoting another's words, the narrator makes the story world in the hearer's mind more realistic (Wennerstrom 2001: 1187). Quotations do not always represent the exact words originally spoken. Their purpose is often to combine story action with evaluation (Young 1991: 45). Wolfson (1982) refers to this type of dramatisation in storytelling as a performance feature, along with other options such as gestures or sound effects. In the example above, quoted speech is combined with mimicry. By acting out or mimicking the character's behaviour, Craig puts on a performance for the audience. In this sense, Richards and Schmidt (1983: 145-6) note:

The conversational technique of embodying elements of ‘what happened’ in the performance of a story is a general one. Talkers regularly include direct quotes from story characters, sometimes mimicking accent or intonation. More subtle is the device of embodying one’s *characterization* of an event in the telling.

Intonation can also be used as a dramatic technique. Wennerstrom (2001: 1184) has shown that “pitch plays a key role in the teller’s dramatization of the story”. Interestingly enough, the use of exclamations, evidence of pitch maxima, often coincides with the use of exaggeration and quotations in our narratives. Indeed, Wennerstrom has shown that quoted speech is a most consistently high-pitched category in narratives (p. 1195), and many of her examples of intonational high points contain exaggerations. Examples of this can be found in the above excerpt and the following extract.

Text KDV > Conversation recorded by Sandra

SANDRA>: Oh, I can't wear jeans now when I've lost weight. There's a Weightwatchers opened in the school. Oh!

DEANNE>: Oh, I know, I went the first night.

SANDRA>: Did you?

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: Any good?

DEANNE>: Well ... I only, th I mean ... *the woman made me feel dead small* because I said to her ... you know, she was asking everybody why they'd come and I said, well I've only come to give Chris moral support, which was the truth because ... until about three hours before ... we went, I didn't even know it was there

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: and she rang up and said that she wanted to go and would I go with her? And I said yes, you see. Of course, the woman said why do you come? So I says, well, I've come for Chris really. So *she said, oh they all say that!* And *she made me feel about two inches high*

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: you know!

SANDRA>: Are you going again?

DEANNE>: Well, I didn't go, no, cos Chris int going, so I didn't bother going but ... I must admit, I mean, when she gave me the papers and what have you that goes with it, I come home, I put it in the cupboard and I've not even looked at it since.

Note here that, rather than reported speech, the characters are also given direct and realistic dialogue (Pridham 2001: 12). There is also an example of the use of vivid present in narratives: “*So I says, well, I’ve come for Chris really*”. Although most of the time the narrator expresses herself in the past tense, at least once she switches to the present. She does this, according to Schiffirin (1981: 57), as “a way of making a past event sound as if it

were occurring at the moment of speaking – a way of making it more vivid”. This way the narrator helps us represent the experience in a situational model as if it were happening right now (Clark 1994: 1013).

In both of the above extracts, there is also evidence of “expressions that draw H as participant into the conversation” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 107), such as *you know* and *you see*. In this sense, Pridham (2001: 18) notes that “speakers frequently check hearer’s involvement with the filler ‘you know’ which signals the assumption that the hearer does understand what the speaker is talking about”.

In a variety of ways, therefore, narrators can make their stories vivid. All these performance or dramatisation techniques help storytellers turn simple reports of events into performed narratives.

8.6.3. Interactive nature of narratives

Audience reaction is crucial in narratives since interest intensification demands of the listener a show of interest and attention. Oral storytellers, says Pridham (2001: 9), have to interact with their listeners to attract and keep their attention. As Goffman (1974: 503) notes: “what the listeners are primarily obliged to do is to show some kind of audience appreciation. They are to be stirred not to take action but to exhibit signs that they have been stirred”. In the words of Richards and Schmidt (1983: 146): “techniques of dramatic appreciation are as important as those of presentation. As everyone knows, to be a good listener is crucial”.

Although narratives may appear different from conversations, because they seem to be produced by individuals speaking on their own, they rely just as heavily on coordination among the participants as conversations do (Clark 1994: 1006-7). Thus, “whenever someone is telling a story or relating an incident, there has to be someone to take the respondent role” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 113). Indeed, turn-by-turn talk is essential in narratives since when telling a story the teller needs to know what the recipient has made of the story so far and thus what the story has amounted to (Richards and Schmidt 1983: 142). Like other conversations, narratives proceed contribution by contribution, each of which is completed through the joint actions of speaker and addressees (Clark 1994: 1010).

Personal anecdotes produce almost immediate participation (Norrick 1994: 25). Carter and McCarthy (1997: 35) explain that the recounting of personal experience is collaboratively constructed: “listeners do a lot of work, adding their own evaluations, asking for more details, helping the teller to finish the story and enabling all present to get out of ‘story-world’ and back to the ‘conversational world’ they were in before the story started”. More recently, McCarthy and Carter (2004: 172), in examining the accumulation of exaggerations for narrative effect, have observed that the hyperbolic act in such cases “is not one simple clause or lexical item, but an extended narrative scenario where conversational participants are jointly implicated”, and whose success “depends not just on the single act of the single speaking creative genius, but rather emerges from an interactive pact”.

The audience takes active part in shaping narratives – accepting them as having been understood or forcing them to be reformulated or extended (Clark 1994: 1009). Indeed, many narratives are created bit by bit through prompts from an audience (Polanyi 1989, Tannen 1984). Narrators look to their audience to accept their stories by nodding, smiling, saying “yeah” or “uh huh”, showing continued interest, or acknowledging with some other signal (Clark 1994: 1010). Again, the impossibility of analysing non-verbal communication signals proves a major limitation for the analysis of listener’s responses in storytelling.

But what goes unrecorded on audiotape and in almost all transcripts are the many smiles and nods of acknowledgement. These should be especially prevalent in narratives because verbal acknowledgements get suppressed when there are two or more addressees and when narrators tell jokes or fictional stories. (Clark 1994: 1009)

The following excerpt may serve to illustrate the co-operative role that listeners often play in storytelling.

Text KB6 > Conversation recorded by Angela

ANGELA>: Like when Angie said, [...]

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: [laughing] You ought to have seen her when she looked in the mirror. She went argh.

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: [laughing] I said quick we'll get a toner on, we'll get a toner. [...] Fine now. She said I got, *she said to me Sue I want a lot, all over.*
SUE>: Yeah.
ANGELA>: So I thought right. That's how she wants it, so I done a lot. When she took the hat off she went erm ... erm ... erm ... I don't think I wanted that many! ...
SUE>: Mm. ... I got used, I got used to it now.
ANGELA>: Yeah. When you first seen it though. I thought ... bloody hell.
SUE>: [laugh]
ANGELA>: I said ... it looks really nice Ange, I said. [laughing] ... *I said it looks lov*, I said what we'll do, I said ... we'll rush down the road ... and we'll get a tint. I said it, I think it suits you.
SUE>: Oh, dear.
ANGELA>: Well, what can you say? When you just ... [...]
SUE>: [...] *nothing you can do. Nothing at all you can do.*
ANGELA>: I thought ooh. I was going [...]
SUE>: And you don't know the [...] colour until you've actually washed it off anyway.
ANGELA>: Yeah.
SUE>: I mean I ha, I hate doing them.
ANGELA>: Ooh. ... Mhm.
SUE>: Right.
ANGELA>: [...] [laugh]
SUE>: Yeah.

Sue here works as an active and collaborative listener. She offers speaker support in the form of assenting back-channel responses such as *yeah, mm, oh* to show her interest and involvement in the story. As a good listener, Sue also laughs where appropriate. At the end, she adds her own evaluation of the story, which supports Angela's assessment. This joint evaluation "shows a closeness between the speakers and a positive, active interest in the story itself" (Pridham 2001: 49).

Listeners' response is also crucial to distinguish between humorous and dramatic narratives. Recall here that humour is another pragmatic goal of hyperbole. Often, narrators indicate the light-hearted or non-serious nature of the story by laughing themselves. That way they signal or imply how they want their story to be received and interpreted. Angela's story above is an example. At other times, the tone is more serious as illustrated in the next excerpt or in Deanne's story in section 8.6.2.1.

Text J8J > Drugs: television discussion

J8JPS003>: Rec, erm the lady behind was stating that recent a, I mean recently I had about, er went through a bereavement, lost
J8JPS000>: Yep.
J8JPS003>: my brother who I was very close to ... *went to the doctor ... and, instantly he, pres, er prescribed Tamazepam tablets for me*, knowing that I myself am a single parent so I have ... a responsibility.

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS003>: I've my daughter to look after. *Didn't ask me anything!* Just looked at me ... saw how I was, prescribed the Tamazepam tablets, and *I had a terrible experience with those ...* and that's only in the last year!

J8JPS000>: And so, how's that affe, I mean, what do you think about that? Because at the end of the day are we not responsible for ourselves? I mean you don't have to take drugs!

J8JPS003>: But you're taking a, a, a GP's word ... for it, that these tablets that he's given you are gonna help you through the emotional pain

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS003>: that you are going through. They done nothing for me ... at all!

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

This has to do with the motivation of the talk, whether to entertain or to complain (usually about a third non-present person) through storytelling.

8.7. Discussion

In this chapter, the production process of exaggerated remarks, an issue which almost invariably has been solely associated with the speaker alone, has been explored. Rather than regarding exaggeration as an unidirectional act, I have tried to show its bi-directional nature. Thus, the reception process, in terms of listeners' verbal responses (rather than cognitive processes), has been here examined as a crucial component of hyperbolic speech. I have, hopefully, explored the interactional nature of this figure, as a joint activity between speaker and hearer, an issue that has only recently been discussed in the literature on irony and metaphor. Thus, I adhere to the view that the study of psychological factors should be complemented by one focusing on the production of figurative expressions.

Two main response categories have been identified in our corpus, namely positive and negative evidence responses, which broadly correspond to two different, almost antagonistic, listener types: active/co-operative vs. passive/uncooperative listeners. This is consistent with Clift's (1999: 546) finding that ironic evaluations "strongly implicate a certain category of response, namely agreement or disagreement". Overwhelmingly in our data, as in her study, the response has been agreement, that is, positive evidence responses (through back-channel communication devices and relevant next contributions). This suggests that conversational interactivity plays a crucial role both in the collaborative creation and comprehension of exaggeration. Negative evidence responses were also present in our data, and indeed their frequency was higher than I had initially expected. A possible explanation is the existence of special speech exchange systems, such as political

debates, interviews and talk shows, in the data. As we have seen, listeners may also be uncooperative and so disagree, challenge, ignore or misunderstand hyperbole.

The results also suggest that on the whole hearers, rather than interpreting the speaker's hyperbole in a literal way, deflate, or inflate where appropriate, the speaker's words to fit reality. The total amount of misunderstood and non-recognised or missed hyperbole in our transcripts seems to suggest that speaking hyperbolically, rather than literally, does not entail so much risk. Hence, overstatement might be classified as a low risk figure, though the amount of risk-taking depends on the degree of conventionality or creativity of the expression too (Bhaya *et al.* 1988: 29).

Continuation or reciprocation in terms of figures also deserves special attention, since it often brings about bursts of figurative language. In this sense, some have explained the occurrence of multiple idioms as a kind of "contamination" effect: once one speaker uses an idiom, this infects the other, who follows suit, and suddenly there is a bunch of them (Black 1972: 169). Rather, clusterings of figures, in my opinion, seem to suggest that we conceptualise the world in figurative terms. Indeed, rarely do we speak literally. This adheres to a prevailing view among figurative language researchers, namely that cognition is inherently figurative (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Gibbs 1994a, Turner 1998, Arduini 2000).

The study of listener responsiveness may also serve to demonstrate that, rather than studying figures in isolation or in decontextualized situations, researchers should examine figurative language forms over turn-boundaries and within extended or entire conversations.

Finally and partly drawing on chapter six, I have examined the use of exaggeration as a performance or dramatisation technique in storytelling. The fact that the narrative genre seems particularly well suited for some of the pragmatic goals of hyperbole, namely evaluation, both positive and negative, emphasis, interest intensification and humour, may help explain why hyperbole is a prominent feature in narratives.

9. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, by way of conclusion, the significance of the present study is critically assessed in the light of the results obtained from the analysis. The main findings are here summarised and evaluated. Possible limitations in the study in terms of aims, research questions, corpus and methodology are discussed. Further areas of research that could be investigated in order to complete our knowledge and understanding of hyperbole in particular, and of figurative language in general are also pointed up.

This dissertation has concentrated on the notion of hyperbole, a trope long neglected by figurative language researchers, probably due to the increasing interest in the study of the so-called master tropes, metaphor and verbal irony. By contrast, exaggeration together with many other figures of speech has been relegated to an ancillary position. It has been my aim to compensate for the existing dearth of studies on the trope. This study has aimed to provide new insights not only into the literature on the subject but also, by extension, to the field of figuration in general. I have attempted, in particular, to contribute a general framework for the description and understanding of exaggeration in interaction, in terms of functions (rhetorical and speech acts), usage (text forms and genres) and conversational interactivity. I have examined the ways in which the trope is used in speech, mainly from a production viewpoint but without totally disregarding the reception process, since special emphasis has been devoted to the interactive or collaborative dimension of hyperbole.

Let us commence by recalling the main points of the present study.

Since a crucial limitation in figurative language theories is the production of figurative expressions, probably due to the intensive research focus on comprehension, this study has mainly addressed the production process of exaggeration. Thus, the functions fulfilled by the trope in terms of speech acts and discourse goals as well as the text forms and genres with which it is associated, have been addressed. Similarly, the reception process of figures of speech has been intensively studied in terms of understanding, but little attention has been devoted to the analysis of listeners' reactions to figuration and their collaboration in a joint construction of figurative contexts. By addressing hearers' responses to overstated remarks, this study aimed to redress the balance and remove, partly at least, this lacuna in theories of figurative language, although listenership is in general a notably under-

researched area of study. In this light, I adhered to the view that the study of psychological factors should be complemented by one focusing on the production of figurative expressions.

Another contribution refers to the data subjected to scrutiny. Whereas the bulk of research has been conducted in the written medium, I decided to concentrate on speech, given that not a great amount of research exists into everyday spoken hyperbole. A crucial limitation in previous research points to the data or test materials employed, since for the most part, they are elicited or artificial. By contrast, the data here examined was naturally-occurring conversation. This choice was aimed at counterbalancing the lack of studies addressing the trope in authentic speech. Not only were our texts naturalistic, the entirety of conversations were examined, since another limitation in analyses based on isolated or decontextualized sentences is that they “ignore the ecology in which we encounter and produce figurative language” (Katz 1996: 2). In this sense and as already mentioned, Cornbleet and Carter (2001: 64) correctly note: “It’s quite wrong to take naturally occurring speech and isolate utterances because a great deal of the language interrelates and interweaves across longer stretches of the exchange”.

The corpus-based character is also a defining characteristic of the present study, with all the advantages this feature implies. The data upon which the analysis was based have been extracted from the BNC spoken sub-corpus. The use of corpora grants certain benefits, such as the use of naturalistic data, automatic retrievability and access to context, evidence of interactivity, wide coverage of genres, evidence of hyperbolic cues, etc. Corpus linguistics was combined with pragmatic and conversational-analytical methods. These disciplines collectively offer a more comprehensive framework, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, for the description and understanding of hyperbole in interaction.

It cannot be overlooked, however, that this study is not without certain limitations. First is the issue of subjectivity and individual interpretability. Whilst every effort has been made in search of objectivity, some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable in the humanities. Besides, in evaluating the analytical instruments, that is, the corpus for analysis, it should be borne in mind that “none of the BNC documents making up the corpus should be properly regarded as a complete written or spoken text” (Aston and Burnard 1998: 39). Some conversations have been stopped or cut short, either by the participants in the speech event or partially transcribed, whether for ethical or technical reasons. The presence of

inaudible stretches of speech may also have limited to some extent our understanding and analysis of texts. Finally, the impossibility of analysing non-verbal aspects of communication proved a major shortcoming too, since discourse includes much more than the words uttered (Clark 1994: 986).

Let us now move to report and summarise the main findings of this study, but emphasising how they must be interpreted, with caution. Corpus usage, say Aston and Burnard (1998: 42), “encourages a probabilistic rather than a rule-based approach to fundamental issues of language description”.

As a starting point, in chapter four, having reviewed the literature on the subject, I attempted to provide a sound definition and characterisation of the notion of overstatement, by listing its main features. The phenomenon was briefly defined as “a figure whereby the quantity or quality of an objective fact is, whether purposely or inadvertently, subjectively inflated or deflated in varying degrees but always to excess in an utterance which listeners do not normally interpret literally or perceive as a lie”. It is a purely pragmatic phenomenon. Given the impossibility to overstate without contrasting the utterance with its corresponding referent situation, hyperbole is entirely dependent on context.

My aim was also to distinguish the trope from related figures of speech. The notion of contrast (between utterance and referent situation) is naturally a defining feature of hyperbole, but not exclusive of the trope. Irony and understatement are contrasting figures of speech, too. The main difference is that exaggeration, like understatement, establishes a contrast of magnitude, whereas irony produces contrasts of kind with the real state of affairs. On the other hand, the key to distinguishing between over- and understatement is whether the extremity affects the proposition or the referent situation. Hyperbole depicts moderate situations in the real world as extreme, whereas understatement describes extreme situations in the real world as moderate. This distinction is an important one, since too often meiosis is mistakenly equated with understatement.

In this chapter, the criteria for identifying and labelling hyperbole was also examined, so that non-exaggerated uses of words or expressions could be excluded. In the literature, the theme of identification has been overlooked or restricted to the counterfactuality or non-veridicality cue (i.e. a discrepancy between utterance and reality), which presupposes knowledge of the referent situation. Indeed, context plays a central role in hyperbole perception and identification. However, when the referent situation is not explicitly stated

or can only be vaguely identified, the context is impoverished or ambiguous and the test of sheer impossibility is not applicable, other criteria are needed to identify and label this figure in corpora. Among the cues that may incline the researcher towards a hyperbolic interpretation of the proposition are the list of features proposed by McCarthy and Carter (2004: 162-3): disjunction with context, shifts in footing, unchallenged counterfactuality, co-creation of impossible worlds, extreme case formulations and intensification, listener take-up, relevant interpretability and syntactic support to underline the amplification. In addition, explicit labels, downgraders, interjections, exclamative words and exclamation marks were also considered signs of the presence of an overstatement in discourse. The latter, however, are necessarily second-hand cues in spoken corpora, being the interpretations of transcribers.

The identification of exaggeration in the BNC data was not an easy task. Some of the items and utterances interpreted as hyperbolic may not always be heard as exaggeration. There might be disagreement about the hyperbolic or non-hyperbolic reading of some of the expressions examined in the study. This is partly explained because of the influence the principle of etymology has exerted on trope identification. This is certainly the case of the word *reviving*, meaning “resuscitate” in origin [from Latin *revivere*, to live again], but which nowadays means revitalising, reinvigorating, “regaining an active state” (Webster 1993: 1944). Native speakers may not perceive the hyperbole in such terms, because of the semantic changes brought about by this figure of speech. Thus, it is possible that some of our hyperboles may no longer be heard as exaggerations. In the words of McKnight (1928: 183; quoted in Spitzbardt 1965: 349):

“The fading quality of words of this kind is a familiar feature of language. Words of intensive force in one generation, in a succeeding generation sink to the level of plain expression. Hence it is that the speech of each period is distinguished by its peculiar intensive words” (McKnight, “Modern English in the Making”, New York-London 1928, p. 183).

It is also true that not only the production of exaggeration is a subjective act, there is also an element of subjectivity in its interpretation. For example, “done them all” in the fragment below was labelled as hyperbolic although Ann’s next contribution makes clear that the speaker did all the washing-up with the exception of a dish.

Text KB7 > Conversation recorded by Ann

ANN>: [cough] ... Oh, I'd better go and wash our dishes, dear.

STUART>: Not many to do now [...] ***done them all.***

ANN>: Most of them. There's only yours. Have you had

STUART>: What about

ANN>: enough to eat?

Some may not consider such uses motivated by the principle of linguistic economy in communication and aimed at simplifying or generalising as exaggerations properly.

Furthermore, the list of items extracted from the BNC conversations needs to be viewed cautiously, as a sampling rather than a catalogue, since hyperbole is a creative act and “the possibilities for linguistic creativity are infinite” (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 150).

Once identified, I attempted to set up a typology of overstated items according to the following criteria: semantic field, grammatical category, interactivity with other figures and extreme occupied along the continuum. The classification into auxesis or meiosis revealed that by far the tendency is to upscale rather than to downscale reality when exaggerating, explaining thus why hyperbole is often associated with amplification, but rarely with reduction or attenuation.

In terms of lexico-grammatical classification, it was found that hyperbole can be realised in a wide range of linguistic forms, but mostly the devices are lexical. Major word classes were the chief means to overstate. In particular, there seemed to be a preference for adjectives. Not in vain, this word class, together with degree adverbs, has been intensively studied in the literature. By contrast, overstatement involving verbs was rarely found in our data. This appears to suggest that exaggeration is used to express emotions, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, opinions rather than cognition or behaviour (e.g. bodily responses, actions). In this, hyperbole is similar to metaphorical language forms, since Fainsilber and Ortony (1987: 239) found that metaphor is used more often to describe subjective feeling states than overt actions. The use of minor word classes to express extremity was less frequent, but one could find overstated numbers, prepositions as well as quantifiers. In particular, although rarely discussed in the literature, quantifiers such as *everything*, *everybody*, *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. were considerably productive in the creation of hyperbole. After adjectives, they were the most hyperbole-prone word class in our transcripts, and therefore deserve more notice than they have received to date. Finally, one cannot overlook that, although rarely, the trope was also brought about by a combination of

lexical and grammatical means. As Norrick (1982: 170) notes, hyperbole is a pragmatic category that can be realised in any word class or lexico-grammatical configuration. The following lexico-grammatical structures can be used to overstate: superlative degree, idiomatic expressions, similes or comparisons, whole sentences or clauses, polysyndetic structures and complex modification.

The semantic-etymological taxonomy was divided into two main groups, namely the quantitative and evaluative dimension. The former, clearly more numerous in our data, upscales or downscales a quantity or magnitude in excess. The latter involves a subjective evaluation showing the speaker's emotions and attitudes, whether positive or negative, towards the objective fact being assessed. Without claiming comprehensiveness, the taxonomy was organised around major semantic domains: impact/singularity, negative and positive evaluation for the evaluative sphere and quantity/measure, purity and magnitude for the quantitative component. Possibly, a different corpus might have suggested somewhat different domains, since the possibilities of linguistic creativity are infinite. In particular, the overwhelming presence of items in the purity domain, whereby hyperbole was expressed in terms of all or nothing, is remarkable. This appears to suggest a preference for absolute terms, such as do not admit of variation or exception, when exaggerating.

Finally, chapter four addressed the rate of co-occurrence of hyperbole with other figurative language forms. The results indicated the trope is most often simple or pure, but this does not mean that exaggeration is not a productive strategy in the creation of other figures. Although complex hyperbole only accounts for 22.2% of overstated items in our data, only a contrastive study measuring the co-occurrence frequency for other tropes could have truly revealed the extent to which overstatement is a productive technique in the construction of other indirect forms.

As in Kreuz *et al.*'s (1996: 92) study, in our data metaphor was by far the figure with which exaggeration interacted most. This finding corroborates Jiménez Patón's (1987: 143) and Ravazzoli's (1978: 98) intuitive claims that metaphoric overstatement is much more recurrent than other combination types. Not only was the rate of compound hyperbole high, it also interacted with a wide range of figures. Thus, hyperbole needs to be considered a basic trope, one upon which other figures of speech are constructed. In our data, hyperbole also interacted with idioms, similes, irony, metonymy and litotes, but their

frequency (at least compared to metaphoric overstatement) was almost negligible. Other corpora might have revealed additional patterns of co-occurrence, such as hyperbole interacting with *antonomasia*, rhetorical questions, personification, etc.

Chapter five focused on speech act theory as one approach to the study of language functions. In this theory, a speech act is defined as the action that is performed in making an utterance (Tsui 1994: 9). Although several speech act analyses of verbal irony have been published to date, there was no single study on hyperbolic illocutionary acts. In order to compensate for the lack of attested data, speech acts were tested against real instances of language use, since one of the main objections to the theory is the use of elicited or artificial rather than naturalistic data. Besides, the fact that the entirety of conversations instead of decontextualized utterances was analysed enabled me to examine the interactive nature of speech acts, such as confirm/agree or challenge/disagree.

The aim was to arrive at a typology of the different acts that overstatement performs in conversation and determine their distribution across illocutionary forces. The analysis demonstrated that although the study of hyperbole had traditionally been relegated to the representative class, it is by no means restricted to assertions. Other illocutionary forces can be exaggerated too. Apart from assertives, this figure featured in directives, commissives and expressives, showing thus that the theory of speech acts in general and the classification of speech acts in particular provided an optimal framework for the description of the trope. However, hyperbolic manifestations of speech acts were not equally distributed over these illocutionary forces. The trope manifested itself predominantly in the performance of assertives, which was implicitly corroborated by the literature on the subject, since the majority of figurative language researchers have limited themselves to their analysis.

A possible objection to my speech act analysis points to the multiplicity of acts that a single sentence may perform simultaneously. This has even led scholars such as Levinson (1983) to claim that it is impossible to characterise an utterance as performing a particular speech act since often it has more than one function. Often several illocutionary subclasses or acts within the assertive class could be assigned to a single utterance. Although the problem of multiplicity in our data only arises at the level of illocutionary subclasses or acts, rather than forces, the distribution found in the representative force, which was

broadly divided into assessment and report, may not have truly reflected their co-occurrence, since the analysis was restricted to a single choice among competing options.

Compared to representatives, the class of directives, commissives and expressives, even together, still seems almost negligible. Assertives, broadly speaking, represented nearly 70% of speech acts in our data, whereas the rest of illocutionary forces only accounted for approximately 30%. The overwhelming presence of assertives, defined as acts whereby “the speaker expresses his belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true” (Fraser 1983: 38), that is, it is a matter of fact, finds a possible explanation in Falk (1990: 46), who claims: “since an overstatement has in it an element of subjective evaluation of an objective fact, it is unexpected to see it in a putative situation”, such as the future acts expressed in directives and commissives.

Although hyperbolic acts are typically and overwhelmingly direct speech acts, the notion of indirection was also examined. The traditional distinction between direct and indirect speech acts led us to inquire about the motives that may prompt speakers to express their communicative intent indirectly, via other illocutionary acts, instead of straightforwardly. It was found that expressives and directives are typically realised indirectly, mainly under the linguistic guise of assertives. Curiously, these illocutionary forces often involve FTAs against the listener’s negative face and thus require softening. One of the strategies to minimise the threat in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness framework is indirection, whose protective character is succinctly explained by Stubbs (1996: 205): “if an illocutionary force is indirect or off the record to some degree, it will be possible to claim, if challenged, that it was never issued”. This clarifies why speakers go to the trouble of expressing themselves indirectly. However, since the bulk of hyperbolic speech acts in our data were direct illocutionary acts, exaggeration in general must not be considered an offensive, threatening or risky figure of speech.

Chapter six addressed the rhetorical functions that overstatement fulfils in discourse. Although the trope’s aesthetic function is probably pervasive in literary texts, this is not the only function attributable to exaggeration. The aim was to discover the range of propositional and affective functions the trope performs in communication, in order to explain why speakers should prefer to express their thoughts indirectly, via the use of hyperbole, rather than literally. Unlike previous research, this study focused on the pragmatic functioning of hyperbole solely, rather than contrasting the extent to which

different indirect forms accomplish the same communicative goals. Neither, was this study confined to the identification of functions; their definitions, explanations and some naturally-occurring illustrations were provided.

It was found that exaggeration in speech responds to nine communicative functions: expressing surprise, contrasting differences, evaluation, humour, clarification, interest intensification, emphasis, simplification and (polite) de-emphasis. Given this wide range of propositional and affective functions, the classical view of hyperbole as merely linguistic decoration, or even as a vice, needs to be rejected in favour of a more cognitive view of the trope, “as a powerful communicative and conceptual tool” (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1994: 448). Not all the functions seemed equally important, though. Some goals exhibited a higher frequency of occurrence: emphasis, evaluation and expressing surprise. These appear to be the most prominent functions for the trope. The recurrence of evaluation is explained by the fact that what determines the evaluative force of utterances is not only the positive or negative import of overstated items. Often, “the precise attitude expressed can only be identified in the particular context” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 29). This explains why the trope is essentially an evaluative tool.

Since the interpersonal goals were more numerous and recurrent than other pragmatic functions, one cannot but emphasise the central role the affective dimension plays in the description and understanding of this figure. I have examined how hyperbole is used to convey a wide range of affective meanings, such as interest, approval, disapproval, sympathy, antipathy, humour, etc. Hyperbole, though, not only serves to perform interpersonal functions but also propositional or content-based goals, such as contrast of differences, clarification, etc. Overstatement, hence, is employed to convey information about the topic under discussion but also and most importantly, to convey the speaker’s beliefs or feelings about the topic. In this sense, Falk (1990: 39) claims that instead of conveying factual information, hyperboles express the speaker’s attitude, emotional state and degree of involvement in what is being said. Because of the overwhelming presence of interpersonal goals, we can safely assume that understanding hyperbole calls upon the social task of inferring a speaker’s beliefs, attitudes and intentions. Thus, hyperbole, like irony, must be primarily seen as “evaluative and social”, as opposed to metaphorical expressions which can be defined as primarily “descriptive and explanatory” (Dews and Winner 1997: 380).

With regard to the question: why should speakers prefer hyperbole over literal expressions?, the analysis, in consistency with the findings reported by previous figurative language research, suggested the trope grants rewards and advantages over literal forms. In consonance with the inexpressibility hypothesis, exaggeration accomplished goals that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil literally (e.g. to generalise). In addition, when literal and overstated remarks seemed to fulfil the same functions, hyperbole performed them to a greater extent or more successfully than literal comments (e.g. to express surprise). Finally, another advantage of the trope over direct, literal language was that although “no single phrase or use of language ever seems to have just a single function” (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), hyperbole appeared to fulfil more discourse goals than their literal equivalents. It allowed speakers to satisfy multiple goals simultaneously. Although functions were discussed separately, they are not independent but interrelated. All this demonstrated the trope is not simply a substitute for literal language, but rather conveys information that literal utterances do not. It is not simply an imaginative and creative way to say something that could have been said literally. All this helps explain why speakers often choose to express their thoughts indirectly or exaggeratedly, rather than literally, and why overstatement exists and is so ubiquitous in language.

Chapter six also focused on the relation between neighbouring literal and hyperbolic expressions, revealing that speakers did not use overstated forms instead of literal ones, but rather in addition to them. This means the trope and literal language reinforce and complement, rather than substitute, each other. Hence, this relationship, which was primarily based on the notion of reiterability (e.g. paraphrase, explanation, summary), is not one of competing but of complementary versions. This complementation was often achieved through clarification of a preceding utterance, whether figurative or literal. This observation is consistent with Roberts and Kreuz’s (1994: 161) and Sell *et al.*’s (1997: 110) finding that people employ overstatement to clarify their meanings.

In chapter seven the object of study was still the long neglected production process of hyperbole, but in terms of usage of text forms and speech genres. I focused firstly on text forms at the level of utterance or segment where the figure was embedded. The aim was to determine which mode attracted most hyperboles, whether narrative, descriptive, procedural or argumentative-expository. A major shortcoming in the analysis points to the introduction of a new textual category, that of assessment within a follow-up or response

move, which breaks the traditional taxonomic homogeneity, since it refers to an evaluation within the reception process. Similarly, the lack of distinction between exposition and argumentation may have slightly altered the results. Argumentation is probably much more frequent than exposition, but because the basis of any argumentative text form is said to be provided by expository passages, they were not eventually separated. In theory, the speaker in argumentation is involved in an appeal for or against a particular thesis, whereas the aim of expository texts is to explain or to inform about ideas or concepts and their interrelations. In practice, though, the distinction becomes blurred.

The analysis indicated that although a purely subjective act, hyperbole often responded to the expository-argumentative mode. This is consistent with and empirically demonstrates Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1994: 448) claim that superlativeness is most often motivated by argumentative ends. A trope is argumentative, "if it brings about a change of perspective, and its use seems normal in relation to this new situation" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1994: 271). This mode often responds to persuasion, which is also in line with Sell *et al.*'s (1997: 103) categorisation of exaggeration as a persuasive non-literal form, since it aims to "get the listener to know or believe something". Less frequent was the use of descriptive and narrative hyperbole, although their presence in descriptive and narrative contexts has often been discussed in the literature on the subject. And even rarer, was procedural or instructional overstatement. Nevertheless, all these modes co-occurred with expository-argumentative forms in utterance hybridisation, since persuasion is essentially discursal and therefore can make use of any mode.

Although the trope had been individually associated with particular text forms, the area of conversational genres remained unexplored. The study of genres was carried out on a global text-external basis, examining the overall interaction where hyperbole was embedded. This object of study was clearly favoured by the analysis of entire conversations, rather than fragments or isolated utterances. The aim was to establish correlations between speech genres and the use of this figure and so to explore the way contextual factors influence over the use and frequency of overstatement.

The first step was to identify, define and characterise speech genres in our data. After Carter and McCarthy's (1997: 8) interactional genre taxonomy, six generic distinctions were identified, namely decision-making, debate and argument, language-in-action,

comment-elaboration, service and learning encounters. The narrative and identifying genre were present but embedded within some of the aforesaid categories, showing thus how genres merge into each other and defy exact definition. In defining genres, special attention was devoted to their purpose, lexico-grammatical characteristics as well as situative structure, whereby their interactive organisation as described by CA was examined, showing thus how conversational analytic methods can be productively combined with the study of speech genres.

The study of speech genres was implicitly connected to a crucial aim of the research, namely to demonstrate that although traditionally associated with literary criticism, hyperboles are by no means confined to literary texts. The range of genres here examined indicated that the trope is not rare or limited to poetic situations but is rather a ubiquitous characteristic of speech. This adheres to a prevailing view among figurative language researchers: figures provide part of the figurative foundation for everyday thought (e.g. Pollio *et al.* 1977, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Gibbs 1993, 1994a, 1994b, Turner 1998, Arduini 2000).

The analysis manifested that the genres which attract most hyperboles are language-in-action and comment-elaboration encounters. This indicates that exaggeration is not a matter of personal style solely and most importantly, that a determinant factor for the use of the trope is the informality of the situation. Hyperbole is closely associated with informal encounters, since the two genres correspond to or solely feature in the BNC informal domain. In this sense, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 74) remark that the comment-elaboration genre is frequent in informal exchanges between speakers in the same family or enjoying close relations. Similarly, the abundant presence of ellipsis in language-in-action encounters is a signal of informality. In the words of Carter and McCarthy (1997: 67), “ellipsis is a linguistic concomitant of informality and easy-goingness in conversation”. Service encounters were the third genre in attracting a higher number of hyperboles. By contrast, learning and debate-argument encounters exhibited a relatively low frequency of exaggerations, although the lowest percentage was found in the so-called decision-making genre. Hyperbole was not very recurrent in problem-solving tasks, despite Pollio *et al.*'s (1977: 15) claim that “figurative language plays an important role in structuring and ultimately in solving problems”. The results suggest that although the trope shows up in “cases in which a speaker intends to teach and/or learn, to convince, as well as

those in which the intention is to solve problems” (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), hyperbole, unlike metaphor, does not play a key role in such contexts.

Since generic manifestations may slightly vary in their individual realisations, three defining generic dimensions, namely goal orientation, participant framework and transactional/interpersonal language use were examined in isolation to determine more specific patterns of hyperbolic use. A strong tendency to associate the trope with physically immediate activities (collaborative tasks), interactional or relational language use as well as with informal and equal participant relationships was found. A recurrent idea throughout the chapter points to the strong connection between hyperbole and informality. In general, when the context was informal, the tendency to exaggerate was higher. Not without good reason, overstatement pervades the BNC informal domain.

Given the wide range of contexts and interaction environments examined, the corpus can be said to be sufficiently representative of the everyday use of hyperbole in contemporary English. However, although the data represents a wide coverage of everyday genres and participant relations, some of them are comparatively underrepresented. Since these classifications were done after the corpus for analysis was compiled, there is not a balanced distribution across the different genres and relations. For example, there is a single token of the decision-making genre and socialising relation. Additional instances are necessary to make these categories representative enough and claim their results are conclusive.

Finally, chapter eight, in line with studies that advocate examining the role of conversational interactivity in figurative language use, addressed the interactive nature of hyperbole. Rather than regarding figures as acts by the speaker alone, the aim was to demonstrate the collaborative dimension of the trope, as a joint activity between speaker and listener. This is an aspect that is recently arousing interest in figurative language theories, but the scant literature has solely concentrated on irony and metaphor. In order to examine this interactive dimension and the active role that listeners play in the co-construction and understanding of exaggeration, their responses and further contributions to the trope were examined. The aim was to determine how listeners reacted verbally to overstated remarks and which response was more hyperbole-prone. Naturally, a joint activity view of discourse was adopted, disregarding other communication paradigms, such as the intentional view, which exclude the crucial role that hearers play in both the creation

and interpretation of meaning. The impossibility of examining some replies, labelled “inaudible responses”, since they were imperceptible for the BNC transcribers, proved a major limitation in the analysis, though.

The analysis indicated that listeners’ responses to hyperbole were divided into two main categories: positive and negative evidence, operating both at the level of trope construction and comprehension. Probably, a classification of such responses into moves would have offered a much more thorough account in terms of distribution. Positive evidence, which were almost double the number of negative evidence responses, indicates understanding and/or acceptance of the speaker’s intent. It involves topically fitted or appropriate responses and so signals the recipient’s concurrence with the prior speaker’s turn. By contrast, negative evidence refers to some manifest lack of interest, accord, affiliation or understanding between speaker and listener as far as the overstated remark is concerned. In general terms, they can be said to correspond to antagonistic listenership patterns, namely active/cooperative vs. passive/uncooperative listener, respectively.

In turn, positive and negative evidence responses in our data were divided into different subtypes. Following Clark (1994: 993), two forms of positive evidence were distinguished: back-channel responses and relevant next contributions. Back-channel communication, signalling understanding and acceptance of the speaker’s message but without claiming the floor, was the most recurrent response in our transcripts. A major drawback in the study of listeners’ responses in general, and of feedback in particular, was the impossibility of examining non-verbal communication, which is particularly well suited as feedback and comprehension indicators (Goffman 1976: 262). Besides providing feedback about listeners’ understanding, conversational interaction allowed for collaboration in the creation of overstated remarks themselves. Indeed, the second most common form of positive evidence was a relevant next contribution, which involves further topically connected talk, and whose crucial property is conditional relevance. In particular, hearers’ take-up and continuation of hyperbole or any other figurative language form stand out, since they often bring about bursts of figurative language. Rare, however, was the presence of indirect appreciation or acceptance signals and relevant non-verbal responses.

Four main types of negative evidence, whereby the listener’s contribution was not related to the speaker’s as an expected follow-up, were found in our data: challenged, ignored, misunderstood or unheard hyperbole and inappropriate non-linguistic responses.

Among them, ignoring the speaker's words, often through topic shift, was the most recurrent pattern in our data. The analysis, however, indicates that listeners, rather than interpreting the speaker's hyperbole in a literal way, deflate, or inflate where appropriate, the speaker's words to fit reality. The low frequency of misunderstood and non-recognised or missed hyperbole suggests that speaking hyperbolically, rather than literally, does not imply a high risk or cost to the speaker. Hyperbole, therefore, must be classified as a low risk figure, although the amount of risk-taking also depends on the degree of conventionality or creativity of the expression.

Some of the negative evidence responses were realised through hyperbole or some other non-literal language form. Thus, one can talk about the take-up and continuation of figuration by participants, which often brings about bursts of figures. All figurative responses in our data, whether positive or negative, contributed to the emergence of non-literal frames. The difference between them is that whereas the use of figures within positive evidence expanded, continued or elaborated the preceding theme and contributed to co-construct or maintain the hyperbolic frame introduced by the speaker, in negative evidence responses rather than collaborating, the use of non-literal forms competed with the speaker's overstated account. Given its bi-directional rather than unidirectional character, "an interactive approach to hyperbole is indispensable for its proper understanding" (McCarthy and Carter 2004: 149).

The study of listener responsiveness together with the fact that hyperboles are not one-off lexico-grammatical items, the relation between neighbouring literal and overstated expressions, the presence of hyperbolic cues and the study of genres all demonstrate that, rather than studying decontextualized or isolated figures, researchers should examine non-literal forms over turn-boundaries, within the constraints of placement and sequencing, and within extended or entire conversations.

Finally, the use of this figure as a performance feature in narratives was examined, to determine why hyperbole is so frequent in storytelling. It was found that the narrative genre is particularly well suited for some of the functions attributed to overstatement, namely evaluation, emphasis, interest intensification and humour. In all of these ways hyperbole is an important element in storytelling which helps turn the story into a performed narrative, as opposed to a simple recount of events. Other performance features, such as quotations, intonational high points, vivid present, the filler "you know",

repetition, etc. were found in our narratives, but performance, says Haiman (1997: 182-3), “is usually recognizable as such (unless the actors are very skilled) by one formal feature: exaggeration. Exaggeration is the very essence of performance, as it is of parody”.

However, a huge amount of work remains still to be done in describing the full extent of hyperbole and other non-literal forms in communication. Further research is needed from a CA viewpoint in order to determine sequential distributional patterns for the trope (e.g. Is hyperbole used to introduce, terminate or sum up topics?). Regarding distribution, the study of overstated acts in terms of elicit, response and follow-up moves would be another possible direction for research. Empirical sociolinguistic studies, on the other hand, should eventually demonstrate whether men or women, adults or youngsters are keener on exaggeration. What this study has also missed is an examination of the degree of conventionality of hyperbolic expressions. Their categorisation into dead/frozen, conventional and novel exaggerations will determine whether speakers prefer creativity or conventionality when overstating. Neither have I discussed and addressed the role of the notion of echoic mention in exaggeration. Finally, a contrastive study of contemporary written and spoken genres, to check whether hyperbole behaves similarly, would also be fruitful. Although for this study I have chosen the oral mode as a point of departure, “we are confronted with the problem of limited external validity”, that is, the problem that the results obtained cannot straightforwardly be generalised for written language, although this is often falsely assumed (Christmann and Mischo 2000: 230). For this reason, testing additionally whether the results are valid for the written mode is a necessary step.

10. REFERENCES

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11. APPENDIX

<p style="text-align: center;">Text FM3</p> <p>BNC domain: Business G: Service encounter Body Shop presentation: aromatherapy/Body Shop products Participants: Yvonne, 40+, masseur, female; Emmy, 50+, manageress, female; Wendy, 26, administrator, female; Celia, 40+, administration tutor, female</p>
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MASSEUR>: It's a nice thing to know ... if you ever ... get ... tense, ... er decide that this is it, I'll throw things. Er, well, I do when I want to throw things at the kitchen and [...] go away and you use aromatherapy. And it's really nice. It's nice for both men and women. And so the men can try it just as much as the girls can as well.

<1> MANAGERESS>: *Cos what possibly*

MASSEUR>: So

MANAGERESS>: *we should tell you is that everybody here has suffered from mental health problems.*

SA: Representative > report > warn

RF: Humour, Evaluation: negative

M: Description

MASSEUR>: Yes, yes. So I find [1 R: Acceptance token]

MANAGERESS>: So that might be, might be our cure.

MASSEUR>: Yeah.

PS000>: [laugh]

<2> MASSEUR>: *I do find that I have been around everywhere.* I mean, I used to go to

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [2 R: Inaudible response]

MASSEUR>: park and, and all and all this. [Clarification via literal language]

MANAGERESS>: Mm. [2 R: Back-channel response]

MASSEUR>: Er, well, before actually. [laugh] So I've done er community work for a long time. So I do know the different things that do make people feel either a little bit better or might just help them. And the one thing that I, over all these years, I have found and I've come more and more into is aromatherapy, because it's not ...

MANAGERESS>: I'm so worried about [...]

MASSEUR>: drug-like, it's, doesn't make you tired. Unless you get too relaxed and you're er tired. Erm, it doesn't give you a headache, it helps to ... maybe cure a headache, and it's just nice ... smelling and I think if you were just to, even with your partners or with friends, even just massage somebody's hands ... or massage somebody's feet [laugh], <3> ***if you don't make them scream while [laughing] you're doing it, it's really nice.*** So er Body Shop do have a ran, they've bought a new range of aromatherapy out, so I can talk about Body Shop's, it's easier when I've got it with me here. So ... I'm going to tell you what each one does and I'm gonna pass them round. Now, do any, have any of you tried aromatherapy? Do you know what it is?

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Directive > advisable > warn

FTA to H – face > warning through humour + indirection

RF: Humour

M: Instruction

MANAGERESS>: Mm. [3 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

MASSEUR>: Have you tried it?

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: tried aromatherapy? Aroma is the sense of smell. You all smell things, don't you? <4> ***I mean, you know when something smells horrible and you know when something smells nice.*** And so our sense of smell is very strong. So it soon tells you whether you like it or not. When you breathe something it goes up into ... your, your brain here, what they call the olfactory bulb up here, and this is right near the memory. And how many of you have smelt ... things and you think it [...] turns you back

either to when you were a child, ... maybe new bread, ... a certain flower.

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Rowntrees. [4 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Rowntrees, yeah.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] You see, you see chocolate. Ooh, I haven't got a chocolate flavoured one here. Er, oh, yes, I have, [...]. No, I haven't got the Mamatoto. [laugh] Erm ... yes, chocolate. Has anybody else, think of anything that ...

ADMINISTRATOR>: Oh, grass clippings. Grass cuttings.

MASSEUR>: Grass clippings'll send your memory

ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: straight back, won't it?

ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: to sometimes happier times.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Fresh laundry.

MASSEUR>: ... Yes. Yes.

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: The, the, the smell of the, the sort of the w

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Clean sheets.

MASSEUR>: Yes.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: The washing and that. Erm ... but it does bring you back with things. I always think of, er, as I say new bread always brings me back ... a lot of memories. So smell is very important, erm ... s and this is why it's called aromatherapy. It tries to make you feel better by the sense of smell. You can massage them on your hands, on your temples, or you can use it as a what they call steam inhalation. Put it in a bowl of water ... a few bowl of hot water, a few drops, like you do if you got a cold, and just breathe in. So these are ... that's how you use aromatherapy. <5> *And it help, it doesn't say it'll definitely cure you of anything, but it will help maybe to alleviate some problems.*

SA: Representative > report > warn

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Contrast of differences, [Enhance] Clarification through negation

M: Argumentation-exposition

You have to have an open mind I always think with these things. Right. Now you can see Body Shop's here, I've got them in a nice box. Now they look better, they all used to be one colour before but we've now extended the range ... and so they've put them in different colour bottles. Now the red range at the top here is all the oils to make you relax. ... <6> *And all the oils at the bottom, the blue ones are to make you refreshed, happy, revived, we hope.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition

So if you ever go in and you want to have a oil that relaxes you, you look at all the red ones. Again, you must have one that you like the smell of. Also with essential oils, they come from plants, leaves, ... twigs, roots, er parts of flowers and plants. If you were to use essential oil neat, that's the little drops of oil, it's too strong and it will h, well, it won't harm you but it won't, it might set up irritations. You must always mix it with an oil. And if you went say to 's where they sell essential oils, theirs are pure oils. You must always buy what they call a carrier oil to help mix the oils. Now ours, we've helped you by already mixing it, so ours have got three percent of essential oil to a carrier oil, which in our case happens to be grapes erm grapeseed oil, which is a very light carrier oil. So ... I'll start with the first one and I'll pass it round and just ... <7> *put either the relaxing on one hand and the reviving on the other and you'll have one hand relaxed, the other one [laughing] doing this.*

SA: Directive > requestive > invite

FTA to H – face > invitation. Bald, on record

RF: Contrast of differences

M: Instruction

PS000>: [laugh] [5 & 6 R: Unchallenged hyperbole] [7 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: So and see just, get to like the smell. See which one you like the smell of as I

pass them round. Now the first one is camomile. Have any of you ever been on a camomile lawn? [...]

PS000>: Tea.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: Or camomile tea, yes?

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Yeah. Yeah.

MASSEUR>: Very relaxing. Well, this I think's, well, it smells better than camomile tea. I always think it tastes a bit weak, doesn't it? This one, the camomile, is, is very good for the, <8> *we call it the children's one because it's good for everything for children really*. If they get a bit tetchy ... and, and they're crying a lot maybe cos they're teething you could just massage a little bit on their temples. If they're teething just on their jaw line. You never take them internally, it's always externally you use these. Or if you've got a headache you can massage it on your temples. If you suffer from eczema, psoriasis, any dry skin complaint, camomile is quite a soother for that. If you get itchy patches, do any of you ever get itchy patches?

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance]

Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

MANAGERESS>: Mm. [8 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

PS000>: Mm. [8 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: I find sometimes I get itchy

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: patches and you don't know why, maybe you've been in the garden or something irritates you, you'll find that camomile will soothe and calm that down. So, gonna pass it round and just if you do this

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: it'll drop eventually ... [laughing] like that. If you shake it, it doesn't seem to drop. But just drop a bit on, that's it, a drop.

PS000>: Yeah, I don't want to take too much though.

MASSEUR>: That's it.

PS000>: Right.

MASSEUR>: [laugh]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Just massage it on your hand. I'll leave some tissues around so that if you don't like it or you want to rub it off you can always use a tissue. There.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: There.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Your mother'll wonder where you've been Mike.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yes, yes [...].

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Ooh, yeah.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...]?

PS000>: No.

MASSEUR>: No, you don't like that one? No, right.

PS000>: No [...].

MASSEUR>: Right. There.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...] can smell that from here.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah. ...

<9> PS000>: *I think it'd give me a headache, not take it away.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Representative > report > state

FTA to H + face > declining invitation through excuse for non-compliance

RF: Express surprise, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Humour

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [9 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: Right. So, so you'd say to yourself. Right, [9 R: Challenged hyperbole]

PS000>: No.

MASSEUR>: you don't like camomile, that's not gonna do you any good. The next one, which is similar to camomile and which I find a lot of people like better, is lavender. <10> *Everybody thinks of grandma with lavender.*

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [10 R: Inaudible response]

<11> MASSEUR>: *Lavender in the cupboards and lavender everywhere.* Lavender again is good for headaches and it's good if you can't sleep or you suffer a bit from insomnia.

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis
M: Description

PS000>: No, I s, s I don't suffer from that. [...]
[11 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

MASSEUR>: No, [laughing] [...] like me, the opposite direction.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: Erm, but if you can't sleep you could put a little bit on a hankie on your pillow or rub a little bit on your chest, and it'll help to ... erm make you sleep. Lavender is also one that's quite good for things like acne. If you suffer from acne at all. Cos acne can often be s triggered by stress. Erm, acne, is good, it's also good for burns.

MANAGERESS>: What do you do with acne then? Do you?

MASSEUR>: Well, you would just ... massage it on your face.

MANAGERESS>: Mhm.

MASSEUR>: Over your face. You can put it with a moisturizer,

MANAGERESS>: Mhm.

MASSEUR>: or you could just erm ...

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: put on your hands and just gently go over your face.

MANAGERESS>: Mhm.

MASSEUR>: Make sure you washed your hands first before you do it. And it's supposed to help erm calm the skin down.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: Cos it's often acne is caused by the overactivity of the sebaceous glands. And what it does the ... s erm sebum is very poisonous. If it can't get out ... from the surface of the skin then it goes underneath and gets these great lumps which are very poisonous.

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: I mean often acne runs in families as well. It, you know, everybody

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: can be prone to it. But you can help by sort of relaxing the pores so that the oil can come out. But it is the overactivity of the sebaceous glands that

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: sends more oil through. So lavender can help calm it. It's also good for

sunburn and if you burn yourself. If you get very sun

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Really?

MASSEUR>: Yeah, it's very calming. Apparently during the First World War some professor erm was using a bunsen burner and he burned himself quite badly and by him he just happ [laughing] he just happened to have some lavender oil essential and ... for the nearest thing he put his hand in there and apparently it was supposed to have calmed it down and it healed very quickly. So during the First World War and in the Second for severe burn cases they use er used Lavender ... mm, if they didn't have any drugs of any kind.

PS000>: Is that like a dock leaf when you [...]?

MASSEUR>: Yes, that's the same sort of thing. The plants have

PS000>: Yeah.

MASSEUR>: a certain chemical

PS000>: Yeah.

MASSEUR>: and if you sting yourself you go and get a dock leaf. You

PS000>: Dock leaf, yeah.

MASSEUR>: don't know why but the dock leaf takes the itching out. It's a similar sort of thing.

So the lavender is good for headaches, it's good

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: for ... insom

PS000>: Where's that one [...] put it er somewhere else?

MASSEUR>: Just put it somewhere [...]. [laugh]

PS000>: I'm gonna run out of space here, you know.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Roll your sleeve up [...].

MASSEUR>: Roll your sleeves up, yeah.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: That's it.

PS000>: [...]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Is this still a, is

MASSEUR>: Yeah.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: this a r these are r the relaxing

PS000>: [...]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: ones we're on?

MASSEUR>: These are all the relaxing ones now so also if you've got them on ... breathe deeply. Now just breathing deeply with it will help you relax.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Not with the camomile one, it won't.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] No. No, not with the camomile one, maybe that's

ADMINISTRATOR>: I'm not keen on that one. Not keen on that.

MASSEUR>: not so good. ... You've got to like the smell,

ADMINISTRATOR>: Oh, yeah.

MASSEUR>: otherwise it just will not do you any good.

PS000>: Right. Well, that's better.

MASSEUR>: Do you like that, the lavender better?

PS000>: Well, yeah, I [...] I got [...] in a lavender bush when I was small so [...]

MASSEUR>: Oh, did you?

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...] you'll like the lavender one.

PS000>: [...] My brothers er, I mean, you know, this lavender bush and [...] ... Get in there.

<12> ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: ***Bet you smelled lovely when you came out.***

SA: Representative > report > suppose

RF: Evaluation: positive

M: Narration

<13> PS000>: [...] ***compost heap.*** [12 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > challenge

FTA to H + face > challenge through humour + self-deprecation

RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [13 R: Laughter]

[13 R: Refusal to make a contribution by addressee > administration tutor]

PS000>: Yeah. [...] all right. ...

MASSEUR>: Another one which is very relaxing, and this one you'll find much stronger than the ... It's a different smell. Those two that we've had are fl are flowers. The ylang-ylang is a flower, but it's a tropical flower and it's this is called, can be called the Oil of Tranquillity.

<14> So *this g very good for things like shock ... like when my husband gets a telephone bill.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (NPP)

RF: Humour

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [14 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: [...] To my son, [gruffly] you have been on the phone again.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Or if you're frightened or if you're very anxious, if you're gonna do something important and you've not done it before and you get a bit anxious, you can use the ylang-ylang which is the Oil of Tranquillity. It's very calming.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Or the next committee meeting.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yes [...]. Yes. You'd better use that.

MANAGERESS>: Couldn't you leave me a drop?

PS000>: [laugh] ...

MASSEUR>: Yeah, so ylang-ylang is it's, it's very good, it's a good sort of all-round one.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: But this has a much different smell ... to the others.

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: Eh?

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: You might like that one, it's sort of more

PS000>: Right.

MASSEUR>: erm ... it's not sort of flowery.

<15> ADMINISTRATOR>: ***Lovely.***

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive

M: Assessment

<16> ***It's gorgeous.***

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Assessment

<17> ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: *Yeah, i they're not overpowering, are they?* [15 & 16 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Directive > elicit > agree
RF: Express surprise, Contrast of differences
M: Description

MASSEUR>: No. [17 R: Relevant acceptance token]

PS000>: They're delicate. [17 R: Relevant next contribution: literal paraphrase] [Clarification (by different S) via literal language]

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: No.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: I found we used to have them mixed with sweet almond oil and soya oil, which I find this one brings out their aroma much more the grapeseed oil. It's supposed to be erm a lighter oil. And of course with Body Shop it's more [laughing] environmentally easy to get.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Yes. [laugh]

MASSEUR>: We always have to have things that you know are easier to do or are not s such a hassle with the environment. So did you like that one at all?

PS000>: Yeah. It's not bad.

MASSEUR>: You're thinking about that one.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: [...]

PS000>: Well, I think I need, I think I need something a bit stronger that all these three [...].

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: [...]. ...

MASSEUR>: The next one we've got is rose.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Oh, yeah.

MASSEUR>: Now rose is one of the oldest essential oils. And, and rose and neroli are our sort of dearest ones now. Before when we had our other range, they were all the same price, which was wrong really because it's a lot easier to get lavender than it is to get rose.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...]

ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: And if you went and bought the essential oil you could buy

ADMINISTRATOR>: Don't you like it?

MASSEUR>: lavender for about three pound a bottle whereas neroli and rose are eighty six pound a bottle. So now we've ... alter, varied the

prices. Lavender is one ninety-five and rose and neroli are four ninety-five so it does make a, you know, a difference. Now rose I don't know how many of you when you were little used to collect rose petals and put them in the ... jam jars, did you?

PS000>: Yeah.

ADMINISTRATOR>: Ooh, yeah. Yes.

MASSEUR>: And tried to get [...]

PS000>: [...]

ADMINISTRATOR>: [laugh]

<18> MASSEUR>: [laughing] *And all you got was a rotting mess.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Humour, Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

PS000>: [laugh] [18 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: It is very difficult to get essential oil from the rose, it has to be done by what they call extraction. They put it on a, a solvent or a fat in layers ... and let the oil seep through, and so it takes a lot longer and is more difficult to get. Erm ... the rose i has been used through the centuries. Again the Egyptians used to use rose. It's a sort of slight relaxing and an aphrodisiac and ... it's supposed to help your headaches.

MANAGERESS>: Does everybody know what an aphrodisiac is?

MASSEUR>: Oh, yes, an aph aphrodisiac. Do you know what it is?

PS000>: Is it er ... [...] something to make you go ... h high?

MASSEUR>: Y yes sort of.

PS000>: Sor s sort of something like a ... It makes you go, it makes you go l loose and nice and feeling good inside.

MASSEUR>: That's it. Sort a er you know you ... you're, you're happy but you're full of go at the same time.

PS000>: Yeah.

MASSEUR>: You're not so th relaxed that you want to do this but you're relaxed and yet you're happy with life as well.

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: So this is what rose is supposed to be. It's more

PS000>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: of a sort of they call one of the women's essential oils ... er cos I suppose they think rose was a woman really, [laughing] don't

they? So it's good again for headaches. It's good for people with dry skins. The dry mature skin as they say.

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: Er, so you can mix it with your moisturizer. All these you could use as a face ... cre in a face cream. So again this is good for headaches, dry, flaky skin. It's good just to make you feel good. Some people use it as a perfume.

PS000>: No, I think I know what a rose smells like.

MASSEUR>: You, Yes [...].

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: He's gonna, he's gonna bypass that one.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Not macho

PS000>: No.

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: enough.

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: No, I just I know they ta I know what they smell like, you know.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] Yeah.

PS000>: [...]

<19> MANAGERESS>: [...] *everybody's asleep in a minute*, everybody's [...].

SA: Representative > report > predict, foresee

RF: Express surprise, Humour, Emphasis

M: Description of future state (Prediction)

PS000>: [...] [laugh] [19 R: Laughter]

<20> MASSEUR>: *I've got the reviving ones next*. You're all right? [19 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform

PIA: Commissive > offer

FTA to H – face > offer through off-record politeness: give hints: conditions for doing X

RF: Contrast of differences

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [20 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: [...]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Are you okay in the corner Karen, enjoying the smells?

<21> PS000>: *Nearly asleep*.

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Express surprise, Humour

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [21 R: Laughter]

<22> MANAGERESS>: *Haven't been so relaxed for ages, have we?* [21 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole] [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Express surprise, Humour, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [22 R: Laughter]

MASSEUR>: [...]?

MANAGERESS>: [...]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: In the, with the camomile with have in our mother and baby range, ... Mamatoto range, and I usually go to mother and baby u clinics and m massage the babies [laughing] with it. You know and they seem to love it, yeah.

<23> PS000>: *Oh, how lovely*. Yeah.

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > approve

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Assessment

<24> MASSEUR>: *And usually the one I massage at the end is way out [laughing] asleep, you know*. [23 R: Ignored hyperbole without topic shift]

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Humour

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [24 R: Laughter]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm. [24 R: Back-channel response]

MASSEUR>: I'm getting very popular at these mother and baby things. [laugh] ... Right the last one on the rela

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: I the relaxing one is one called neroli, which is my favourite.

PS000>: [...]

MASSEUR>: Now neroli is made from the blossom of the bitter orange tree. You get three essential oils from the orange tree. You get neroli from the blossom, er tangerine and orange which erm or mandarin, whi people might call it from the fruits, and from the leaves

and the twigs and the bark you get er an oil called petitgrain. So it's very useful is the orange tree. Erm, neroli is very good for sensitive skins ... for people who have er you know veins on the surface.

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: Men don't usually suffer

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: from that, it's

MANAGERESS>: Mm. Yes.

MANAGERESS>: It's sort of the ladies who get

MANAGERESS>: Mm.

MASSEUR>: the veins on the s red cheeks

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Yeah.

PS000>: Yeah.

MASSEUR>: and a red nose. It's also good for erm depressed, if you're depressed, neroli is very good for depression. It's also very good again if you're going on your committee meeting or you're going for an interview to rub on what they call the solar plexus, just here.

PS000>: Yeah? [laugh]

MASSEUR>: It helps to when you get, you know, when you get the your tummy

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Butterflies.

MASSEUR>: [laughing] butterflies, yeah. And to rub on there and it helps to calm it down. They do say that essential oils will often work quicker than a tablet. I mean, I've never timed them. [laugh]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: Cos it depends how you feel. But that's what they do say, that it, it sometimes works quicker. So if you're going or <25> *when my daughter had a driving test I was [laughing] massaging neroli all over her in the hope that she would calm down.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

ADMINISTRATOR>: [laugh] [25 R: Laughter]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Did she pass? [25 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

MASSEUR>: Well, only the third time.

PS000>: [laugh]

<26> MASSEUR>: [laugh] *She just went haywire as soon as she saw the instructor.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Humour

M: Narration

PS000>: [laugh] [26 R: Laughter]

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [...] [26 R: Inaudible response]

<27> MASSEUR>: It wouldn't be so bad, [laughing] er she's not a nervous type normally and *it's the only person that's sort of made her go completely nervous.* So neroli again is good for the skin.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > blame, accuse (NPP)

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition

ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: [sigh] [27 R: Negative evidence: non-verbal response: sigh]

PS000>: [...] [27 R: Inaudible response]

MASSEUR>: You ma when you smell

<28> ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: *It is lovely, isn't it?* Yeah, it is relaxing.

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive

M: Assessment

MASSEUR>: When you smell this one [28 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

<29> MANAGERESS>: [laughing] *Everybody's so relaxed.* [28 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Express surprise, Humour, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [29 R: Laughter]

MANAGERESS>: [laughing] We are not normally like this.

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: When you smell this one you may re there's the l the girls particularly may recognize it from face cream. A l neroli is a lot in face creams cos it is good for the skin. Go on smell that one, cos it's a nice one.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: [laugh]

MASSEUR>: I'm going to get him to like one.
 PS000>: [laugh] ...
 <30> PS000>: *I can't smell [laughing] anything now.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Commissive > decline invitation
 FTA to H + face > declining invitation through excuse for non-compliance
 RF: Express surprise, Humour, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [30 R: Laughter]
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Do you like neroli [...]?
 MASSEUR>: [...]
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: I like the lavender best.
 PS000>: Mm.
 PS000>: It's probably a knock-on effect [...].
 MANAGERESS>: Lavender must
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.
 MANAGERESS>: be nice sort of in the bath at night.
 MASSEUR>: Yes.
 MANAGERESS>: So which one is the best sort of
 MASSEUR>: Lavender is. We have a, a erm a bath oil here. <31> Oh, well, *I've got the massage one which w we might massage our hands or massage somebody's hands in a minute.* This relaxing massage oil has got lavender in and ylang-ylang and frankincense

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Commissive > proposal
 FTA to H – face > proposal through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [31 R: Inaudible response]
 MASSEUR>: and sandalwood so it's nice for men as well cos they're supposed to like frankincense and sandalwood. [laugh] And this is nice if you just use a capful in a drawn bath. And so if you were to use that at night and then put a bit of lavender on, it is really nice.
 MANAGERESS>: Mm.
 MASSEUR>: Really relaxing. Erm, the massage oil which this one is, I use a lot of this

for massaging and but people find it very ... relaxing. Er
 MANAGERESS>: If you have a bath in the morning, what [...]?
 MASSEUR>: Well, if you have a bath in the morning, we have, we have ... If I've got it here ... I haven't got one here, but we do have a refreshing shower gel.
 MANAGERESS>: Mhm.
 MASSEUR>: And that's got lemon and lemon grass ... and er ... bay in that one I think. So that's you can use that in the bath as well, but they call it a shower gel because a shower oil because, they think people usually have a shower in the morning and a bath at night.
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.
 MASSEUR>: But if you haven't got a shower you can use it anyway. But that one is quite erm, oh I thought I had some in here. [whispering] Obviously not.
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Oh, I'm not keen on that one.
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Oh, that do you, do you remember those
 MASSEUR>: You don't like nero. Yes, it's
 ADMINISTRATOR>: little erm you used be able to get I don't know if you still can little wipes in little sachets and they smelled of this. ...
 MASSEUR>: Yes.
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: Mm.
 ADMINISTRATOR>: Little face wipes. Refreshing wipes [...].
 PS000>: [...]
 MASSEUR>: We do that with the Mamatoto ones again.
 ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.
 MASSEUR>: It's in my other box.
 ADMINISTRATOR>: Oh, I like those.
 MASSEUR>: We've got [...].
 ADMINISTRATION TUTOR>: I quite like it.
 ADMINISTRATOR>: Mm.

Text G5M

BNC domain: Business
 G: Service encounter
 Medical consultation
 Participants: General practitioner, 35, male;
 Patient, female

PATIENT>: I've come of a new [...]
 GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: please.
 GP>: Let's have a look. This is the Noraday, yeah.
 PATIENT>: Noraday, yeah.
 GP>: Everything okay on that?
 PATIENT>: Yeah, fine, yeah.
 GP>: Periods behaving?
 PATIENT>: Erm, sometimes I have a, a good period, like
 GP>: Yeah.
 PATIENT>: I used to on er
 GP>: Yeah.
 PATIENT>: other pill.
 GP>: [...] yeah, that's right.
 PATIENT>: But sometimes I don't have one or
 GP>: Yeah.
 PATIENT>: sometimes it's just one
 GP>: Yeah.
 PATIENT>: day.
 GP>: Yeah, a bit erratic?
 PATIENT>: [...] Er, Yeah. But
 GP>: Right, okay.
 PATIENT>: no problem at all.
 GP>: Yes, that can happen on Noraday. Waterworks? Bowels? Breasts?
 PATIENT>: Yeah, fine.
 GP>: All behaving?
 PATIENT>: Yes.
 GP>: Right, now what we do need to do today is to get your blood pressure checked.
 PATIENT>: Yeah.
 GP>: How are things going on from the other point of view?
 PATIENT>: Erm, it get's
 GP>: Mm.
 PATIENT>: a bit off still.
 GP>: Yes.
 PATIENT>: Yeah. We h we still haven't heard anything.
 GP>: From the psychologist?
 PATIENT>: Er, no, [...] go to see him.
 GP>: [...] you've, you've got from them, certainly.
 PATIENT>: Yeah. Yeah.
 <32> GP>: *But you're still in limbo as far as the*
 PATIENT>: Yeah. [32 R: Relevant acceptance token]
 GP>: *the civil action is concerned?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
 RF: Simplification, Contrast of differences
 M: Description

PATIENT>: Erm, even no second inquest, nothing. [32 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
 GP>: Oh. [...]
 PATIENT>: But er apparently [...] got a solicitor. Er, we haven't had to see anybody about that and he sent us a letter saying that he'd like to see us and we went and he says it there might not be a second inquest.
 GP>: Oh.
 PATIENT>: Might go straight to court.
 GP>: Ah.
 PATIENT>: And then we had a phone call from the police, about a month ago.
 GP>: Oh, right, good.
 PATIENT>: Saying that it had gone straight to court, it was in court, you know
 GP>: Oh, right.
 PATIENT>: but we haven't heard anything.
 GP>: Oh, well, I mean they may have been adjourned or a
 PATIENT>: Even though
 GP>: it may have been referred to a higher court.
 PATIENT>: You think so.
 GP>: [...]
 PATIENT>: Erm
 GP>: I mean we, we haven't heard anything directly, I'm only glad that the police are actually telling you something.
 PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah.
 GP>: [cough]
 <33> PATIENT>: It, *it was a big shock that day, when we had that phone call.*

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis
 M: Narration

GP>: Mm. [33 R: Back-channel response]
 PATIENT>: But it was I, you know, to know that you haven't got to fight,
 GP>: That's right, yeah.
 PATIENT>: t to take him to court.
 GP>: [...]
 PATIENT>: Erm
 GP>: But it's a long process. <34> *I mean, we have dealings with solicitors for all sorts of things*, asking for reports and we send a lot of notes away to have a lot of er [...] medical opinion reports

SA: Representative > report > inform
 RF: Simplification, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<35> and **they take ages to come back**. And that's a, these are the preliminary things that the solicitor must go through before they get near court, so

SA: Representative > report > warn
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PATIENT>: Yeah. [34 & 35. Acceptance token]

<36> GP>: **the people**

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: who it's actually, **they're actually dealing with are waiting months and months and months** and er

SA: Representative > report > warn
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PATIENT>: Yeah. [36 R: Acceptance token]

GP>: it looks like that in your case. We,

PATIENT>: [...]

GP>: we may well have to provide the medical report on your behalf, yet.

PATIENT>: God.

GP>: But n no-one has approached me to do so.

PATIENT>: No, no.

GP>: So er but it wouldn't surprise me if some sort of medical report on how you are doesn't reach court.

PATIENT>: It, erm, Mr who we see psychologist erm the first week I went to see him, Oh [...]. It t d [...] certainly, you know erm

GP>: Yeah. It's very

PATIENT>: Erm

GP>: hard.

PATIENT>: We, do you know, when we start doing something, we'll do it and even if we do things different [...] gonna say? We thinking well why are we doing it this way?

GP>: Mm.

<37> PATIENT>: **So er everything's pulling at us,**

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)
 RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

GP>: Yeah. [37 R: Acceptance token]

PATIENT>: *you know*. <38> W, *we seem as though we do something and we [...] w, we are absolutely drained*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Description

GP>: Mm. [38 R: Back-channel response]

PATIENT>: you get, we want to push ourselves.

GP>: That's right.

PATIENT>: But do you know, <39> *once we start doing something w, we're just drained all the while*.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)
 RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Description

<40> GP>: **In some ways you're in limbo** [39 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift through continuation of hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)
 PIA: Expressive > commiserate
 RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative
 M: Description

<41> *cos you've, you've got nothing to aim towards*. You've

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)
 PIA: Expressive > commiserate
 RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PATIENT>: No. [40 & 41 R: Acceptance token]

GP>: got, I mean, if, even if you had a date to aim towards, even if it was six months hence, at least that would help you, you could

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: aim towards it and work towards it.

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: But er and I think it's most unfair on you two really and the whole thing. And you, you come off worse than anyone else and er but there's no real way of speeding that up, they can't give

PATIENT>: No.

GP>: dates and they can't say what's going to happens [...] they have to go through, sift the evidence, arrange it all in a certain order,

PATIENT>: [...]

GP>: and then go and

PATIENT>: Rachael, she's coming home. Well, she was, she was discharged Friday from hospital.

GP>: Mm. Oh, right.

PATIENT>: And er they thought Thursday they'd have to do an operation on her by taking a piece of bone from her hip,

GP>: Mhm.

GP>: and putting it in the leg. <42> *But they said it was knitting together lovely.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: positive

M: Narration

GP>: Good, good. [42 R: Acceptance token]

PATIENT>: But then they took the pins out,

GP>: Ah.

PATIENT>: let her go home Friday, discharged her the day after. She'd put too much weight on it, and she's back in hospital, she's broke it.

GP>: Well, they'll probably have to put at least the bone in there, it's a bone graft.

PATIENT>: They've put it in plaster at the moment.

GP>: Yeah, [...]

PATIENT>: But s you know she, she's mending, it's erm

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: She, she's coming okay, I think.

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: You know to see her as well, that's som you know.

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: But we don't go as often now.

GP>: No.

PATIENT>: Erm, [...] ...

GP>: Right.

<43> PATIENT>: *Lovely*, and

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > appreciate

RF: Evaluation: positive

M: Assessment

GP>: [...] Th, the six packets of Noraday. [43 R: Collaborative completion]

PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah.

GP>: [cough] Your smear is due in December. Now I'm going to leave that with you. If you really don't feel like coming up for a smear at that time, that's fine and we'll understand why.

<44> And w, *there's an awful lot*

PATIENT>: Yeah. [44 R: Acceptance token]

GP>: *of pressure on you from an awful lot of other sources, so don't worry about it.* And

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

PIA: Expressive > commiserate

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition

PATIENT>: Yeah. [44 R: Acceptance token]

GP>: But er you are

PATIENT>: [...]

GP>: actually officially due in December and obviously we'd like

PATIENT>: Is that me three years?

GP>: Yeah.

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: [cough] We'd like

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: to get that done.

PATIENT>: Yeah. Don't seem like three years. [laugh]

GP>: Oh, no, I'm sure. The psychologist of course will continue to see you. And if

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: you want to pop in and have a chat with me in between that's fine, but I'm not here next week.

PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah. [...]

GP>: [...] So that's that. Er and I hope everything goes a smoothly as possible. If there are any medical reports to do, we'll get them

done as soon as possible but, you know, a is that's very much out of our hands, and
 PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: we can only wait on your solicitors, their solicitors, there's the police, the court, the entire system.

PATIENT>: You see we haven't notified any solicitor at all, it was

GP>: No.

PATIENT>: just when we got back off holiday we'd got a letter from

GP>: Well, it's if the police are doing the prosecuting then you may

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: not have to bother [...]

PATIENT>: Well, it, it, apparently there is a clause in Lee's insurance er that got the solicitor

GP>: Yeah.

PATIENT>: and he notified us

GP>: Right.

PATIENT>: and he said he would b represent. But then he mentioned, when we wen to see him, he says [...] we will deal with this but you must get somebody for civil

GP>: Yeah.

PATIENT>: action.

GP>: Yeah.

PATIENT>: And we asked him if he did civil action.

GP>: Oh, right, yeah.

PATIENT>: And he said yes he'd,

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: he would, you know, he hasn't g, the records haven't got to be released then to

GP>: No.

PATIENT>: anybody else. He, he will be able to get them. But it's just hoping that everything goes right, but at least we

GP>: [...]

PATIENT>: haven't got to fight for prosecution.

GP>: No, no. That should go through, but er it's a question of when it's going to be though. [...]

PATIENT>: Yeah, yeah. Do they usually take time like this?

GP>: Yes.

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: Yes. <45> Things from er *data whenever can take ages and ages and ages to*, and you know doctors get sued every now and again, perish the thought,

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PATIENT>: [laughing] Oh [...] [45 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

GP>: Perish the thought but when

PATIENT>: [cough]

GP>: y w you when you keep hearing reports in the medical journals about doctors being sued, and it can be several years after the event that the case comes to court. Now it won't be that long in your case, but it just goes to show how lengthy the whole thing can be.

PATIENT>: Yea, yeah, yeah.

GP>: And it's er

PATIENT>: But it's so

GP>: But

PATIENT>: much hurt, you know.

GP>: That's right.

PATIENT>: [...] but Pete, he, he still getting up very early, he doesn't sleep

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: very good.

GP>: Yeah. Yeah. I mean in some ways

PATIENT>: And

GP>: I think he's more effected by it than you. And [...]

PATIENT>: I like erm psychologist said erm

GP>: there's a lot of anger there, isn't there?

PATIENT>: Yeah. He says I'm still with denial

GP>: Yeah.

PATIENT>: and Pete knows it's happened.

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: I erm if I try not to give way, it leaves so much up here

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: I can keep thinking it's not happened.

GP>: Yeah. That's right. But

PATIENT>: You know. But

GP>: wor working through it all, it's very, very painful.

PATIENT>: Yeah.

GP>: And it's easier in the short term not to have [...] In the long term you get more problems.

PATIENT>: Yea, yeah. I, I've found that. You know, like I say, I try to do some things different, and then that don't work sometimes cos I think well why am I doing 'em like that?

GP>: Mm.

PATIENT>: I wouldn't be doing this if it hadn't happened. Do you, do you,

GP>: Mhm.
 PATIENT>: Do you know what I mean? [sniff]
 So like you say it can cause [...]
 GP>: [cough]
 PATIENT>: that few more problems. But erm
 probably if we wasn't [...] so much and
 GP>: Mm. I think he 'd be [...]
 PATIENT>: I think sometimes he's still being
 protective.
 GP>: Yeah.
 PATIENT>: He's still being protective.
 GP>: Mm. That's right.
 PATIENT>: And erm dunno. The police I
 know, went to see Rachael, and they still can't
 understand why he didn't use an islander, you
 know?
 GP>: No.
 <46> PATIENT>: *And it's just unbelievable.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing
 > complain (event)
 RF: Express surprise, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

GP>: Mm. [46 R: Back-channel response]
 PATIENT>: But everybody's allowed a mistake
 but
 GP>: [...]
 PATIENT>: when you've got a big articulated
 lorry
 GP>: Bit of drastic mistake to make.
 PATIENT>: you know, if you, you know, I
 can't stop feeling as though that morning he
 used that lorry as a weapon.
 GP>: Mm.
 PATIENT>: You know, er, I don't [...] I think
 as it goes on y you do start and get that anger
 that anger so bad, but erm, but I'll leave you to
 get on, doctor. [laugh]
 GP>: [...]

Text JJC
BNC domain: Business
G: Service encounter
Estate agency: interview
Participants: Estate agent, male; Buyer, female

CLIENT>: Erm, right I'm new to the area and
 I'm sort of wanting to move into the Garden
 City.
 <47> ESTATE AGENT>: *Great.* Take a seat.
 Is it still as cold out there as it looks?

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing
 > approve
 RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment

<48> CLIENT>: *Absolutely freezing out there.*
 [47 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > inform
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative,
 Emphasis
 M: Description

<49> ESTATE AGENT>: *Oh, yuk, oh,
 horrible, horrible.* Okay, so you're looking for
 a house or [48 R: Back-channel response +
 continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing
 > complain (situation)
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative,
 Emphasis
 M: Assessment

CLIENT>: Well, I'm actually, I'd like
 something cottagey if at all possible, but erm
 I'm quite open minded at the moment, erm, I'm
 so new to the area, I'm actually in Brookmans
 Park at the moment. [49 R: Unchallenged
 hyperbole]
 ESTATE AGENT>: Right.
 CLIENT>: but my house is on the market.
 ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, has that been on
 there long?
 CLIENT>: It's been on for about the past
 month.
 ESTATE AGENT>: And what sort of response
 are you getting on that?
 CLIENT>: Not too bad, had a couple of people
 round in the last week and one seems quite
 keen.
 ESTATE AGENT>: All fairly encouraging
 then.
 CLIENT>: Yeah, you know, quite hopeful so
 what I, as I say, what I'm really looking for is,
 I've got a preference for older properties but
 you know try not to pin myself down to too
 much at the moment. I've got about a hundred
 and thirty to spend [...] so ideally, I'd like a
 cottage old style but I do need three bedrooms.
 ESTATE AGENT>: OK, right.

CLIENT>: Erm, ideally, would like something in villages.

ESTATE AGENT>: OK.

CLIENT>: But something on the outskirts of the Garden City might be OK, perhaps on the northern side.

ESTATE AGENT>: Right, OK, that's fine.

CLIENT>: Um, I've heard the west side's nice.

ESTATE AGENT>: Yeah, west side is very popular and it tends to be the area where we get the older properties as well, so that's encouraging.

CLIENT>: That would suit me then, wouldn't it?

ESTATE AGENT>: OK, with erm other than the three bedrooms, do you have any particular requirements, do you need a garage or anything like that?

CLIENT>: A garage would be nice and as we've got two cars, <50> so **although a garage is vital, if we, as long as we can get them off the road, that would be an advantage.**

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

ESTATE AGENT>: And with regard to the three bedrooms, do you actually need three bedrooms or if a, a two bedroomed cottage came up with perhaps an extra room downstairs or something, would that be okay? [50 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

CLIENT>: Erm, yes, it should be okay, <51> *perhaps you know if **obviously if one bedroom a box room** wouldn't be any good to us* but that would be [...] consider that

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > hypothesise

PIA: Directive > advisive > warn

FTA to H – face > warning through - politeness: dissociate H from infringement: impersonalise H + be indirect

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

ESTATE AGENT>: Yep. It's just that some of the cottages tend to be a bit smaller so that it might well be that we can get you something where there's a perhaps ground floor extension or whatever, okay? Do you need to be or have access to the railway station or to the main

roads or anything like that? [51 R: Acceptance token + Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

CLIENT>: It's an advantage but with cars it's not really a problem, so ...

<52> ESTATE AGENT>: **That's fine, okay, smashing.** What sort of timescale are you looking at to move, really just waiting to get a buyer on yours or?

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > approve, accept

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Assessment

CLIENT>: Well, yes, as soon as things get moving there, then we would be ready really, so hopefully in the next month or so. [52 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

ESTATE AGENT>: Good, okay. Well, let's take some details from you and what I'll do is I'll register your details onto our mailing list so that erm, anything that's coming onto the market you'll get a phone call on straight away to let you know but also I'll then check and see what we've got that might suit your requirements at the moment. So what's the name, please?

CLIENT>: Erm, it's erm [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, and what's your address?

CLIENT>: Erm, it's [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: [...]

CLIENT>: [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: And the postcode there is?

CLIENT>: [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, is there a home telephone number for you?

CLIENT>: Erm, yes, it's erm would be [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, and is there a day-time telephone number, a work telephone number?

CLIENT>: Yes, you could probably ring me at work, yep, that's more convenient so that's [...]

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay, any extension on that or do we come straight through to you?

CLIENT>: That'll come direct.

<53> ESTATE AGENT>: **That's smashing okay.** Now you just said you've got your own property to sell and that's on the market at the moment, okay? Erm, have you had any advice

on mortgage and what we should be able to obtain on the mortgage side of things?

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > approve, accept

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Assessment

CLIENT>: Er, yes, we have actually but erm [53 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

ESTATE AGENT>: Is that from your own building society or

CLIENT>: Well, we were actually going to be going through the Halifax, but have you got any other suggestions?

ESTATE AGENT>: Yes, erm, we've actually linked with a firm of independent mortgage brokers erm so rather than being tied to a particular building society as most estate agents are erm what they will do is they'll shop around and tell you which lenders are offering the best terms and particularly good schemes at any one time erm, it's literally free information, they simply phone you up and say get some idea of what your salary is and what your requirements are and then they'll send through some information for you. Can I ask our adviser just to give you a free phone call?

CLIENT>: Yeah, erm it certainly wouldn't do any harm, erm, I'd rather not be rung at work if that's alright.

ESTATE AGENT>: No, that's alright, we try and keep it confidential so they work evenings they'll contact you. Is there

CLIENT>: Yeah, right, well, you know any time after sort of six, six thirty you should be able to catch me then

ESTATE AGENT>: Okay and is there a particular evening that's best for you?

CLIENT>: Erm, no, most evenings, it doesn't really matter, no.

<54> ESTATE AGENT>: *That's fine, okay, smashing.* Right, well, as I say, I've got your details here so what I'll do is if you bear with me, I'll go and have a look through the drawers and see what we've got available. Okay?

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > approve, accept

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Assessment

CLIENT>: Do you just have the one office or? [54 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

ESTATE AGENT>: No, no, we've got another office at Knebworth which is a village approximately six miles north of here. What I will also be doing automatically is passing your details through to the office so that as you're looking for character property and village property they'll be particularly appropriate, okay? But also to make life easier we actually carry their details here so anything that they've got available I'll be able to give to you now.

CLIENT>: Oh, fine, okay, then give me a ring if anything new comes in.

ESTATE AGENT>: I'll give you a ring if anything new comes in.

CLIENT>: Well, thanks very much indeed.

ESTATE AGENT>: Thanks.

CLIENT>: Okay, thank you, bye, bye.

Text K6X

BNC domain: Business

G: Decision making/Negotiating outcomes

Nottingham Constabulary: meeting

Participants: Storer, 47, male; Collishan, male; Jeffery, 38, sergeant, male; Mills, 38, sergeant, male; Stone, 47, inspector, male; Williams, 48, inspector, male; Hadfield, 40, sergeant, male; Smith, 47, sergeant, male

PS000>: Any plans?

COLLISHAN>: Well, I, obviously want to try and attend meetings if and when possible, er I've been to one last week, which basically was er [...] because I don't feel I'm qualified to get up and [...] David got up and spoke very well actually, he was always at the police not neighbourhood watch, er to do with the cascade telephone system which we found out afterwards, after a three quarters hour debate a man came up to Dave afterwards and showed him a memo which said this cascade system has now ceased in November 1992 and that was the, the abuse on that particular meeting. I do intend to er to attend inaugural meetings with each of the CPOs er with a view to looking, I mean obviously at some stages you said to me that I would probably have to attend at short notice.

STORER>: Mm.

COLLISHAN>: Probably by going to these meetings I can pick up the best practice for ideas which can be passed on to the others.

STORER>: If anybody hears of any neighbourhood watch group meetings, I think make sure Paul knows about it so he can attend where possible.

COLLISHAN>: Yeah.

STORER>: Like him to go and look at the one at er the at er which seems to be a successful one.

COLLISHAN>: Well, I went to the [...] last week and I did say that I'd like to go to that one, I'll go to as many as I can.

PS000>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: What I would like and I'm sure it happens with the previous CPO er and I have been notified by telephone and I keep saying to them let me know, but I would like probably a memo from each CPO to say that there is a meeting on this particular night.

PS000>: Do you mean inaugural meetings?

COLLISHAN>: Well, any meetings really because I think if I can er show my face at these meetings it might, er, I mean, I think whether or not it's because of the increase in burglaries or whether it's because of the publicity via David, <55> *we seem to have had er a hell of a lot of er enquiries about the schemes*. More than normal Tracy, ain't it? [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Yeah, I think so. [55 R: Relevant acceptance token]

PS000>: Yeah. [55 R: Acceptance token]

STORER>: Okay, er

JEFFERY>: It's amazing that he's [...]

PS000>: What you saying that for Jed, how long you been saying that for?

JEFFERY>: Yeah, I know, but there has ain't there, you know but I say that and I live in an area where there's not a neighbourhood watch scheme and I ain't setting one up to until I retire.

PS000>: As crime goes up, people see it as a way of protecting their property, don't they?

PS000>: Yes.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Seventeen per cent of reported crime is up.

PS000>: Mm.

PS000>: [...]

MILLS>: Erm, may I make a comment on neighbourhood watch? I went to er a job the other day, it was a theatre, I was off duty and er I got tapped on the shoulder by my local neighbourhood watch co-ordinator who said, nine months ago I resigned, I wrote a letter to headquarters, I wrote a letter to the divisional commander, and I wrote a letter to the local constable, and nobody's replied to me and they still keep sending me papers, are you gonna get your act together? Now I, I have brought this up before, we never ever have let a neighbourhood watch scheme lapse, it's nothing to do with you, this is all before you came.

PS000>: No.

PS000>: Er, we just kept them on and there's, I know quite a few schemes have stopped working but we've still got them written down somewhere.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Probably now we started it might be well worth while getting rid of some of these schemes that aren't operating.

PS000>: Are you saying then that when one's lapsed for six months or over a given period of time we should actually go out there and remove the signs?

MILLS>: Yeah.

STONE>: Well, that's one of my next questions because I think it's debatable either way, a, a lot of people and I'm finding this, just want to be in a neighbourhood watch scheme to take advantage of insurance er and also to have the sign up. Once the signs are up and they got insurance [...] they're not bothered, and you can tell that by the er gist of the conversation on the telephone. The other, the other thing is I've discussed this with CPOs as regards the signs, if a scheme folds then we take the sign down, there are arguments for and against,

PS000>: No, No.

STONE>: [...] say yeh or nay at the moment.

PS000>: No.

STONE>: But if the sign's left up, surely that's erm

PS000>: deterrent

STONE>: towards crime prevention, on the other hand it might make some people realise

that if they're no longer a scheme then they don't get the er the

PS000>: Yeah.

WILLIAMS>: Once a co-ordinator's retired or resigned, who do you actually communicate with to find out if the group wants to continue playing?

STONE>: Well, it should be in the file and I asked for this and keep it before me when a scheme is set up, A) we have a map which I must have sent out [...] letters,

PS000>: Em.

STONE>: I've received very few replies so the signs can be erected and B) either a deputy co-ordinator or the deputies that should come in, now some, some oblige a lot of them, don't

STORER>: Right, well, let's find one or two of these schemes that appear to have lapsed, send some letters to the names in the file, if we don't get any positive response within a couple of months, <56> *let's go and take the signs down er and then wait for the squeals*

IIA: SIA: Directive > requestive > proposal

PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct, command

FTA to H – face > instruct through negative politeness: impersonalise S and H (we) + be indirect

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Instruction

PS000>: [...] [56 R: Inaudible response]

PS000>: [...] [56 R: Inaudible response]

STORER>: We'll do it ourselves, although the council are the only people who can put them up anyone can take them down,

PS000>: All you need is a pair of wire cutters

STORER>: wire cutters and we'll have them down, have 'em back here, and they won't be wasted, cos although you can't use the straps again we're always short of fronts because of damage cos you can regularly replace the fronts but not the straps.

PS000>: Well, we can buy straps, or always order some more straps if that's the case.

PS000>: Yes.

MILLS>: It'll also, if we start to take action, provoke somebody else to take over the schemes.

PS000>: Well, that's right.

<57> MILLS>: *At the moment nobody's interested.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

STORER>: But I think we need to prove that we've actually communicated with quite a few people to say that if we don't hear from you in two months, then I'm afraid the scheme will lapse. [57 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Is that down to us or should we notify the division to make contact?

STORER>: No if, if we notify the division after the end of it.

COLLISHAN>: We can only write to people we know, it might well be twenty out of thirty houses wanted

PS000>: Well,

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: I think you'll find, but they might be more up to date than Mike.

PS000>: Well, then, in that case let's send a copy letter to the local station

PS000>: I think so.

PS000>: for their information [sniff].

PS000>: I intend to go through all the files in due course, I mean, it's

PS000>: Well.

STONE>: It it's a big task, em, er the thing is that I think that that the first point of call is one, is that we get the questionnaire out and see whether you know the one where can, we can the questionnaires [...] to all the neighbourhood watch is it, w, w we prepare the questionnaire and we get on and send it out, right. Depending on the replies from them in relation to those that have lapsed we then send a second letter to them saying is there anybody that will take over the scheme? if not, right we, we intend to remove the signs from the er, from the area and then if there is no reply to this letter within fourteen days we, you know, we'll come and remove the signs.

PS000>: I think there's a lot of them.

PS000>: [...]

WILLIAMS>: That trawl will bring out a couple of dozen schemes that have totally lapsed, and people will write snotty letters saying I've told you this once before.

PS000>: Mm, yeah.

<58> WILLIAMS>: So, *great*, let's communicate with any other deputies and say if you're not prepared to take it over we'll close the, we're afraid the scheme will have to close down.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Assessment

PS000>: And

WILLIAMS>: And remove the signs.

STONE>: And any claim and, and please inform your insurance companies. [58 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

WILLIAMS>: And depending on the area we'll give a photocopy of the map and Derek will fetch 'em in, Derek can take them down.

PS000>: Who'll [...] doing

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: No [...]

COLLISHAN>: We have that many er applications, I mean, I've just gone through A division <59> and *I've got er a pile of cards, literally an inch thick, with people a) made an initial inquiry or b) they've been furnished with questionnaires and not been returned*, so I'm sending those er right through the divisions.

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: Mm. [59 R: Back-channel response]

COLLISHAN>: That's the task of the moment, in between the everyday work.

PS000>: Mm, yeah.

COLLISHAN>: Then of course there's this insurance thing to do as well when David's er free and sorted out.

PS000>: Yeah, well, it's [...] a lot of that.

PS000>: Yeah, at least we'll end up with a scheme that's up-to-date and accurate.

PS000>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: Well, we could also from that by photocopying the er the addresses erm and sending these letters out we might well get updated on the schemes anyway [...]

PS000>: That er a scheme isn't operating

PS000>: What about [...]

PS000>: computerisation of the system to come back to us every twelve months if no contact

PS000>: Eventually, yes. Eventually, yes. I think we only want to be on the mainframe so that the divisions can access details in the middle of the night. I think we still have priority at the moment to computers, in effect Paul is going to [...]

PS000>: We might as well

COLLISHAN>: I still think we have to have the system as such, perhaps not so intricate, but certainly keep the file probably with the bits in.

PS000>: We might, cos you won't be able to put maps and things on them.

PS000>: Eh.

PS000>: But certainly the main co-ordinators er

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: Almost like the burglar alarm [...] you just have scheme, head co-ordinators, you know deputy co-ordinator, number of 'ouses and that just a basic so you go in

<60> COLLISHAN>: *We, we don't want really is street co-ordinators because*

PS000>: No.

COLLISHAN>: *that'd be a mammoth task.*

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

STONE>: If you have somebody like somewhere like that [60 R: Challenged hyperbole]

COLLISHAN>: I'm not talking about that, I'm now talking about Tollerton but it's eight hundred properties, it's a small village but there are twenty-seven street co-ordinators, so you know.

STONE>: Erm, yeah, so say all you need is just access to that field so if they do change you can just

MILLS>: At the moment you do I take it you're recording people who sort of ring up say I'm interested, you send out a package to them, you record them.

PS000>: Yes.

MILLS>: I would think about giving up that, send the package out and forget about them.

COLLISHAN>: Well, this is something I've just done myself.

MILLS>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: But I mean you send the package out and you get a phone call er it's Mr Davies, and then you get card out and then you send him the questionnaire it's merely a record duplicated on the form but

PS000>: [...]

COLLISHAN>: it's, I can't see any other way to do it at the moment, I mean probably when I

MILLS>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: think about it, but

PS000>: I mean, you don't start a file at that stage, do you?

COLLISHAN>: No, just a card in er a pending tray and that's it.

MILLS>: So you know who they are, yeah.

COLLISHAN>: Er a sheet of paper for Tracy to get the initial erm [...] out and then they just go through the system.

STONE>: And you also get sometimes two people off the same street.

COLLISHAN>: Well, that's it.

STONE>: It's just a reference they want you [...] Mr Smith two doors away.

COLLISHAN>: Well, I've had one for Basingfield or Basingfield.

PS000>: Oh, I spoke to her, yeah.

COLLISHAN>: Yeah, I've had three applications all for the, it's only a small village albeit it's spread

PS000>: and that's a [...]

COLLISHAN>: You know for the er village

PS000>: Well, have you spoken to Sergeant [...] to alleviate all the paperwork and

PS000>: Yeah, yeah.

PS000>: and incur any additional expense?

PS000>: Three, three farms and there's only ten properties altogether in about two hundred yards

COLLISHAN>: But they're building some more, aren't they? building another seven

<61> PS000>: Building some, yeah, **building some massive houses there.**

SA: Representative > report > confirm

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: and a Happy Eater as well. [61 R: Collaborative completion]

COLLISHAN>: Well, that's it.

PS000>: [...]

COLLISHAN>: Do they include that in the scheme, some of them on the rate? I won't bother with that anyway, it's not our problem.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: Okay, anybody

HADFIELD>: I've got one I meant to put on the main agenda and I forgot, and I wrote the agenda [...]. I've been offered the opportunity by er Bob in training er in force [...] have taken this on er the tactical unit have taken it on, the chance of er one day erm assessment or appraisal training, at erm probably at Exeter for those of us that do it and erm I think that perhaps with the, the way that the diverse way that our staff's spread out, the proper ways of assessing people which I've, I've never been shown how to do and I don't think many of us have. Erm, I mean, he it sort of went through our staff inspector wise and er Paul was sort of chatting, and he wasn't being unkind <62> *he said yes, they'll be dinosaurs* because it's a long time since you've had er any training like that. [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

STONE>: What about civilian staff? I have to assess my staff, I haven't had no training. [62. Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

PS000>: Yeah, yeah.

PS000>: Right, yeah.

PS000>: [...]

HADFIELD>: I also said that erm my, I expressed that the fears that I expressed at this meeting last time about er the fact that Paul and I now supervise civilian staff, er which I've never been sat down and told what the civilians term of contract are and what I can or cannot say or whatever, so erm I feel it will be quite valuable, and brought it for me to see if anybody think it's worthwhile pursuing.

PS000>: A one day appraisal.

HADFIELD>: Yes, it's a one day,

STORER>: Just write it on a memo form Paul and send it round with a circulation slip, and those who feel they want to get involved put their name down, probably the quickest way of doing it.

MILLS>: Right, things are on hold though with assessments, aren't they at the moment? cos they

<63> PS000>: *aren't they always?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<64> *don't they change every ten minutes?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [63 & 64 R: Inaudible response]

[63 & 64 R: Refusal to make a contribution by addressee > Mills]

PS000>: I ain't got time to do assessments, let alone a one day course.

PS000>: Yeah, that's true.

PS000>: I think that your two waiting for signature on his desk,

MILLS>: You haven't seen mine, have you? [...]

PS000>: Well, why? do you want one? you've just bloody had one.

PS000>: No, it's Derek [...]

MILLS>: First time he's said anything nice about me, I thought I'll get in while I can

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: Derek, it won't last

STORER>: Right, anyone else want to bring any points up?

<65> STONE>: Took me, *took me about bloody two days to do your last one.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > recount //

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > reproach

FTA to H + face > reproach through indirection

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Narration

PS000>: [...] [65 R: Inaudible response]

SMITH>: Stuart is having a social event on the 11th of March for the media and the police, I'll circulate this round with a er slip on it, erm it involves a conducted tour of the police station and some bits and bobs

PS000>: Oooh!

SMITH>: and everyone's very welcome to come, I'll let you know.

PS000>: [...] reply to it

PS000>: 11th of March

PS000>: Well, it's now come under a general invited round to us all.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: 11th of March, yeah.

SMITH>: The [...] on the contacts slip so you can read at your leisure, anybody else want to raise any points, Tracy at all, David?

PS000>: About car park.

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: Green vans, green vans.

PS000>: Green vans

PS000>: Are we

STONE>: I'm gonna tell it

PS000>: don't start

STORER>: No, I've been and spoken to them again this morning and yesterday, RSC left it there, not OSD, although it's OSD's van, so they should've come out to move it on Friday and the mechanics didn't turn up, then they lost the keys, cos yesterday myself and who was it, Lyn, waited up for the keys cos they were gonna move down, put it into a safer spot.

PS000>: Mm.

PS000>: Couldn't find the keys anywhere.

STONE>: Well, they were hung up on the board in OSD on Friday when I went down there.

PS000>: Which, which office?

STONE>: In the a, in the

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: No, you know, you know, as you're going down the corridor before you get to the doors to go down the next set of stairs, I mean in OSD, the last one is er for the PC that does all the man er you know all the duties and things like that, <66> and *in his office there's a great big board with all the vehicles on*, and the key's hung up at the end and who's got 'em out, and the bottom one is that green van, because he went up and picked 'em up, when I was there.

SA: Representative > report > describe

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: I was coming to David. [66 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

PS000>: [...]

COLLISHAN>: tomorrow morning if it's still there

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: Yeah.

COLLISHAN>: We're not gonna put any [...] down cos it's going somewhere else.

PS000>: But they're gonna have to find him.

PS000>: Erm, Bob, Bob.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: No, no, no.

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: You have to wait until all the transit vans are out and double parked, put it across, across the transit van bays.

PS000>: So nobody can get in at all.

STONE>: Mm, or their transits.

PS000>: Let's throw the keys away.

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: I was saying to David this morning there was a [...] on the police [...] that was good

<67> PS000>: *probably terribly naive*.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > disdain (object)

RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Description

PS000>: Oh, it says something like J. R. Green, a number which doesn't exist and any tradesperson could have the name, address, type of trade and a real phone number. [67 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

PS000>: Course, they would.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: You could change the signs quite regular though, couldn't you?

PS000>: Painter and decorator one day and er butcher the [laughing] other.

STONE>: Quite easily.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: throw, throw some paint over the back and everything [...] paint running out the back

PS000>: Mm, yeah.

PS000>: detail like that

PS000>: Hear that.

STORER>: Rubbish really, not our problem, anybody else want to bring any points up?

PS000>: No, no.

PS000>: [...]

STORER>: We've got dates for the meeting, I've got two suggestions, one is that I can't see any point anymore why

PS000>: Here, here.

PS000>: and it's [...] to one

PS000>: Yeah, here, here.

PS000>: better headquarters,

PS000>: Yeah, where, where.

STONE>: S-31, if we book it in advance we can get in S-31 downstairs [sniff] in the canteen, cos we're only an hour and half, two hours meeting.

PS000>: Yeah.

STONE>: We can be finished by quarter to twelve.

STORER>: Good idea, any items of agenda for Sergeant, who will be organising the next meeting in S-31?

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: Okay, yeah, fine, 28th of March.

PS000>: Hang on.

PS000>: He's on holiday.

STONE>: Bloody right.

PS000>: The meetings

STONE>: coming for comments like that.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: [...]

MILLS>: There's an SLO's meeting on the 28th of March.

STONE>: Oh, good, I'm in Majorca.

STORER>: Are we gonna do dates now? or I think we regard the deputies visit as a special visit and

PS000>: Mm.

PS000>: Yeah.

STONE>: I mean, I think the thing to do, I mean we, most of our lot are within the corridor, what we need to do is get headquarters, find out when the rooms free and ring everybody round.

PS000>: Can you organise that?

STONE>: Yeah, I'll find it.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Yeah, if you go up to that door [...]

STONE>: Yeah, well, 15th March what day is it, Tuesday?

PS000>: There, there's some dates on there.

STONE>: No, 15th of March is out. Silly bugger.

PS000>: Wednesday, it's a Tuesday.

PS000>: 15th of March.

PS000>: [...]

STONE>: 22nd of March.

PS000>: It's much easier with a cal diary.
 PS000>: Okay for that one.
 WILLIAMS>: What 22nd of March, is that too far ahead? Right, 22nd. If there's any difficulty I'll come back to Paul and Keith cos, to let everybody else know about any problems.
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: S-31, is it?
 PS000>: Well, yes.
 STONE>: S-31.
 PS000>: Well.
 PS000>: Do you think it's
 PS000>: Do you not think it's worthwhile booking the rest of the year's meetings or shall we do it as we carry on?
 PS000>: What you mean going to find a room?
 PS000>: I'm bored now.
 PS000>: Are we closing the meetings [...]?
 PS000>: Yeah, we're all bored.
 PS000>: The meeting's closing just before ten thirty, thank you.
 STONE>: The sun has now risen, the sun is over the yard arm.

Text F7Y

BNC domain: Leisure
 G: Informal learning encounter interview
 Harlow Study Centre: oral history interview
 Participants: Interviewer, student, female;
 Interviewer assistant, student; Interviewee, Mrs Druce, 70+, retired, female

INTERVIEWER>: How long has he lived in Harlow?
 INTERVIEWEE>: Thirty-two years. We came here ... on the ninth of June ... 1950.
 INTERVIEWER>: What did you ... why did you move to Harlow?
 INTERVIEWEE>: Well, my husband ... had a job here ... we moved from Highbury in, in London ... because his firm moved ... from Highbury in London to ... here ... and erm ... got so ... we had to move with my husband because of his job, you see? And er ... but my husband was down here ... er ... a good year before we moved down here ... because ... there wasn't accommodation available ... for us to move with i ... him, you see? So erm ... he travelled ... backwards and forwards for ... a year prior to us ... coming to live here permanently.
 INTERVIEWER>: What did you think of it when you first moved here?

INTERVIEWEE>: [laughing] Well, ... it really was so different from ... a built-up place ... but er ... um, when, but the day that we came in ... it was ... mm, pouring with rain ... <68> *everywhere was muddy*

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]
 Evaluation: negative
 M: Description via Narration

... and er ... of course, i i ... there were only erm ... one part of this town ... this area, rather ... that ... had been occupied because all the other parts were all fields. There was just the erm ... Broomfield Stafffield ... Tanys Dell ... erm ... Glebelands ... and that was the ... all the area that was built up when we came here. Our children ... had to go to Chingford to school. My daughter was of er ... grammar school ... erm ... tuition ... but we couldn't put her into anywhere here because there were ... no schools available Loughton wouldn't take her ... neither would ... er Bishop's Stortford, because they were the only two grammar schools available here <69> and erm ... *my dau, other daughter ... with many other children er, well, all the children of the residency in Tanys Dell and the Glebelands ... had to travel ... to Chingford every day to school.*

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis, Clarification
 M: Narration

Then, the infant school ... the first class of the infants ... we had in a hut ... on Netteswell Road ... and then we went, they came from that hut there to the servant's quarters of Mark Hall. The o, the Mark Hall ... only Mark Hall wasn't there, because it had been previously burnt down. So ... that was our first ... se ... good school, as you may say then ... and then within about four years ... they built Tanys Dell ... And erm ... we just ... you know, we formed a ... quite a, a ... a very good community here because we were all people from different areas ... we all had the same problems trying to ... re-adjust in a new place ... and I think then, we had ... more ... relationship with, with our neighbours than people are having today. Because

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah. [68 & 69 R: Acceptance token]

INTERVIEWEE>: yo, you know, if we had problems we'd each ... talk to them and we had of course, we had, we formed a resident association and we took our problems to the resident's association ... and ... and we wo, you know, if we had problems which could be ironed out ... the man, general manager of the development corporation, Mr [...] would come and listen to our complaints ... and ... we seemed, you know, <70> we, **we got along very ... very well really for ... such a small place with nothing** ... because the only shopping facilities were in the old town ... or we had to go to Epping ... or Bishop's Stortford ... you see? [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification,

Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description via Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Mm. How did the people in the old town feel? [70 R: Back-channel response]

INTERVIEWEE>: They resented us in the beginning ... but I think, as the years have gone by ... and they have seen the facilities that ... a new town has brought to their advantage ... I think, they're more acceptable now, but they did resent us in the beginning. <71> **Well, I think everybody would, that had had their privacy ... erupted like ... they had been**, because they'd been a small community ... for ... well through the years, you see ... and for strangers to come in, I think it applies ... in every place that you go to, new places, you know ... that are built up ... after it just being a little country village, people do resent you ... but I think now that they, they are ... really ... erm ... accepting us for the fact that we have brought things that they would never have had ... had the new town not been er ... sta, you know, started here.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: So have you always lived in this house? [71 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

INTERVIEWEE>: Yes. I came down when my husband was working on the factory site then ... as I say, prior to us coming to live here. ... This was ... hadn't been even built ... so we've seen it grow from ... the floor ... to what it is today, you know? I, it really was ... an adventure ... it was really was an adventure.

INTERVIEWER>: What business was your husband in then?

INTERVIEWEE>: He was an engineer ... and erm ... he, he was ... he made co, he worked on conveyers and things ... and then he changed his occupation ... became a civil servant ... and he worked at the Admiralty ... down on ... Templefields ... until it ... closed ... about ten years, cos my husband has been retired about five years now. Er

INTERVIEWER>: How do you feel about Harlow now?

<72> INTERVIEWEE>: **I think it's a wonderful place!**

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Description

<73> **And I think ... the council ... are trying their utmost to ... make facilities for all ages.**

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (NPP)

RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

<74> **I mean, when we came here, as I say, we had nothing.** Our children, if they wanted erm ... any entertainment ... we had to make our own entertainment, which we did. My son started a youth club ... in one of the common rooms and ... we as residents we got together ... we really enjoyed ourselves in ... our way, you know? But er ... I think, [laugh] ... people that have got so much now ... feel they haven't got enough.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Mm. [72, 73 & 74 R: Back-channel response]

INTERVIEWEE>: They want more! But ... they've got to realise that ... Rome wasn't [laughing] built in a day! And I mean, through the years which this town is about ... thirty-four years old? That's including Chippingfield ... If you had seen it as we saw it when we came here ... you would recognise how much work has gone ... into ... building the town ... because I was on the ... the council then. ... I was asked if I would stand for ... the council ... which was then ... only a parish council ... there was no ... urban district council, ... that wasn't formed for ... four or five years afterwards ... and ... of course, we had to fight for ... lights ... Everything that er that we needed, we had to fight for ... because there was ... no ... lighting on Netteswell Road ... where our children were going to school, and there were little ones. We had to fight for ... parks ... swimming pools ... Everything that we wanted, we had to fight for! <75> *But people now are coming in ... and they're expecting everything to ... be here.* ... They don't realise that ... it has taken many years to bring the town up to the standard it is now. And, very hard working people have had to do the fighting for what we have got!

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Simplification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: Did you have erm, any special job on the council? [75 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, ... erm ... I had different kinds of positions. I was er ... Chairman of Public Health ... and ... various chim, I was Chairman of the Road Safety, which I was very interested in. ... I was very road safety conscious ... and ... we each were given a job ... which we tried to do the best we could with ... and then ... we ... well, whatever we were asked to do. We began to make ... a good town, you know? This is what we, we

were aiming for ... we were trying to make a town for the people and for our children ... when they grow up ... cos I had three children ... <76> *nearly every one that had come into the town had little ones* ... So you see we were trying to build a town ... for our children to benefit ... which I don't know whether you think ... that ... it's a town worth living in ..., but I think that we have done ... very well ... and it's a town that is caring ... for ... such as the elderly ... They really do care!

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification

M: Narration

<77> *Cos, lots of towns and ... even ... good towns that yo, you would of thought that are better off than Harlow would have been ... would have been ... don't do half as much ... for the ... pensioners as Harlow does.*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative (indirect praise), Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

I think they are very caring! If o, people would only appreciate the fact that ... you can't have everything, you just can't have everything! I mean, schools ... the only thing I was, I'd been governor of a ... a school for thirty years. ... that was ... used to depress me with the fact that we couldn't get ... for our schools ... the things that we needed ... <78> *because to me and to all the people in Harlow who have children ... are concerned ... that we are ... being stopped so much money on education,*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<79> *which is the most vital thing ... in our children's lives!* Without education, what kind of a country are we going to have? It's so important, so important! [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: So do you use the Leah Manning? [76 & 77 R: Unchallenged hyperbole] [78 & 79 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

INTERVIEWEE>: Dame Leah Manning was my very best friend! She ... came to me one day and asked me if I would stand for the council, which I did. I have her book here. She ... wro ... did an autobiography of a ... education ... <80> and *she was the most wonderful person ... that you would ever wish to meet!*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (NPP)

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Description

<81> *She fought for ... the working class ... she fought for education ... she fought for everything to benefit the community*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

<82> ... *She was a wonderful person!* She really was!

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (NPP)

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Description

INTERVIEWER>: Do you think that erm ... any of the town's been ... badly designed for the old people? [80, 81 & 82 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, I don't se ... I don't think that it has been badly designed for the old people. I think the object of building the town as it has been built ... is to ... integrate the ... erm ... the old people ... with the young. Perhaps the young people ... resent that ... but I think we have got to have a ... mixed community ... inasmuch as ... we have got to ... be aware that old people need ... attention ... inasmuch as they need ... companionship ... and if they are ... not integrated with the community

they are going to be ... I really se, just left out on their own ... <83> *which in lots of cases there are very, very many lonely people, old people* ... but if they are ... put within the community ... I think the community will look after them, inasmuch as giving them companionship Whether the people, some people resent it or not, I don't know, but I do think ... that they should ... not be segregated.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: When you were a councillor was there anything so, erm that you did definite to ... help the old people? [83 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, there weren't so many old people then. ... When we came here ... [laugh] ... we were classed as one of the oldest people, <84> *because er ... they were all very young people* ...

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

And ... you were talking about Dame Leah Manning ... and she came to me one day and she said we're going to have a problem on the town because it's a very young town. She said, what do you think of us starting a family planning clinic? Because we had people coming into the town ... that had come out of rooms ... one and two rooms ... in Har, in wherever they came from to Harlow ... and ... there were so many things that they required for their home ... that they couldn't afford to have ... big families ... and ... pay their way. So, we opened ... a family planning clinic at Nuffield House ... with all volunteer workers, nobody was paid! The doctors gave their services, the nurses gave their services, all the lay workers give their services ... <85> *and from one clinic ... we went to seven clinics in a week!* And I was in charge of the clinics.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Mm. Erm, how did you get involved with the Barnardos then? [84 & 85 R: Back-channel response]

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, ... one day, I had a knock at the door ... and ... it was a Mr [...] from Stepney Causeway that is the headquarters of ... Barnardos, erm, I mean ... headquarters as from adminis, the administrative erm ... part of it. ... I don't know whether you saw the ... Barnardos This is Your Life lady

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah, I know.

INTERVIEWEE>: last night?

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, Barkingside was a big home. ... They also have one out at Ware ..., they also had one at Upshire ..., but the Upshire one were for disabled children. So this gentleman came and he was i, said ... would I be prepared to ... run a fete ... in aid of Doctor Barnardos' Home? Well, at that particular time I was already on the council. <86> *I was doing family planning ... which took up an awful lot ... of my time.* So he said ... it wouldn't involve much, but to run a fete does involve a lot of work.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Mm. [86 R: Back-channel response]

INTERVIEWEE>: So we talked and ... I said well, we would think about it and we would let him know ... So we collected all the friends that we thought would ... like to help ..., which were many ... people were very good to help! And ... the following ... visit he made here he brought with him Miss Virginia ... She was one of the personnel at Stepney Causeway. She was the Miss Virginia, the niece of the line ... and she came ... and she said that she would help ... in erm ... doing some organisation and, and ... giving us some insight as to what we had to do, because we had never run ... a fete in all our lives! So ... we got everyone together here, ... the bank manager, was Mr [...] then, Barclays Bank ..., we got two or three of the industrialists ..., all of the members that were prepared to help ... and ... we started from there. We wrote to ... oh, I don't know how many stars ... for

articles that they wished to give ... so that we could raise money by them. The ... Catholic School ... which was the only ... school available then to us ... fo with the field that was ... we, which we needed. The Sister Constance, who was the then the principal sister there ... she let us have the field ... so we got ... entertainment laid on We invited a celebrity, I think our first celebrity was erm ... I think it was Lord and Lady [...] and ... then each time we had a different one. <87> *We had entertainment the whole time.* We started, about half past two and then we had entertainment until six ... then we had an interval ... then we had entertainment till twelve o'clock ... [Clarification via literal language] I even took my piano down onto the field so that we could have music.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive

M: Narration

We raised quite ... a good sum for the first time ... and that went to the Barnardos Home. Then, the following one ... we had ... erm ... Lord and Lady [...]. They came as guests of ours. Then, we did another one ... and Tommy Cooper came! And ... we've, each time we had someone ... of importance to bring in the people. Now, Tommy Cooper, he never charged us one penny! All we had to do ... was to pay the expense of the helicopter that brought him in ..., because at that time he was appearing at the Prince of Wales and it was a matter of him ... fitting his time in with his performances, you see? which we did. We brought him here ... ou, he changed his clothes from his ... own suit into the pied piper ... and erm ... then we got him back to the Prince of Wales Theatre. <88> *Well, the money that we raised from there ... and also from another one was about three thousand ... nearly four thousand ... three thousand something ...* and we presented ... er ... Tommy Cooper with the cheque on the Prince, the stage of the Prince of Wales Theatre, but that cheque was to buy ... a special ambulance ... for the children of Upshire, which is the home of the disabled

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Evaluation: positive
M: Narration

And this special coach had erm ... places where you could ... wheel the children into the coach ... in their chairs with the clamps and those children that could be taken out of their chairs and put on seats ... put and had their belts put around them ... and that was the only way that these children were able to get out! Then, on our next project, we ... raised money for ... the swimming pool that they required. Then, for the following one ... we bought the first meals on wheels van ... so that with all the money that we've collected for Harlow Day we bought something out of the money. <89> *And we really had a wonderful time doing it!*

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
M: Narration

We took the children, when we had the bus ... we took the children to Southend That was the first time they had all been out together ... and the owner of the Kersal ... and the person responsible ... on the council for ... the erm ... maintaining of, of Southend, such as the Chairman, they put ... the Kersal at our disposal! <90> *And before the children left ... they were given a carrier bag with ... all sorts of things that you could think of ...* and to see the delight on those little children's faces! ... It was worth all the hard work ... that we had put into it because ... it got that we used to use the town park towards the latter part of Barnardos Day ... and all the men that we had gathered together ... used to have to erect ... every piece of fence ... to enclose ... like it is now, the park, is enclosed now with, with fencing The men that were helping us did that all voluntarily! And mis, the ... the constructors here ... they loaned us different equipment and we worked from Monday to Friday getting the ... things ready ... we worked all day Saturday doing the show, and we worked all day Sunday clearing the field! It was very hard work but it was worth it.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis
M: Narration

INTERVIEWER>: When did Barnardos Day become the town show? [87, 88, 89 & 90 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
INTERVIEWEE>: I can't remember ... erm ... they took ... I just can't remember when they took over from us. But erm ... I don't think that the town show, ... [laughing] perhaps I was ... I'm prejudiced to the fact that, that we'll be losing money rather than making it ... <91> but ... *it wasn't ... anything like we put on for entertainment! Nothing at all!*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > disdain (event)
RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Description

They put it on a bigger scale ... but the entertainment ... far below ours! I may be bragging [laughing] but ... it er ... <92> *we had a wonderful day!*

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
M: Narration

We had the American band, we had the Horse Guards ... from London ..., we brought them all up on the train, the horses and the guards <93> and ... *we had wonderful times!*

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
M: Narration

INTERVIEWER>: What other entertainment was there in Harlow at the time? [91, 92 & 93 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
INTERVIEWEE>: Well, ... not very much unless you made it yourself, you know, if you were, the factories used to have their own erm ... dances ... and ... the ... Embers, it used to be the Embers then, that's the place in the Stow, they had danci, yes, they had dancing there ... and they put on competitions for different things ... <94> and *my son, with lots of others*

er, did erm ... a rock and roll thing ... which needed thirty-six hours.

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Emphasis
M: Narration

And ... we ... made our own entertainment ... that is the thing about it, you know? There wasn't much laid on for you because er ... <95> *I think with new people you've gotta get them ... into the spirit of doing something ... otherwise you sit here, all sitting down doing nothing!* This is ... how we felt. And we had so many good people ... in the beginning, as I say, that really ... wanted to help ... for to make ... entertainment, you know?

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture
PIA: Representative > report > state
RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: Erm ... do you take part in any of the entertainments now? [94 & 95 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
INTERVIEWEE>: Not now ... no. I resigned from the family planning about ... seven years ago when my husband retired, as I say ... because he used to help me very much ... and ... when he retired ... and my children had all ... married ... I felt it was time that I should retire too. I'd done twenty years ... in the family planning ... and I'd done twelve years ... on the ... council ... and I'd done thirty years ... as school governor. <96> *So ... now I'm sitting back doing nothing!*

SA: Representative > report > admit, confess
FTA to S + face > confession through humour
RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
N: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: [laugh] [96 R: Laughter]
INTERVIEWEE>: [laugh]
INTERVIEWER>: Oh is, looking back, do you think that Harlow's been a successful project?
INTERVIEWEE>: I think so.
INTERVIEWER>: Oh.
INTERVIEWEE>: I think so. But, you see the thing about it is ... we have got a ... take towns

... for what we make of them ... you see We could just all sit back. <97> *People say they're bored! There's nothing to do!* But if you look around ... there is so much to do! And there's so much voluntary work to be done If people have got spare time ... to go and help ... but, I don't know whether it's the ... sign of the times that people only want to ... do jobs ... for monetary gain. That maybe ... the idea, but ... there are so many things to be done ... by voluntary workers If people would only ... say well I've got half an hour ... an hour ... it could be ... so much ... of an advantage to ... whoever they're giving their services to ... because we're having to cut costs on this and costs on that An hour or two given voluntary ... would ... cover those jobs that we ... can't get the money to pay for.

SA: Representative > report > report speech
RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: Has your view of Harlow changed over the years? [97 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
INTERVIEWEE>: My view of Harlow?
INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.
INTERVIEWEE>: It hasn't changed, no ... because ... we er haven't gone back ... we are going forward all the time. I mean, we've had the facilities as we have now in the town centre <98> *I mean, it has improved this town immensely!*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)
RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]
Evaluation: positive
M: Argumentation-exposition

We're not only catering for Harlow people ..., we are catering for people ... outside ..., which is bringing ... money into Harlow ..., helping the finance of Harlow ... and ... I think we are just progressing ... with the times. We're not going back. If we had more money to spend I'm sure there would be far more things that the councils would like to ... do ... but without money you can't do it! And things are ... very expensive to do. When we say ... and we've often said it, well we could do with this, we could do with that ...

like we used to say ... <99> *We wanted the swimming pool ... well ... that cost an awful lot of money!*

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
M: Narration

<100> *To do the town park ... that cost an awful lot of money!* People think oh, you can do this, you can do that! We could do a lot of things ... but without the finance you just can't do it!

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
M: Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Don't think I've got any
INTERVIEWEE>: Aha.

INTERVIEWER>: more, can't think of any more questions. Is there anything you'd like to tell us? [98, 99 & 100 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, ... the only thing is that I hope that ... the next generation that is coming along now ... will appreciate ... what has been done ... for ... their generation ... because ... it took a long time for us to ... get what we wanted for our children ... and now with our grandchildren are coming along ... I hope the town will improve ... with their growth. As the town has grown ... with our children. And, if people would appreciate it ... and keep it ... as it should be ... cos to me, I think ... there's a lot of error in people neglecting their places. Which is detrimental to the town ... and we are trying to keep this town ... as ... we think it ought to be kept.

INTERVIEWER>: Do your children still live in Harlow?

INTERVIEWEE>: Yes, ... not all of them. I have erm ... one daughter living here ... and a son living here ..., but my eldest daughter is in the United States. ... And ... my granddaughter is just finishing her last year of law. So ... what just i, well my ... eldest daughter away ... and she's been away this ... month ... twenty-six years.

INTERVIEWER>: That's a long time, innit?

INTERVIEWEE>: It is a long time.

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

<101> INTERVIEWEE>: [laughing] *Seems like a lifetime!*

SA: Representative > report > agree
RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, Clarification
M: Description

INTERVIEWER>: [laugh] ... Have you ever been over to see her? [101 R: Laughter + Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

INTERVIEWEE>: Yes, ... we were ... there last year because my granddaughter got married. We go quite frequent. My daughter's, you know,

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: wants us to go over as often as we can ... and we try and ... and often as we can. The only thing about it it's not ... [laugh] ... very inexpensive to go there.

INTERVIEWER>: [laugh]

INTERVIEWEE>: It's not just like [laughing] going ... going on a bus and ... but erm ... my daughter's very generous and ... seeing that we ... we get to her ... and we spend about three months ... with her. *Cos you can't go and say well I'm only going for a couple of weeks!*

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

<102> INTERVIEWEE>: [laughing] *Stay for the weekend!*

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain
RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Emphasis, Clarification
M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: [laughing] Yeah! [102 R: Laughter + Acceptance token]

INTERVIEWEE>: We would like ... we would like to go every week, you know.

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: But erm ... she phones us and ... you know ... Oh I had a ... card, erm letter from her yesterday with er photographs and things like that.

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: And she was saying how well my granddaughter was getting along in the University. She has ... just this last year to go ... and er ... we hope for her sake everything goes well for her <103> *because she's ... brilliant*, and as you see I have to fly the flag for her because she's

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing
> praise (NPP)

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Description

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah. [103 R:
Unchallenged hyperbole]

INTERVIEWEE>: she's so Americanized, you see? But erm ... we have to fly the flag!

INTERVIEWER>: [laugh]

INTERVIEWEE>: [laugh] ... But as I say ... what do you feel as ... as students? ... Do you feel that you have ... the facilities here, that ... could be improved on ... or ... or?

INTERVIEWER>: Well.

INTERVIEWEE>: Are you satisfied with what ... you have?

INTERVIEWER>: I think that wha what we've got

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Well

INTERVIEWER>: is very good!

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah. I just can't believe that ... that just things that are ha, going to be happening ...

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah, exactly!

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: [...]

INTERVIEWEE>: Out of the sixth ... from the sixth form that you're

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah, that's right.

INTERVIEWEE>: going to ... Yes, we've tri

INTERVIEWER>: The school have

INTERVIEWEE>: we ... been trying to fight that but

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: the ones above us are ... stronger than we are. As I say, finance comes into it again, you see?

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: And the thing about it is ... such as erm ... well not only Tanys Dell ... that ... biggest part of school is here ... the population has decreased ... so much in the last ten years ... that <104> *we having now to close schools*

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: *where we were trying ... desperately to have schools* ...

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis, [Enhance] Contrast of differences

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

<105> *because ... we had no schools when we first came here as I say.* But ... now they are closing them We've got so many good teachers out of work ..., where ... ten years ago we were fighting to get good teachers ... and smaller classes ... but now ... you see, we've got smaller classes

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah. [104 & 105 R:
Acceptance token]

INTERVIEWEE>: but ... we haven't got the ... children ... to ... engage the teachers, you see?

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: What do you think about the comprehensive schooling?

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Well

INTERVIEWER>: I think it's good.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah, I think it's good! We've never known anything different, you see.

INTERVIEWEE>: You haven't?

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: No.

INTERVIEWEE>: You haven't known anything different? Well, as I say, my daughter was a grammar school tea, er pupil ... but erm ... my so, grandsons ... I have one now at ... he'll be twenty-two this year, went to Burnt Mill ... I have another grandson in Burnt Mill

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: I have a granddaughter now ... going up to Burnt Mill ... and I think ... myself, they couldn't have done ... any better ... in the grammar school.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah. Well

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER>: I mean, my sister's school they have [...] right from the start ... and er ... they don't ... I don't think you get a wide enough circle of friends really.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah. Instead just

INTERVIEWER>: Like, stick to your own type.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: And your social assets ... just develop so much better at a comprehensive.

INTERVIEWEE>: Too much segregation

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: at school? Yes, well this is, this is what the intention of the comprehensive school was in the beginning ... was to ... ha, let every child ... have the same opportunity ... which I'm sure they're getting ... in the comprehensive school. People do say that ... erm ... there are far too many pupils ... but if you've got the stuff ... and the accommodation, which our school provide ... they're not overcrowded. If the, if they're provided with the right kind of teacher ... then I think the pupil ... will be ... given that opportunity if it's, the potential is there ... to ... bring it out, but you some of the children don't want to learn ... well that's not the fault of the school!

INTERVIEWER>: No.

INTERVIEWEE>: That's the ... the child themselves ..., you see? I mean if you don't, think, oh well I'd ... I don't want to be [...] ... well it's not the teachers' fault cos you don't get on! But the thing about it is the school gets the bad name!

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE>: You see? It isn't the child, they say oh, oh, oh! They're not doing this or that ... <106> *but ... in lots of cases, and I've known of lots of cases where children just don't want to know!*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > accuse, blame (NPP)

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

INTERVIEWER>: Mm. [106 R: Back-channel response]

INTERVIEWEE>: You see? So you go ... are you ... going now from your sixth form ... into the college this time?

INTERVIEWER>: No, we'll have finished.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: No, we'll have finished then.

INTERVIEWEE>: You're finishing

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: But

INTERVIEWEE>: now?

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah, well next

INTERVIEWER>: No.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: year after we've done our A levels.

INTERVIEWEE>: Af, you're ow, you're doing the le, the levels now?

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: That'll be it. And that'll be end of the school [...]

INTERVIEWEE>: And what, what are you erm ... qualifying in?

INTERVIEWER>: Well

INTERVIEWEE>: What levels are you taking, for what?

INTERVIEWER>: I'm doing English, History and Chemistry.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: And I'm doing ... Maths, Physics and History.

INTERVIEWEE>: Very good!

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Oh, well.

INTERVIEWEE>: Well, I wish you ... every success!

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: [laughing] Thank you.

INTERVIEWER>: [laughing] Thank you.

INTERVIEWEE>: And I wish you every success in your project too.

INTERVIEWER>: Mm.

INTERVIEWEE>: And I hope that I've been of some assistance.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: You have

INTERVIEWER>: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: yeah! So

INTERVIEWEE>: I, I can't think the there's anything else you you'd ... like to ask me?

INTERVIEWER>: No, I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER-ASSISTANT>: Can't remember.

INTERVIEWEE>: That erm

INTERVIEWER>: Turn the tape off.

Text J8J

BNC domain: Leisure

G: Debate and argument in TV chat show

Drugs: television discussion

Participants: J8JPS000: TV presenter, female

PS000>: Drug abuse wrecks lives and families! So is it here to stay ... or could we, all of us, do without drugs? [introduction music]

J8JPS000>: We all take drugs in some form or another, some are legal, you can buy them over

the counter or your GP may prescribe, those are illegal, but still widely available and used at a price. What we're looking at in this half hour is why and how we use drugs and what we might change. And let's start with a question, do you take prescribed, or illegal drugs? Or have you ever taken? Button one for yes, and button two for no. And if there's anything surprising about that results, it's that nineteen people say they've never taken any kind of drug! Eighty-one have said yes. What have you taken, or what do you take? Yes?

J8JPS001>: Erm, [...] inhaler for asthmatic attack, well, to prevent asthmatic attacks.

J8JPS000>: And have you been taking that for quite a while?

J8JPS001>: Erm, sin, well ... I think, er ... about seven years.

J8JPS000>: And you would go on taking it because it's a

J8JPS001>: I don't need it very often, erm ... I'm not a bad asthmat, it's an allergy to animals

J8JPS000>: Right.

J8JPS001>: so it's ... a rare occasion have to use it, but I probably have ... to have one with me all, for the rest of my life.

J8JPS000>: Okay. Up there.

J8JPS002>: I take Thyroxin for an under-active thyroid gland.

J8JPS000>: Mhm. And these are prescribed drugs then?

J8JPS002>: Yes.

J8JPS000>: You get that from your doctor? Yes?

J8JPS003>: Maccresin for a, arthritis.

J8JPS000>: For arthritis, right. Yes?

J8JPS004>: I take Tamazepam to sleep. Erm, and I have no side effects to it, I've been on it for quite a long while.

J8JPS000>: Every night?

J8JPS004>: Every night. One every night. It induces four hours of sleep, and if you sleep after that it's a normal sleep. I waken up fine.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS004>: No problems.

J8JPS000>: And how long have you been doing that?

J8JPS004>: Erm ... nine years.

J8JPS000>: And why did you start?

J8JPS004>: I had a bereavement, a very close bereavement in the

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS004>: family and they put me onto valium, but having worked in psychiatric I knew the results of valium, so I, I gradually broke them down and got off them ... <107> *but for six full months I couldn't sleep*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

J8JPS000>: Mm. [107 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS004>: so they did put me onto some. But, I, I kno, I do use them as they're prescribed, one

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS004>: per night. And they do help.

J8JPS000>: So you've got a drug that you can live with?

J8JPS004>: Yes.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS004>: Yes.

J8JPS000>: Yes?

J8JPS005>: Steroids. My mother takes these.

J8JPS000>: Okay. Any others? Yes?

J8JPS006>: I used illegal drugs ... erm

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS006>: for seven year.

J8JPS000>: Yo, yo you did, do?

J8JPS006>: I did, aye.

J8JPS000>: Now, now you're the first person who's said you used ill, ill illegal drugs, I ... yes?

J8JPS007>: I've took illegal drugs and prescribed drugs.

J8JPS000>: You did or you do? Or yo you

J8JPS007>: I take prescribed drugs now.

J8JPS000>: Yes. But, did you used to take illegal drugs?

J8JPS007>: Yeah.

J8JPS000>: Well, let's, since we've got onto that ... why?

J8JPS007>: Just to get a hit. Just to feel good, forget or whatever!

J8JPS000>: And how old were you when you started doing that?

J8JPS007>: Started at fourteen or so.

J8JPS000>: Yeah. And how did, and how did you begin? I mean, was it ... through your ... friends or ... family or?

J8JPS007>: You just take one, I just ... my pal had a bad [...] or something and ... she was prescribed er ... a se, a certain kind of sleeping

tablet, Tamazepam ... and just I started [...] in to say ... amounts up to twenty-five at the end of the, do you know what I mean?

J8JPS000>: It's quite expensive, isn't it?

J8JPS007>: Ah, but ... you need it.

J8JPS000>: So, how did you change? Did you see?

J8JPS007>: Er ... I went er ... er sa ... CDPS.

J8JPS000>: Mhm. Do you wanna say what that is?

J8JPS007>: Well, it was er ... it's Community Drugs Project

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS007>: Scheme. And erm ... to get pro ... a nurse, like you get a ... along with the nurse. She's here ... er, and she ... put me in a hospital and then going off for something.

J8JPS000>: And that was that?

J8JPS007>: Mm. Well

J8JPS000>: And you

J8JPS007>: I'm still on ... some stuff.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS007>: But she got me so, over the worse part, yeah.

J8JPS000>: Yeah. And what would you say to a fourteen-year-old girl ... who might be watching this ... who might think of doing the same thing?

J8JPS007>: Just none of you ever try ... da er, <108> **it ruins your life, ruins your family and everything!**

SA: Representative > report > warn

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance]
Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Don't try it once? [108 R: Requests for confirmation]

J8JPS007>: No. Waste of time!

J8JPS000>: Would you say the same thing?

J8JPS008>: Aye, I would gi that. I would advise

PS000>: [cough]

J8JPS008>: erm, any young person never to try it. It ruins and wrecks your own life and family's life as well!

J8JPS000>: Well, we've got onto illegal drugs, and of course le or, do you think illegal drugs are attractive almost because they are illegal? I mean, th there are other things that can give you a hit. There are, there are legal drugs in our society, and you may not think they should be

legal, I don't know, there's ... there's er, alcohol, I suppose is the most commonly used one but <109> J8JPS008>: *It would start probably because they are illegal, erm ... but basically because everybody else running about me ... er, was trying it, my friends* [Clarification via literal language] so ... it basically boiled down to peer pressure ... at the start.

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

J8JPS000>: So what were you taking? [109 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

J8JPS008>: Heroin.

J8JPS000>: From the start?

J8JPS008>: Mhm.

J8JPS000>: And did it give you a high?

J8JPS008>: At the start, aye.

J8JPS000>: And then what happened?

J8JPS008>: And then it just became a drug that I had to take for every day use. Erm, had to take it to feel normal.

J8JPS000>: And how difficult is it to stop doing that?

J8JPS008>: Oh, it's very difficult. But now I've been drug-free for over a year ... erm ... but I'd been trying for a few year before that and had nay managed to ... succeed. But through the help er, the group that I'm well involved in, which is Carlton Athletic Recovery Group

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS008>: I've managed ... to stay straight to day.

J8JPS000>: And what was the point at which you thought ... I want to stop doing this, I want to get off drugs?

J8JPS008>: Well, the point that I wanted to get off drugs was, my family ... not wanting any more to do with me, erm, they'd shut the door on me. I've got two young sons as well, erm ... they two got took off me into foster care, and that was when I really had to decide it was the either the drugs or the children.

J8JPS000>: So it was one day you made the decision and you stuck with it?

J8JPS008>: No, not just one day, as I said, I'd been trying for a few

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS008>: year but ... the end result came ... when the two children did get took into foster

care ... erm, that's when ... I realized that it was a problem and I had to do something about it.

J8JPS000>: What, what, what do you think of those two experiences? Yes?

<110> PS000>: *I admire them for being able to sit there in front of everybody and say they actually, what they've been through*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud

FTA to H – face > expression of admiration through negative politeness: dissociate H from infringement: impersonalise H + be indirect

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<111> *because it must have been sheer hell ... er, trying to come off and withdrawal symptoms.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Expressive > commiserate

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<112> I mean, I don't know much about it *cos I've never taken* ... well, I smoke

PS000>: [...] [110, 111 & 112 R: Inaudible response]

PS000>: and I take a drink [Clarification via literal language], but *hard drugs ... misused drugs* ...

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<113> *it just must be shu he sheer hell!* And if ... they're coming out stating that your families turned their back, they've had enough.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Expressive > commiserate

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Mhm. [110, 111, 112 & 113 R: Back-channel response]

PS000>: Who do you turn to?

J8JPS000a>: These, these seem to be extreme stories.

J8JPS000>: Mhm?

J8JPS000a>: Er, I do believe that er, if the question was asked have people taken less, you know, no not heroin

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS000a>: but dabbled in it in a, a younger age? And what the response was to it because, well I, I did try it merely ... sort of to experience it, and I don't think that it was an addictive experience and

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS000a>: I really don't think there was any ill effects at the time.

J8JPS000>: What, what are we talking about here?

J8JPS000a>: Well, erm ... just er dope re, you

J8JPS000>: Dope.

J8JPS000a>: know, marijuana.

J8JPS000>: Yeah. Yeah. Are they bo

J8JPS000a>: And having smoked the odd joint I don't really feel

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS000a>: that ... it was ... it was that detrimental.

J8JPS000>: Okay. Well, le let

PS000>: No.

J8JPS000>: Well, le let's ask that tha that question then. Have you ever used ... illegal drugs? And I'm not going to pick on you so you can feel free to answer the question.

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: Button one for yes, and button two for no. I mean, nobody has to speak who doesn't want to.

J8JPS006>: Can I answer that question?

J8JPS000>: Yes.

<114> J8JPS006>: *Marijuana is nothing like taking ... heroin, smack, whatever. It's nothing like it!*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS001>: I think we should maybe ask the question why youngsters take drugs ... and, maybe we would get to the root of the problem. [114 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

J8JPS000>: And what do you think the answer to that is?

J8JPS001>: Erm, sometimes they'll say they're bored. Maybe

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS001>: we have to ... try and divert their attention.

J8JPS002>: Probably the only way to try and prevent it is to go into the schools ... and get people that have been through the problem, the problem themselves ... to go into the schools and try and educate the kids to stay off drugs. Because, you're getting it, I know in the east end of Glasgow where I come from

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS002>: you're getting them as young as ... eleven and twelve ... and, they're trying these drugs. You wonder how they're getting them. They're getting them because ... you've got ... old drug addicts going to the doctors getting prescribed drugs that is nay there. Th the one do they really want them? But

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS002>: it does to get them money ... because they can sell that ... and then go and get the, the drug they re, they require theirself. So they can enter the secondary schools and they're selling it to these young kids that just don't know any better.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS002>: So I think if ... what we're doing just now, cos I'm part of Carlton Athletic as well, and what we're doing just now is trying to get into the secondary schools in the east end, and getting this message across to the kids not ee ... to buy these drugs.

J8JPS000>: Yep. Over there.

J8JPS003>: There actually is a drug-wise ... project

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: that is run in the secondary schools in the first year ... where the children are talked to by the police and they see videos and they are a act,

<115> J8JPS002>: **They must have terrible programmes!**

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (object)

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > disdain

FTA to H + face > disdain through indirection

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS003>: they are act to, [115 R: Ignored hyperbole without topic shift]

J8JPS002>: [...]

J8JPS003>: they are, asked to respond to

J8JPS002>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: various situations <116> and **they**

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS003>: **do role play**

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS003>: **and all sorts of things to try and discourage them from this.**

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: You don't think that's a good ... thing? [116 R: Ignored hyperbole and selection of a different speaker through request for confirmation]

J8JPS002>: I've, I've used ... well, I've decided not to use the drug-wise project. I worked in the east end for a year with young people, I think it's very, very moralistic, I don't like the idea of the police coming in and ... and teaching

J8JPS000>: What

J8JPS002>: the, the ... group work ... sessions. I to, I think it's a very

J8JPS000>: What, what, what would you pu

J8JPS002>: bad package!

J8JPS000>: What would you prefer?

J8JPS002>: I think what we should be looking at is pu, campaigning for de-criminalization of soft drugs, like cannabis

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS002>: because ... the use of recreational drugs like that is not necessarily problematic. And I also think that we should looking at harm reduction methods, in schools definitely ... not drug-wise.

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS004>: If you carry what

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS004>: you're saying to it's logical conclusion, then why don't we just ... erm, open up Hampden up ... sell the stuff there? you know ... people, you know, if children want it or ... adults

J8JPS002>: I don't

J8JPS004>: or anyone, why not have

J8JPS002>: Well

J8JPS004>: it there?

J8JPS002>: why not?

J8JPS004>: I mean tha I, I, I,

J8JPS002>: [...]

J8JPS004>: I don't think that's

J8JPS002>: A lot of that isn't harmful.
 J8JPS004>: Is, is that what you want for children?
 J8JPS002>: Well, we sell alcoho
 J8JPS004>: Or young people?
 J8JPS002>: We sell alcohol ... quite freely.
 J8JPS000>: Well, maybe you should just
 J8JPS002>: Quite socially acceptable.
 J8JPS000>: Wha what do you mean de-
 J8JPS002>: But it
 J8JPS000>: criminalize? I mean, do you mean that you would mean that you would get it on
 J8JPS002>: Yep.
 J8JPS000>: or that it should be a
 J8JPS002>: [...]
 J8JPS000>: think it should just be available in ... in shops?
 J8JPS002>: With, with certain regulations. Er
 J8JPS000>: Yep.
 J8JPS002>: with er, there would be a certain amount of state control.
 J8JPS000>: Er, behind you. Mhm.
 J8JPS005>: Erm ... we talk about cannabis being made
 J8JPS000>: Mhm.
 J8JPS005>: legal ... Now, if some of the people here could see the damage ... that cannabis does. It's the first step ... towards hard drugs! And I don't know anybody ... that addicts, I deal with a lot of addicts, and a lot of families ... and it all started on cannabis ... so, you should nah talk about legalizing ... any drug!
 J8JPS006>: One thing that I think we have to be very careful about, if we did legalize cannabis ... there would be a proportion of adolescents ... who would get a great kick out of it, but there would those who don't get the kick because it's not illegal. <117> **There are people who feel that it's great to break the law**, and ... a word of caution, that I feel is important, is that the same group of kids will react against drug programmes in the schools. I don't know that the school's is the right vehicle for this ... because in many ways, the children who are getting into these things pay more attention to the peer group, and it's more important to have community groups, community cafes, things which are not seen as authority getting at them.

SA: Representative > report > inform
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive (indirect criticism), Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Yeah? Up, up there. Up there. Yes?
 [117 R: Ignored hyperbole and selection of a different speaker]

J8JPS008>: I think we really have to look at the Dutch experience and

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS008>: see ... that the fact that in Amsterdam ... they de-criminalized cannabis and they do not have the same kind of problems. It means that the drug squad there can concentrate on harder drugs, and certainly I, I pu, a recent interview with a ... a police inspector from Amsterdam said he would rather ... deal with, you know, he would rather have cannabis users than certainly alcohol, problems with alcohol.

J8JPS000>: Mhm. Yes?

PS000>: Erm, I just think that over the generations er ma a er perhaps we're forgetting that in the 70s, for instance, er well, cannabis was a ... at that time a popular, a popular thing, but you also had ecstasy, isn't either the main thing in the, in the papers?

J8JPS000>: Mm.

PS000>: but er, even then if you, if you could go to your doctor, if you wanted slimming tablets, they gave you Dexadrin or

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

PS000>: a derivative of it, which gave you the same high that ecstasy does and er, and if you didn't it from the doctor you could buy it on the street. So that's twenty-two years go, and ecstasy, I think's only the same thing reoccurring.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

PS000>: It's like er a fashion <118> and because it's on the black market, **it's infinitely more attractive**.

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Emphasis, (Enhance) Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

<119> *The papers have taken it up, and as such, **there's an awful lot of hype about it**, and I think makes it more attractive.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Yes? [118 & 119 R: Ignored hyperbole and selection of a different speaker]

J8JPS000b>: Well, I just wonder you, there has got to be some kind of ... relationship between the fact that most people who take drugs live in really run down, deprived areas. I mean, I think tha that you have to look at that, <120> *because people have got nothing to do!*

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<121> Er, *I mean, lots of people have got nothing to do and are unlikely to be employed during that time.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<122> J8JPS000>: *So you think, you think people who live in, in well off areas, there's lots to do, don't take drugs?* [120 & 121 R: Request for confirmation through continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000b>: No! [122 R: Challenged hyperbole]

PS000>: [laugh] [122 R: Laughter]

J8JPS000>: You don't think that?

J8JPS000b>: Oh, well, you know ... No, I don't think that, but I think that you have to ... I mean, there has to some kind of relationship between ... I'm not saying it's anything to do with the personalities or anything like that but J8JPS000>: Yes.

<123> J8JPS000b>: *it's got something to do with the fact that ... people have got nothing to do in those areas, and no cha, no prospects, no chance of getting a job* and it's actually quite a purposeful way of spending your time.

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS008>: I think that's really patronizing! You're saying that [...] [123 R: Challenged hyperbole]

J8JPS000b>: No, but I don't mean to be patronizing.

J8JPS008>: if I help with addict that they need to compensate for, for ... er, things missing in their lives, perhaps they just like it.

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS000b>: Yeah! Well, maybe. I mean there's nothing wrong with ... I mean people do just like. [...]

J8JPS001>: I think

J8JPS000>: [...]

J8JPS000b>: [laugh]

J8JPS001>: I think if you talk to drug users themselves, we've already heard about some of them talking about coming off drugs.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS001>: If you talk to drug users who will tell you coming off drugs or withdrawal symptoms are not as hard as many people believe that they are. What they do find difficult is filling their day once they have actually come off drugs because they have built up a kind of lifestyle that has already been said

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS001>: around their use of drugs.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

<124> J8JPS001>: *And in areas where there isn't any chance of them*

J8JPS000>: Mhm. [124 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS001>: *getting jobs, they find this ... really the most difficult part of staying off drugs.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Mhm. [124 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS002>: I think there's, there's quite a difference, erm, in between physical dependency and psychological dependency.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS002>: When you're talking about taking drugs ... and it's been shown that the effects erm ... the biological dependency isn't that great <125> and *it's no sort of worse than coming off ... erm, having a bad cold.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

J8JPS000>: Mhm. [125 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS002>: Whereas a psychological dependency is what's really ... you know, difficult and what makes it hard for people to come off drugs. And studies have shown that if people are injected, even with not a drug ... that sort of, satisfies their need for a while, and what does work is a change of environment for people and that does come down to people not, you know, being able to work, people being unemployed, and also peer group pressure like th, the woman said over there. Erm, if all your friends take drugs then you're more likely to erm, take them and it's harder

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS002>: to break that habit.

J8JPS000>: Mhm. In front, yes? You.

J8JPS003>: Like the woman said there, there seems to be a lot of help for people who are on drugs, and who then want to come off them, but the after-care service seems to be ... you know, a lot ... erm, there's not a lot help for the people, they get the help to come off the drugs and then they're put back into the society that they are from ... and they seem to still have that pressure to go back to where they were previously.

J8JPS000>: Is tha, is that, is that true? Are the support services inadequate? I mean, there are a number of professionals here. Yes?

J8JPS004>: Erm, I work in a project at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow, and one of the things, there's young who experiment with drugs whether we like it or not, and I think it depends what drug i is available at that time, so we could sit here and go through the different periods of time. But I think, we've not been good attracting women into services, I think, the responsibility that a woman drug user has over child care and a whole range of other things that male drug users don't have. Erm, yes
J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS004>: then I think, we haven't, I think we're getting better at attracting women into services and, and ... providing what they're looking for but we need to hear from them what they're looking for, erm er with, from those services. And certainly, if you look residential

centres, which is one part of, of a treatment erm of what we have in Scotland or, or nationally

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS004>: erm, isn't very good, for women with children in particular.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS005>: Isn't it also about the hypocrisy, hypocrisy of a society that's saying that one kind of a drug is okay, and another sort of a drug isn't okay? Erm, I mean one

J8JPS000>: Which one is, wi which ones are you thinking

PS000>: Oh.

J8JPS000>: of?

J8JPS005>: Well, alcohol's okay.

J8JPS000>: Yes.

J8JPS005>: I mean, it's okay to come to this studio and, in Edinburgh and walk up a busy street and see people going into pubs and being drunk! But it's not okay to walk up the same street and see somebody using something else, obviously. And, surely it's about erm ... helping ... [sigh], I don't know how you go about it but the illegality of it prevents people admitting it and asking for help, and taking erm any advice that people can give about using it safely.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS005>: And it's about safe drug use, you know what I

J8JPS000>: Mm, mm.

J8JPS005>: mean? Mm.

J8JPS000>: Well, safe drug use is quite a challenging concept. I mean I ... may maybe decriminalization is part of that but I, as someone said why sho, why shouldn't people take ... er, drugs if they want to, they're allowed to take other drugs? What do you think about that? I mean I, I

J8JPS005>: Well, that's what I'm saying, you know drugs ... erm, well you're looking at society where we're given drugs to make us feel better.

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS005>: I mean there's a lady down there talking about taking

J8JPS000>: Tamazepam to help her sleep and has no problems with that, fair enough! But there was another lady there talking about taking Tamazepam as a drug of abuse ... and tha, that's the difficulty.

J8JPS000>: I wonder how many of you have experience of taking tranquillizers? Do you? Button one for yes, and button two for no. And

I'm sure that medical people here will correct me if I'm misusing

PS000>: Mm, mm.

J8JPS000>: the term tranquillizers. Well, thirty-nine people say yes, sixty-one no. Of those, of those, thirty-nine has a, has it been a good experience ... or not? Yes?

J8JPS006>: No! I had a very

J8JPS000>: No?

J8JPS006>: bad experience with tranquillizers! My father died erm ... sixteen years ago ... and I was put on to tranquillizers, up until that point. <126> ***I had never needed a drug in my life,***

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Contrast of differences, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

and I was put onto tranquillizers <127> ***and I had a terrible experience!***

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

J8JPS000>: Did you ask to be put onto tranquillizers? [126 & 127 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

J8JPS006>: No. Th we th, I think at that time it was just the done thing, you hand out tranquillizers, erm ... but I found it a, a really bad experience

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS006>: and ended up having to take anti-depressants to ... reduce the effects of the tranquillizers.

J8JPS000>: So you actually became dependant on ... the tranquillizers did you or, or, or you simply had

J8JPS006>: Mm.

J8JPS000>: such bad experience on them?

J8JPS006>: Ah, yes I, and I've never

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS007>: taken one since. And I refuse under any circumstances to take them!

J8JPS008>: I'm just going to comment on ... the lady over there. I never went to the extremes with heroin, but I was addicted to valium for seven years ... erm ... and I've been clean from valium for four months ... erm ... through a drug programme in Brenda House.

J8JPS000>: Right.

J8JPS008>: Erm

PS000>: I went to the doctor at seventeen, just about to be married and he put me on Librium to calm me down. <128> ***My parents were absolutely shocked when I went home from the doctor,***

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Narration

<129> ***seventeen year old and ... living on ... drugs, so, so to speak,*** just because I was a bit excited about [laughing] getting married! You know it was ... [...]

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Narration

J8JPS000>: And di, did you take the Librium? [128 & 129 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

PS000>: I was entitled to!

<130> J8JPS000>: *See, extraordinary!* Yes?

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Assessment

J8JPS000c>: I take Attavan ... on, on a nightly basis [130 Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS000c>: simply to ... shut off my brain to enable me to sleep, much the same as the

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS000c>: lady over there ... I've no bad experience with it, I am not muddled-headed during the day

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS000c>: erm, it just allows me ... to switch off.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS000c>: I didn't know specifically asking for a sleeping tablet. And during the time where Attavan was getting a very bad press, I went back to the doctor and said, would it be advisable for me to change?

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS000c>: I still want something ... to turn me off at night, er and is ... Attavan that bad? If

so, can you give me an alternative? And he said, in the ... with the, the drug, th, with the amount that I was taking, the, there was no need to co, er concern myself with it.

J8JPS001>: Don't you think that a lot of doctors are too willing to hand out these tranquillizers? They see these weak

PS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS001>: women coming into their surgeries, highly strung and th the answer to their problems is, give them a tranquillizer and be done with them!

J8JPS002>: Ye, I feel actually women go, or people in general, go to the doctors expecting a tablet, a prescription, and are very disappointed if they don't get one. <131> Erm, *but I personally think there's a lot of other things that the doctors could be ... offering, er, pointing us in the direction of er ... relaxation techniques and all sorts of things.* Erm, I think they're quite good at saying stop smoking, or stop taking it but ... we don't offer anything in it's place.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action

FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + hedge + dissociate H from infringement: impersonalise H

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

J8JPS000>: Mm. [131 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS002>: And I think that ... drug taking has always been here, it will probably always be here, but in most people's life it's a transient thing, it's a phase ... perhaps erm ... as animals we like to change our mental state? I don't know, there's ha pu, I think there's a lot of reasons why.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS003>: Rec, erm the lady behind was stating that recent a, I mean recently I had about, er went through a bereavement, lost

J8JPS000>: Yep.

J8JPS003>: my brother who I was very close to ... went to the doctor ... <132> and, *instantly he, pres, er prescribed Tamazapam tablets for me*, knowing that I myself am a single parent so I have ... a responsibility.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

J8JPS000>: Mm. [132 R: Back-channel response]

J8JPS003>: I've my daughter to look after. <133> *Didn't ask me anything!* Just looked at me ... saw how I was, prescribed the Tamazapam tablets,

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

<134> *and I had a terrible experience with those ...* and that's only in the last year!

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

J8JPS000>: And so, how's that affe, I mean, what do you think about that? Because at the end of the day, are we not responsible for ourselves? I mean, you don't have to take drugs! [133 & 134 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark + Continuation of figures > idiom]

J8JPS003>: But you're taking a, a, a GP's word ... for it, that these tablets that he's given you are gonna help you through the emotional pain

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS003>: that you are going through. They done nothing for me ... at all!

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS004>: I had a phobia about going to the dentist, and the doctor wanted to give me tranquillizers ... but I didn't want to take them, so I actually went for hypnotherapy which helped.

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS005>: In the past we had a lot more ... family structure and friends, a good neighbourhood network, but if you had problems ... er, you could go, you could talk about it

J8JPS000>: Yeah.

J8JPS005>: you could ... get it out of your system. But now women are meant to go along

... on an even keel ... and when something upsets them ... they think that, I shouldn't be able to express this any more, so I'll go to the GP and he'll give me something and then the emotions will go away, but unfortunately they don't go away, they just go wandering, they'll come back again at another point.

J8JPS006>: I think there's something that we haven't discussed, and that's that, doctors don't seem to prescribe tranquillizers to men, it's women, and they do wrongly prescribe them to women.

J8JPS000>: Is that true?

PS000>: No.

PS000>: No.

J8JPS006>: In my experience it is.

J8JPS000>: Maybe men talk about it even less than women do. I mean do, do you, do you think women take more drugs than men do, whether recreationally or, or, or for their health or ... now then, is there a particular problem that women have with drugs whether it's illegal drugs or tranquillizers? Yes?

J8JPS007>: Do men, not perhaps drink alcohol more than women?

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS007>: And women use the tranquillizers as the alternative? I don't know!

J8JPS000>: Well, I, no one's saying much about alcohol! Yes?

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS008>: In a study which I did, er erm I find that

J8JPS000>: Aha.

J8JPS008>: erm ... women were being prescribed tranquillizers about three times as often as men ... and in fact, women go to see the GP three times as often as men.

J8JPS000>: Mhm.

J8JPS008>: So, I think the two things go together that way.

J8JPS000>: Well, let me ask you this question, would you say that using drugs has improved your life? Eighty-one people here say they've taken drugs, and probably more than that. Has using drugs, any kind of drug improved your life? Button one for yes, and button two for no. ... And who knows what they're talking about, those fifty-two people who said yes.

PS000>: What about the contraceptive pill, that brings a lot of joy?

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: [laughing] Di we ... In, in, indirectly there! [...]

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: A final question, do think society could do without drugs? Do you think, do you think we could ever do without drugs? Button one for yes, and button two for no. ... And I think you're probably quite right you eighty-three! Seventeen people have said yes, we could do, where are you, you idealists? What are all the asthma sufferers, and arthritis sufferers, and various people going to do? Yes?

J8JPS000d>: I don't think we could be completely drug-free, I mean obviously medical conditions dictate that you have to take medicines

J8JPS000>: Mm.

J8JPS000d>: but, when it comes to taking other drugs, for a thrill, yes you could do without them, and one of the ways you can do that is by taking time out for yourself, whether you're a single parent or if you're a ... you know, if you're a family, the important thing is finding time for yourself and not for your family or your dependants.

J8JPS000>: I think that deserves a whole programme. How do women find time for themselves?

PS000>: [laugh]

J8JPS000>: We'll talk about it another day. Thank you all very much indeed! Thank you for watching. See you next time. Goodbye.

Text F8A

BNC domain: Educational-informative

G: Learning encounter

Birmingham College of Food: lecture on food

Participants: Pat, 40+, lecturer, female

LECTURER>: Right then! Leading on from last week ... we were looking at ... menu planning ... and I actually asked you to bring in some menus. ... Who actually managed to get a menu?

PS000>: Yep!

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Right, let's have a look!

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Well ... that's a shame, innit?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: What? Somewhere. It's only you [...]

PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: You might want to use those a little later.
 PS000>: Yeah.
 LECTURER>: Right, hold on to them cos you'll want them a little later, right? ... Right! ... Can anyone tell me what the ... four most common ones are?
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Yep!
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Yep!
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Yep!
 PS000>: Er, plat du jour.
 LECTURER>: Right! Okay then. What do each of those mean, Suzanne?
 PS000>: Erm ... the ... table d'hote
 LECTURER>: Shh! Shh! Shh! Shh!
 PS000>: is er ... a choice out of ... the main course is a choice out of two ... and everything else ... is set. Or is it a choice of two for each course?
 LECTURER>: You're telling me?
 PS000>: It's a choice out of two for each one.
 LECTURER>: Right.
 PS000>: Erm, the ... er ... cote du jour is a set menu.
 LECTURER>: Yes, it is. Can you expand on that?
 PS000>: Er ... er
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: No. Set price menu.
 LECTURER>: Yes, the price would probably be set. So, I gave you two examples ... and I said that it was often
 PS000>: Chef du jour.
 LECTURER>: Yes! Good! Well done! And
 PS000>: Set budget.
 LECTURER>: It was set which to er ... and it looked different. It usually the chef's speciality. Okay. Erm ... Gareth! The other two are?
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: She's covered plat du jour ... and table d'hote.
 PS000>: A la carte's er ... wide choice of ... choice of food. Has to wait for food to be cooked and prepare to wait for it.
 LECTURER>: Okay. Did anyone get er, er an example of an a la carte?
 PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Right! Okay. Hold on to those. I want you share those with the group shortly. And the other one is ... please?
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Okay. And what exactly's that? What am I gonna get for my money for that?
 PS000>: Erm
 PS000>: [...] [...]
 PS000>: Continental.
 LECTURER>: It is continental. What do I actually get? What is the [...] way?
 PS000>: Oh, accommodation.
 LECTURER>: Accommodation, right! Can you just check that we took down the following? I think that we actually just had time to talk through these and you didn't actually make notes.
 PS000>: We did!
 PS000>: Yeah, we did!
 LECTURER>: You've actually taken notes?
 PS000>: Yeah.
 LECTURER>: And you did that?
 PS000>: Yeah.
 <135> LECTURER>: Right! **Wonderful!** I was just a little curious and she seemed to be er
 IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (action)
 PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud
 FTA to H – face > applause through indirection
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment
 PS000>: Oblivious to [...]! [135 R: Collaborative completion]
 LECTURER>: [...]. And you actually took that down.
 PS000>: Yeah.
 PS000>: Yeah.
 <136> LECTURER>: Right! **Wonderful!**
 IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (action)
 PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud
 FTA to H – face > applause through indirection
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment
 PS000>: [...] [136 R: Inaudible response]
 LECTURER>: Okay then! Continuing ... with the menu and ... when planning a menu the

points to be taken into consideration are ... David! David. Okay? What things do you think you need to consider then ... when you're putting together a menu?

PS000>: They like a lot of food that's popular.

LECTURER>: Popular food.

PS000>: Mm.

LECTURER>: Good!

PS000>: Choice.

LECTURER>: Appearance and choice.

PS000>: Nutrition

PS000>: Baked potato.

LECTURER>: Alright! Just one at a time!

PS000>: Nutrition.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: No, time.

PS000>: Go good balance.

LECTURER>: Who said balance?

PS000>: Me.

LECTURER>: Okay. Balance in what way?

<137> PS000>: *Well, [...] ... I mean, well that's it, you know ... selection of everything, like the starch foods.*

SA: Representative > report > clarify

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

LECTURER>: Is that balance or variety? [137

R: Request for clarification]

PS000>: plenty of [...]

PS000>: Variety.

PS000>: Don't know.

LECTURER>: Okay. Oh.

PS000>: But you need a balance as well, like protein and [...]

LECTURER>: [...] If I put there ... balance. Yes, you're quite right! ... What else do you need to consider? Something that's very important ... that you need consider.

PS000>: Type of customer [...].

LECTURER>: Well done! You actually need to consider ... this person ... because, if you haven't got that person ... i.e. customer ... there's little point in having a menu ... unless you're going to sit and read it yourself! Okay? So you need to consider that very carefully. So ... first things first then ... the people for whom the meal is intended. And it can determine certain things ... Right! Type of food to be served ... and type ... and the number of covers. Why do we need to consider the type of food to be served?

PS000>: So people [...] they always keep, the customers that always arrive ... if you're in a restaurant. You never know

LECTURER>: Yes.

PS000>: what type of [...].

LECTURER>: Can I have a look at those menus that some of you brought in? did I, cos we've got some with a la carte ... Did anybody get sort of erm ... a pub grub menu or? ... No, you all went for the ... top of the range. Who's got the menu [...].?

PS000>: I've got a Beefeater one.

LECTURER>: Right! Where's the [...] have one? ... Who had that copy er, a la carte? That's fine, I'll give it you back. I won't er ... I won't take it away from you! Martin! [...] ... Who had the [...] a la carte?

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: That was from [...].

LECTURER>: And that was a la carte? Right! You hold on to that and you and you can, sort of talk it through. With that, hold on to that. Right! Can you give us the prices of, have they got prices? A la carte? That's right! Are you listening? A la carte then? Just give me a [...].

PS000>: In the erm ... the starters, melon in [...] four ninety-five ... avocado pear is five forty-five ... frog's legs, ten ninety-five ... and, that's the most expensive starter.

LECTURER>: Right.

PS000>: Erm, yep! And then it's ... soups starting at three forty-five, five forty-five ... and then it's on to main course. Fish, twelve ... salmon is twelve ninety-five ... Dover sole is twenty-two ninety-five.

LECTURER>: Okay, you can stop there. <138> *That's lovely*, thank you! Right! At Pizzaland we can have starter for ... one pound thirty if we want! And, we can have ... a main for ... seven pound fifty -ish. Can you see the ... the range of price? But also ... obviously pizzas ... and command a lower ... price ... than things on a la carte menu. Oh right, this is a fixed one. Good! We'll use that in a moment. Now ... so the type of food that you offer ... will reflect the type of establishment. You wouldn't really expect to get ... a la carte style food ... in a pizza ... establishment, okay? What about the time? Where do I put the time, bearing in mind this is in relation to customers?

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (action)

PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud
 FTA to H – face > applause through indirection
 RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment

PS000>: Time of day, it is? [138 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

LECTURER>: Yes, the time of day ... will depend of menu that you offer but ... what else will it consider?

PS000>: Time of year.

LECTURER>: Time of year.

PS000>: Food that is sort of

LECTURER>: Pardon?

PS000>: Things that are in season.

LECTURER>: Yes, it will. But think of your customer.

PS000>: The time people go out to eat. The time people go out to eat.

LECTURER>: The time people will go out to eat. If you were going for a McDonalds, how long do you think it would take?

PS000>: Half an hour.

PS000>: Depends how much you eat, but assuming

LECTURER>: Alright, depends how much you eat. A Big Mac, some fries and a coke.

PS000>: About half an hour.

PS000>: Half an hour.

PS000>: Half an hour at the most [...]

PS000>: Depends if you're [...]

LECTURER>: Right! Half an hour at the most. If I went and had ... a meal in the evening ... a la carte, how would you ... envisage it would take to go through that?

PS000>: An hour and a half.

PS000>: About [...]

<139> LECTURER>: I it, it virtually, *you're virtually going to use the evening*. Number of covers.

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Contrast of differences

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...][139 R: Inaudible response]

PS000>: Depends how many people you're erm ... chef's actually cooked for at the time. [139 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

LECTURER>: Yes. Why would that reflect what you offer?

PS000>: Cos

PS000>: The time. How long it will actually be. How long the customer's actually sitting there for his meal.

LECTURER>: That's right! But also

PS000>: How many. How many it's for.

LECTURER>: How many actual people in at any given time. Tha that will reflect what you can actually offer. ... Right! All important ... cost. The amount of money that people are prepared to pay for the meal ... plus the overheads and the establishment. ... And I think we actually got that, somebody said price.

PS000>: Mm.

LECTURER>: David, a question to you! You said popular food ... did you not?

PS000>: Mhm.

LECTURER>: How, how would you find out what is ... what food is popular?

PS000>: Oh, you gotta do it now?

LECTURER>: Pardon?

PS000>: Depending on the amount of people [...].

LECTURER>: No. So you're just going to compile a menu and you're gonna hope that ... Joe public ... likes what you've put on?

PS000>: No, you can put [...].

LECTURER>: Right. So you sort of do a survey? You do some research into it.

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: If you put ... if you compiled your menu and you then found out that certain dishes weren't being sold ... what would you do then?

PS000>: Take them off.

LECTURER>: Right. Good! Did I actually tell you last week about the feedback [...]?

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Yes?

PS000>: No.

LECTURER>: It was the other group I mentioned. What you've got, you've got your customer ... we've got your menu ... feedback ... and you got your products. Right, so ... your customer ... has the menus ... you get some feedback, and [...] the feedback you might need to modify your product ... which is really what David's just said. The fact that you would need to change ... your menu ... if it wasn't ... being used. That's quite important that you're aware of that. ... Season. And I think se ... several people did say that. ... Use foods in season because they're cheaper. ... Hot weather ... dishes not always suitable to serve in cold weather.

Although, this summer I don't think it would of had much of an effect. Yes?

PS000>: Can I leave [...]

LECTURER>: Yes, certainly! ... That okay?

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Right! ... I've also said that you need to consider the staff. Why?

PS000>: What type of restaurant it is.

LECTURER>: When you're putting yo together your menu, why do you need to consider the staff?

PS000>: They can [...].

LECTURER>: Yes! Exactly that! Whether or the, they've got the ability to cook what you've put on the menu. It's absolutely crucial! What else?

PS000>: Serving.

LECTURER>: Yes, whether they can actually, whether they've got the skills ... to silver serve, if your menu requires that it's silver served ... then, then, yes clearly you would need to consider that. What else would I need to consider, David?

PS000>: Well, I think when you have the customers then you know what type of things ... once you've [...] down you get [...] type of people. If it's a high class restaurant then you prefer to ... [...] people who know what they're doing.

LECTURER>: That's right. What else do I need to consider ... along with the staff? For the benefit of the staff also. We've looked at whether or not the staff have the skills ... to cook ... and serve, what else do I need the staff to be able to do? Who's worked in ki, sorry!

PS000>: Explain all the dishes so that the customer has [...]

LECTURER>: That's right! Yes, they need to have product knowledge. Who's been in ... kitchen? Who's done ... production?

PS000>: Yeah, ah!

LECTURER>: Right! When you actually went into the kitchen ... what type of things were in there?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: The sink. What else is in there?

PS000>: Equipment.

LECTURER>: Equipment! Did you know how all of it works? Did you use all of

PS000>: Not all of it.

LECTURER>: it?

PS000>: No.

PS000>: No.

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: Okay. That's something else that you need to be aware of. It would be no good ... putting together a menu that required ... certain equipment to be used ... and staff didn't have the ability to use it. ... And that is a summary of that. ... Another point there ... size and equipment of kitchen and dining room. <140> ***It would be no good ... putting together menu ... and arranging to do two thousand covers if you've got ... spacing for twenty persons, would it?*** ... By the same token, if your equipment ... is ... small pieces of equipment ... then you would not have the facility ... to do a large volume of meals. If you think of it in relationship to the size of your cooker at home ... and the size of the convection ... ovens in ... the eighth floor kitchen ... or in [...] ... they're much larger ... and therefore you are more able to cook volume. ... It's alright. When I'm actually choosing the dishes that I'm going to put on the menu, what things do we need to consider?

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Contrast of differences

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Er ... special diets, like vegetarian or [140 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

LECTURER>: Er ... yes, we would consider that. ... What else, what might we consider?

PS000>: You can take erm ... [...] of how much it's gonna cost. [...] buy in bulk.

LECTURER>: Yes. What things do I [...]? And that's one we'd look for in se, in season. But there's something else. We'll eat with our mouths but we also eat with, what else?

PS000>: Eyes.

PS000>: Our eyes.

LECTURER>: Our eyes, yes. So what ... do we have to think of when we actually compile a menu?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Pardon?

PS000>: Colour.

LECTURER>: Yes, we do. The colours. The colour. ... You need this information to do your exercise that you're going to do for me ... shortly. ... So, do not repeat the main ingredients. Avoid food the same colour. It actually gives you an example there. <141>

And think about the textures of food. ... Over here. Is that better? Can you see now?

PS000>: Yes.

LECTURER>: *And ... something that ... you all mentioned ... nutrition.*

SA: Directive > mandative > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction. Bald, on record

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Instruction

PS000>: No. It's alright. [141 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

LECTURER>: If you were planning a menu ... which would you consider first do you think? Proteins?

PS000>: Protein.

LECTURER>: vitamins, carbohydrates?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: When you're compiling a dish then? ... What would you do? Select chips and plan it round the chips?

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: No.

LECTURER>: No.

PS000>: You'd plan it around the main course ... the main ... the main meat.

LECTURER>: Meat? Why meat? Suzanne?

PS000>: Because ... meat's the main ... [...].

PS000>: [...].

LECTURER>: Gareth? Which would you plan first? If you're planning a dish, which would you ... proteins, the vitamins, the carbohydrates.

PS000>: Protein.

LECTURER>: Protein?

PS000>: I say vitamins first.

LECTURER>: Vitamins, carbohydrates.

PS000>: No! All that meat's got a [...]

LECTURER>: Pardon?

PS000>: All that meat's got a lot of

LECTURER>: Protein.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: Yeah, protein.

LECTURER>: Protein? Protein. Does anyone know why protein? Yes? Oops! Steady!

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: Why protein?

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Erm ... it's the most beneficiary to the body.

LECTURER>: Yes!

PS000>: And also, you wouldn't want a piece of bro, broccoli!

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: No, that's iron!

PS000>: No, [...]. No, to me [...] piece of broccoli [...].

LECTURER>: People do!

PS000>: [laugh]

PS000>: Yeah, but then it's

LECTURER>: Yeah. I ... if you've ever dieted ... then you'll be aware that ... you actually ... reduce the carbohydrates, but you need to retain protein and vitamins. Because those are essentials.

PS000>: Right.

LECTURER>: for the ... the good order of the body. Basically. And ... therefore ... when you're looking at the nutritional value ... you need to be ... very aware ... of that.

PS000>: Yes.

LECTURER>: So you need to be aware of too many carbohydrates. Plan your protein first, vitamins and minerals second, and then your carbohydrates.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Right, when you've completed that ... you have a menu compilation exercise in front of you. [reading] From the items in the list below prepare two luncheon menus. One menu should be a four course table d'hote ... with two choices for each course ... plus vegetables. And the other should be a set six course menu for a business lunch. You can't ... actually repeat any of them ... when, in your menu compilation. There is adequate there in an order to be able to do the exercise. Now, based on the information that you've just taken down ... you need to give thought to the way in which you compile those. Off you go! ... You can do it within twos ... or threes.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: That's not fives and sixes, that's twos or threes! So David and Gareth and David and, I don't know your name [...].

PS000>: Terry.

PS000>: Terry.

LECTURER>: Terry. Right! David, Terry and

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: you'll be all up. Kieran, Kieran you've got somebody behind you. Two. Two. Daisy you can join up there. Three. Yes.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Group threes, isn't it? Group of three. This group's three.

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: So you got to remem, you got to think of colour ... texture ... you can write all over the sheets if you want to. As long as you use the ones on the sheet ... and you come up with ... the two selection menus.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Yes, put everything on it.

PS000>: Make out a [...] from both?

LECTURER>: Well, you've got to make that [...], I'm going to tell you, you need to think about it.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: There isn't a list [...] ... so that ... you will need to sort of think it through.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Are we not allowed to use the same things twice?

LECTURER>: That's right.

PS000>: Oh!

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: And so if you use the ... whatever ... what is it you wanted to use in yours?

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Right ... so have a look, [...].

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: It's actually quite helpful, isn't it? to have

PS000>: Yeah.

LECTURER>: two or three? you can have a look at what they ... the way in which they're put together which why I [...].

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Right, well you [...], how you going to use it?

PS000>: [...]

<142> LECTURER>: Well, *I'm not going to actually tell you because I'll ... ruin the solution to this*. So, if I start to tell you ...

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [142 R: Inaudible response]

LECTURER>: you need to think it through.

Okay? So, it's, i it's not going to be as I [...].

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: The things that you would get out [...].

PS000>: Daisy!

LECTURER>: That's better [...]. It'd be certain things you would have as starters and then [...].

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: How many, how many [...]?

LECTURER>: Right! Do you think I about the [...]?

PS000>: Yes. [...]

LECTURER>: Well, have you got some [...]?

PS000>: Oh, you can't use, you can't use your

LECTURER>: No, you can't use anything twice.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: No. Can't use anything twice. I, yo I, I mean [...] if you use in one ... [...].

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Well, I shall be interested to see what you can get.

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: You've found a certain [...] Paul?

PS000>: Yeah, but I mean [...].

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Can we erm ... does it have to be all on here or can we use [...]?

LECTURER>: Sorry?

PS000>: Can you copy that and just what's on there?

PS000>: Can you put [...] to it?

LECTURER>: No, you can't!

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: Right!

PS000>: [...]

<143> LECTURER>: *No, we're not gonna take forever [...]*.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > warn

PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: impersonalise S and H (we) + be indirect

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [143 R: Inaudible response]

PS000>: Can you put, add things? [143 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

LECTURER>: No! Copy it all down.

PS000>: I haven't any [...].

PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: There is a solution!

PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: We can't use ... the same things twice?
 LECTURER>: No, you can't use the same thing twice.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: You can't use the same thing twice and coffee doesn't count as a course!
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Just put it ... you, you'll need to get that ... so what's the problem?
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Well, then it'll be a course on it's own.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Impossible! You've gotta get [...] haven't you? You've got to think about it!
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: Cheese and biscuits [...]?
 LECTURER>: Cheese and biscuits can be a course.
 PS000>: Could we have, er [...]?
 LECTURER>: Can you? You tell me!
 PS000>: Yeah.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: And don't forget you're thinking of colour ... texture.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: So you've got set menu and you've got table d'hote menu.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Right! Well that's got a starter and it's [...]
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: How you doing?
 PS000>: Just the starter now cos she's [...].
 LECTURER>: Let's see. What's it called?
 PS000>: Erm ... [...].
 LECTURER>: Pardon?
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Please, worry about listing them.
 PS000>: Right. [...]
 LECTURER>: [...] than one, two, three, four, five, six.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Take a look at those.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Well [...] your table d'hote. That's not the choice, is it? It, it actually says to you ... two choices for each course. Read the instructions!

PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Yes, Colin! You had a six [...] on table d'hote, you've got give me three choices.
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: As you long as [...]?
 LECTURER>: Yes, you can.
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: Do you have to use all the vegetables?
 LECTURER>: I think you'll probably be able to. Yes. Bearing in mind you're looking for colour and [...].
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: It's possible to use ... all the items.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Keep in mind ... one quarter.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: You got it? I'm glad there's [...]!
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Right! Did you all manage to complete it?
 PS000>: Yeah.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Right! I want you to bring it in, it's completed state, to next week's lesson, please. So, whoever you're working with ... Shh! Shh! Shh! Whoever you're working with ... you need, as a pair or a three-some to bring the solution with you next week, please.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Also, Shh! Shh! Shh! Shh! Also you will need to bring menus with you next week ... for comparison.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Right! If there's anyone in your group that suddenly reappears ... they need to see Sally for their [...] assignments.
 PS000>: [...]

Text F8J

BNC domain: Educational-informative
 Newcastle University: lecture on word processing
 G: Learning encounter
 Participants: Lecturer, 30+, male

LECTURER>: Words of wisdom. What we need to do now is ... make them look interesting ... and we do that ... using the ... what is called formatting options. And those are actually ... listed on page eight. So essentially, what we're

going to be doing are going through er the lessons that are actually outlined in page eight ... and page nine of your booklet. Now one of the ... features of Microsoft Word is that a only lets you work with text which is what is called selected ... and if you actually move the cursor down a bit so that it's not at the beginning of a document ... and then we'll follow our way through these various selecting text keys which are outlined in that paragraph, section three six one. So we u, if we use function key F7 we move through the document one word at a time ... backwards ... and F8 is the complimentary key to that ... We move ... through the document one fa word at a time. So, just try that. So as we go through we're acc ... we er accepting one word at a time. Now F9 doesn't do what it says here actually, that's a ... an error on my part. If you hit F9 ... it selects the current sentence. I've actually lost the middle bit of my book! There it is! Right! So, F9 selects the current sentence that you're in. F10 ... takes you through the document one sentence at a time ... so you can work your way through the document one sentence at a time. So it's not actually a next paragraph, it's one sentence.

<144> PS000>: *Unbelievable, isn't it?*

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Assessment

LECTURER>: So you're okay so far? [144 R: Ignored hyperbole without topic shift]

PS000>: Well, mine doesn't seem to go through the [...].

LECTURER>: Does it?

PS000>: Yeah. For F9.

LECTURER>: Yes, true! It is one paragraph at a time, so it is correct.

PS000>: I hope so.

LECTURER>: I was having a job to recognise what was a pa ... Er, a paragraph as far as *Microsoft Word* is concerned is the space between two ... hits of the return key, okay? Whereas a sentence ... is, is the space between er the beginning of er, er between two full stops. <145> *A new way of using the English language, when you're word processing is absolutely another world!*

SA: Representative > report > warn

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

Okay. Erm ... if you go shift F9, or shift F8 ... it goes through the document, I think, one sentence at a time. Yep! And shift F7 takes you back through the document one sentence at a time. ... Shift F9 selects the current line, we've not er stated I think. ... Yeah, shift F9 ... er ... accepts the current line where the cursor is, is located. And probably the most useful key of all ... when you're doing global formatting, is shift F10 and you select the whole document. So if you wanna select all the text you've written, she shift F10 selects the whole document. And essentially, you only will change the appearance of the text which is appearing in your vers video. So if you actually want to italicize something, you want to make it bold, you le you have to select it first and then you can carry out the ... tha, the function. So, if everybody selects the text that they want of their document and we'll just play around with it ... <146> *show you what a mess you can actually create using these formatting keys!*

SA: Commissive > promise

FTA to H – face > promise. Bald, on record

RF: Interest intensification, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

So everybody have document and hit shift F10 ... and they're on page nine now ... if we go, hold down the alt key and type B ... and you'll just see er a shimmer go down the screen ... <147> and ... *then you don't actually see anything*, but if you alt U, everything appears underlined ... alt K ... converts everything into small capitals ..., alt S strikes through everything ... and alt I ... italicizes all the words.

SA: Representative > report > warn

RF: Simplification, Contrast of differences, Humour

M: Argumentation-exposition

<148> *If you don't press your arrow ... you'll see what a mess you've created in your document!*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct
 FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<149> *You've made the text bold ... capitalized, struck through, underlined, and totally illegible!*

SA: Representative > report > recount (task)

RF: Interest intensification, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

<150> *So you've now actually taken all that nice typing that you've done and rendered it totally illegible!*

SA: Representative > report > recount (task)

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Exposition via Description

Fortunately, this is not permanent. So if you select all the text again, shift F10, and press the alt space bar, then all of that formatting is removed ... and it takes you back to your text as it was. <151> *So, from basically making it totally illegible you're back to where you started.*

SA: Representative > report > recount (task)

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

So what we've been doing is we've been taking words and we've been changing their appearance. We've underlining them, italicizing them, whatever ... this is what is called character formats ... and these are eliminated or removed with the alt space bar. The next set of features that are actually mentioned erm ... relate to ... the way in which paragraphs are laid out. So, if we actually have everything highlighted again and we'll actually not follow the list as in the book we'll, if you type in alt C

... all your text moves to the centre ... go alt R ... everything moves to the right ... and alt L again it takes you back to left justified. So now we're altering the space ... the words actually placed on the page. Go alt N ... and you can see what's happening is your text is actually being indented one tab stop at a time ... so it ends up as a narrow thin ribbon of text skating down the page ... <152> *and if you do this really crazily, you can end up with a document that is only just one word wide!*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > hypothesise

PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction through humour + negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Humour, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<153> *It's a great way for producing long banners or waste paper* but ... And if you wanna actually reverse this process alt M takes it back ... the other way. And if you get fed up of moving text one tab stop at a time ... if you go alt P ... you then actually remove all of the paragraph formatting that you add and it takes you back to your starting position. So when you got paragraph formatting ... you can

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing: praise (object)

RF: Interest intensification, Humour, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 & 151 R: Unchallenged hyperbole] [152 & 153 R: Laughter]

LECTURER>: eliminate paragraph formatting with alt P. <154> *Now has anybody actually got themselves in a total mess?*

SA: Directive > elicit > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

PS000>: [laugh] [154 R: Laughter]

LECTURER>: Few ... few hoots of laughter from the back!

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: Let's try another one, is it, go in text highlighted ... try alt T

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: do you know what happens there? You wha, create what is called hanging indent. Your text and your paragraphs are indented by one tab stop but accept the first line.

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: So we have, looked something like our in our conclusions, you'll find the alt T is actually quite useful

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: because you can go down ... in your first line move to the ... first letter o, after the number, hit the tab key and you've actually lined up the first line along with the rest of your paragraph. So you produce nice numbered lists, looking very neat! Okay? Everything is lined up underneath the tab stop. Now this kind of ordering text on a page if you're using a typewriter takes quite a lot of skill ... but if you're a, with a word processor it's actually quite easy. Honest! Right!

PS000>: Oh! [laugh]

LECTURER>: Have you got yourself into a total er

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Yes [...].

LECTURER>: Right! Okay.

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: Go shift F10 or select [...] ... now go alt P and cancel all paragraph formats. If you will just wait it takes a bit of time to get back where you want.

PS000>: Ah! Yeah!

LECTURER>: [...]

PS000>: [laugh]

LECTURER>: So however a big a mess you make of things ... <155> *however big a mess you make of things, everything is usually retrievable.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [laugh] [155 R: Laughter]

<156> LECTURER>: *So rarely can you actually mess up a document in such a way that is totally irretrievable than the way in which things look.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: It's not coming right over [...]. [156 R: Challenged hyperbole]

LECTURER>: Yeah. Right, fine!

PS000>: Can't get [...] anyway.

LECTURER>: Go alt space bar ... should be it. ... So this is fun, learning to format! If you got mice I, you can also make things easier by actually moving that arrow around until you get to the individual word that you actually want to find and actually then you stop your cursor there. So, if you've got a mouse you could actually help speed up a lot of this editing but, I said, I've not written in the mouse commands into this schedule because we didn't actually have mice on all work stations when this was written. So, as I go round I'll show you erm, how to use the mouse ... er a as, as and when it becomes er appropriate. So what you'll have to do now is go back to erm ... page ... eighteen I guess, no haven't got page eighteen, have we? I keep on losing bits of my document! Yeah, I should get one that ... yeah, page ten, it says return to your letter ... and essentially i it tells you all the various formatting ... options that you want to apply to your document to make it look neat and tidy. So, just go through pa, the er ... commands on page ten and follow the instructions. And you should actually then produce a letter which is neat and tidy and worthy to send to ... to Doctor ... and not to your cat! ... And just to prove that some students have got the hang of this ... this is a letter that er ... David ... produced ... and, it actually looks quite good! So, he's only had the same length of time doing this as you have so, by the end of the afternoon you ought to be in the position to print out a really neat ... final version of, of, of the letter. One that you'll be proud, proud of.

PS000>: Can I borrow a book, please?

LECTURER>: Yeah, sure. Also, if anybody's not actually paid me for their book ... that they actually purchased last week, I'm open to accept ... payment today. So is anybody in immediate problems at the moment or you're o ... okay? So, I'll, it's your chance now to do some work then for the next ... twenty minutes or so.

PS000>: Can you accept payments next week?
 LECTURER>: Yes. I'll go on accepting payment until the course finishes.
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: okay? I'll keep reminding you.
 PS000>: Oh, is it possible to
 PS000>: Sir! Copy one disc onto another disc, how come I've done that? And why is it [...]?
 LECTURER>: You want the file off?
 PS000>: No, why? I seem to have gone into this ... exactly the same somehow.
 LECTURER>: Well, if you copied all the files over.
 PS000>: Well, I haven't though. I ju, I jus I haven't been asked to. But I wonder if I've done something ... copied one to six.
 LECTURER>: I bet that has. ... If you go into DOS ... right! So you go into A ... [...] cos we've got that disc in.
 PS000>: Yeah, that's the one that I keep [...].
 LECTURER>: Oh. Then just ask it to list all the files on that disc.
 PS000>: Yeah.
 LECTURER>: Yeah? And then ... there's the next one.
 PS000>: Oh, right!
 LECTURER>: And that ... now will list the same files on that disc
 PS000>: Right.
 LECTURER>: and in fact ... it ... is more or less the same but you check if some of them are missing.
 PS000>: But then I've lost my [...]. I've lost
 LECTURER>: Well
 PS000>: all the other things that were on ... this disc originally.
 PS000>: Ee!
 LECTURER>: Yeah, originally!
 PS000>: [...] work.
 PS000>: [...]
 PS000>: That one is now on this one, there's nothing [...] on this.
 LECTURER>: And you just used all the ... just did that?
 PS000>: Yeah, I just did it as you said. I did a few of them ... [...].
 LECTURER>: Right.
 PS000>: Well, that's alright.
 PS000>: [laugh]
 PS000>: I did that [...].
 PS000>: Yeah.
 PS000>: [...]

LECTURER>: I mean ... some of your letters are there, aren't they?
 PS000>: Erm
 LECTURER>: There's some of there.
 PS000>: Yeah, but ... that's [...] and a couple of ones like that, and that one. That one, but I actually got onto the ... the server.
 LECTURER>: Yeah, but that's what's on the server, isn't it?
 PS000>: Yeah.
 LECTURER>: But, then, that's all your files that are available now, I think you've lost
 PS000>: Some of them must have been on there.
 LECTURER>: Have you done your boot?
 PS000>: No, but that's ... on that one.
 PS000>: This one here
 PS000>: Oh, yeah!
 PS000>: [...]
 LECTURER>: Well ... I think that's happened [...], it's not like they dis, totally disappeared.
 PS000>: Is there any way you can delete ... like the whole the at once?
 LECTURER>: Yes.
 PS000>: Right.
 LECTURER>: I mean, if you want to say delete ... a temporary file ... press del for delete
 PS000>: Yeah.
 LECTURER>: then star ... that stands for a wild card, that'll do ... all files which have got the ... back up.
 PS000>: Oh, right!
 LECTURER>: You better go and get some tea, Margaret. I haven't had a chance yet! [laugh]
 PS000>: Oh, right! Have you not done your bit yet?
 LECTURER>: I've done my bit. Yeah.
 PS000>: Oh! Right! Come and have a cup of coffee then?
 LECTURER>: [...]
 PS000>: [...]

Text FMB

BNC domain: Educational-informative
 G: Learning encounter
 Science lesson: year 10
 Participants: John, 50, teacher, male

TEACHER>: Right, now, listen folks. [...] sh, sh, sh, sh, sh. Can I [...] remind you please, if you're answering a question, can you please put your hand up so I can select [...]. Some of you

know [...] Now way back a couple of weeks ago when we were doing the group seven the one that's spelt F C L B R I A T. Hands up who can remember what any of those stand for without looking on er [...]

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: You forgot the first rule: put your hand up. Right, fluorine is the actual element, fluoride is the stuff that's in?

PS000>: Toothpaste.

TEACHER>: Toothpaste, very good. <157> **You never put your hand up.** Right, CL.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > insult

FTA to H + face > insult through indirection

RF: Simplification, Express surprise,

Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Please, sir is [...] chloride [157 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

TEACHER>: Chloride is the, is when it's joined up with something, chlorine is the element. And what do we get chlorine in?

PS000>: Swimming baths.

TEACHER>: Swimming baths to?

PS000>: To take away all the nasty.

PS000>: To kill the germs.

TEACHER>: Well, it doesn't exactly kill them, kill the [...] it's got its own smell which sort of ... tends to mask the smell [...] but it's also basically to kill the germs. BR?

PS000>: Bromine.

TEACHER>: Bromine [...], very good. And I?

PS000>: Iodine.

<158> TEACHER>: *Very good, excellent.* S so what I want you to show you this morning is how we can actually make the chlorine.

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (answer)

PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud

FTA to H – face > applause through indirection

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Assessment

PS000>: [...] [158 R: Inaudible response]

TEACHER>: So [...] the people at the front, yeah, if, if you come up a little bit closer. ... [...] ... Now [...] sh, sh, sh, sh. ... Please ... Now ... I've got erm a bottle which is actually contains

some chlorine here but it's not called chlorine liquid. I'll scratch this.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Hydro

PS000>: Chloric.

PS000>: Chloric.

TEACHER>: chloric acid and it also says ... C O N C. Conc what is conc short for?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: It's short for a word, yes. It starts with C O N C.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Anybody?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Conc is short for?

PS000>: Nose [laugh]

TEACHER>: No, conc er ... it's the beginning part of a word. If you use the word conc you're just meaning your nose [...].

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Conical.

TEACHER>: Ah, now we're getting a bit more scientific. Conical, if it was conical it would be C O N I conical. But it's conc. Now can you think of a wo c think of a word that describes the state of this liquid. And I'm going to hold the top while I show you. It's rather oily and it's quite a, a dense liquid.

PS000>: Is it dangerous?

TEACHER>: It is dangerous, yes. I'm gonna get some goggles on in a minute. ... What do you call liquid, ah, I'll give you a clue. What do you call a liquid that's very, very strong?

PS000>: Concentrated liquid.

TEACHER>: Thank you, concentrated. Now I ... Goggles on time, folks. Now in this particular case I'm using a tap funnel ... Tap funnel ... just as it's ... it's ... [...] Erm the concentrated acid you don't just sort of pour it in and run away and leave it to it. Let it in a little bit at a time. ... Just slow ... Slowly let the acid in. Then turn it off. Right, now, so the tap is to control the speed at which the acid goes in and if there is any gas that's in there it can't escape out of that pipe again. It's got to go down the other pipe. So it's a safe, it's a safety feature and it helps control the experiment. So we control the speed at which the acid goes in. And once it's in there it prevents the gas from escaping. Now at the moment the black chemical that's in there is not doing a great deal. The black powder's just sort of gone to a, a sludgy paste [...]. The powder's just gone, it's

dissolved a little bit but it's not really doing much on its own. So in order to speed it up a little bit we might need, need to heat it up. Who said that?

PS000>: Me.

TEACHER>: Well done. Now who's going to go next door to get the gas switched on?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: [...]

PS000>: What?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Right ... Listen again sh, sh, sh, sh, sh.

PS000>: Done it.

TEACHER>: Sh [...] Now ... in order to help this black powder to split up the acid, we're going to have to heat it up a little bit. <159> *Now again I'm treating it carefully, I'm not just sticking the bunsen underneath and blasting away at it.* I've got the ... Graham wanted to, well, unfortunately, Graham, this one's a bit dangerous so I'm having to do it so if anything goes wrong it's me that gets it and not you. ... Well, because I've got all the dirty chemicals [...] ... Sh, ... Please. ... Erm ... How will we know ... how will we know if there's any gas escaping?

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Clarification through negation, Contrast of differences, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

PS000>: [...] [159 R: Inaudible response]

TEACHER>: What. What's this paper?

PS000>: PH paper.

TEACHER>: PH paper. So I'm going to moisten it. ... Because of the gas that's drifting around in here [...] ... What?

PS000>: The gas, can you, can you set fire to it?

TEACHER>: No, it's not a flammable gas. But it is poisonous so if I start smelling it I'm going have to switch the cupboard on to suck the fumes away. Lorraine, now this PH test I've only had it a few seconds and already, look, what it's done to the paper? ... Where I've wet it, what's it done to it?

PS000>: Turned it yellow.

TEACHER>: It's turned it yellow and where it was dry it's now going what colour?

PS000>: Red.

TEACHER>: Red. Red means it's

PS000>: An acid.

TEACHER>: an acid. And because this takes what do you call something, what do you call something that takes the colour away?

PS000>: Bleach.

TEACHER>: [...] those are old pieces of paper.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Come on, somebody what do you call a chemical ... A what? Not a neutralizer. ... Andrew? We call a chemical that takes, that takes

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Now you'll see it. What colour's the gas?

PS000>: Green.

TEACHER>: Right, it's a green gas ... and it's also what it does it to this paper turns it acid to start with and then takes the colour away it is a bleach. Bleach gas. ... Now because it was frothing up, I've turned the bunsen off ... to control the reaction, it's slowing down again now. And you can see the colour. What colour's bromine on that list?

PS000>: Black.

TEACHER>: Black. What colour's iodine on that list?

PS000>: Black.

PS000>: Blue.

TEACHER>: Not, it's not blue.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Purple

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: And they're all poisonous ... and they will bleach this the be this is probably the best bleacher. This is highest, the highest up, up the list that we can do. We can do reactions from F [...] too dangerous. ... Now sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, ... sh. Now this one I'm going to show you this one this time. Karina?

PS000>: Mm?

TEACHER>: Why do we use the tap funnel again? Cos we've got a tap funnel.

PS000>: [...] so if there's any gas [...]

TEACHER>: Yeah, right, it can't get out, it has to go down the pipe.

PS000>: Sir?

TEACHER>: Stop shuffling. Sh. Can anybody, oh, I bet you'll never guess this one. Why have I got a conical flask instead of a round flask?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Here's the answer. The round flask is broken. Erm [...] I've got some purple crystals, believe it or not. ... now this one's a bit

more powerful, this purple chemical. ... Shouldn't need heating up. If I put this white ... if I put the white paper behind the flask, can you see the gas that's in there?

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Yes, a yellowy gas.

TEACHER>: Yellowy gas, right and [...]

PS000>: Sir?

TEACHER>: Yes?

PS000>: Is that flammable?

TEACHER>: It's not flammable, it's poisonous, it's acid and it bleaches. It could, yes, in the, in the First World War er they used ... It would [...]

PS000>: But how long would it take?

TEACHER>: It depends how much you got into [...] whether you had asthma or not. You might, you might have after you've s had some of this. Now can I explain this part over here, look at this. Sh, sh. Er right, I've got this [...] contraption upside down leading into a, a trough of water. Can anybody guess why? There's something else that this gas does in water. If you'd got enough gas it would make bubbles. But we've only got a small supply remember.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: It may do [...]. What do, what do things normally do in water.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Sometimes they move, yeah. Anything else? if you just put some. Right, they sink or float. What else do they do after they've either sunk or floated?

PS000>: Rust.

TEACHER>: They might rust, yeah. Or ... turn to a, well, what do you call it when they turn to a liquid. What's the word? They what?

PS000>: They liquidize.

PS000>: Liquidize.

TEACHER>: They liquidize but you can liquidize things by heating them up, that would liquidize them but in this particular case you just mix them with some water what's the process called? To turn it into, it's called what?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: If you stir some sugar into water.

PS000>: Dissolves.

TEACHER>: It dissolves, okay. If this gas ... if this gas dissolves too quickly it'll suck the water back up the tube and into this flask. It could be dangerous because if you're sucking water into acid you could have problems. So Lorraine I've

got this upside down funnel and that prevents the water from being sucked up. How do I know I've got some chlorine in the water? Well, look what's happening to these test papers. ... They're not acid any longer, what's happened to them? Mark, what's happened to that, that test, the PH paper there?

PS000>: It's all gone white.

TEACHER>: It's gone white what's the pr, what's the pr, what do we call it? It's been?

PS000>: Bleached.

TEACHER>: Bleached. So I've got some bleaching [...] yeah, smell you can smell that bleach. I've got some bleaching chemical. Wave it past your nose you don't sn don't, don't [...] just I'll just wave it past your nose.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: You don't want too much cos remember it is er poisonous. ... Anybody else want ... [...] no? You want a smell? ... Right. ... So ... sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, let's just sum up. ... What was the liquid we started with? ... What was the liquid we started with?

PS000>: Erm oh, that conc.

TEACHER>: Concentrated hydrochloric acid. It's got chlorine in it. We used a black chemical to start with but in order to that to help that we needed some heat. And this one works on its own, this purple chemical is more powerful and works on its own. [...] Adam, can you go and turn the gas off?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Right now ... I don't know [...] Mr 's trying to book some.

PS000>: What?

TEACHER>: Erm science trips.

PS000>: Where to?

TEACHER>: Somewhere in

PS000>: The Science Museum in London?

TEACHER>: No, no, no, erm somewhere in Yorkshire.

PS000>: Somewhere where?

TEACHER>: Somewhere in Yorkshire.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Er yes, a gas, gas, gas fired power station [...]. Right, can you go back to your places?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Right, now [...]

PS000>: Sir, have s, have you seen Pride and Prejudice on the telly?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Can you look after those folks?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Well, well, did anything happen when I put the acid in? [...] Did any, any of you three see what anything that happened in the first one? [...] so we had to put some a bit of heat in. [...] <160> *Nothing happened* [...] *acid on its own*. Now we got [...]. Let's ... Right, excuse me. [...] too small.

SA: Representative > report > recount (task)

RF: Contrast of differences, Simplification

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [160 R: Inaudible response]

TEACHER>: Erm ... does anybody know what this MNO^2 business is? Have a look on your, your periodic table and see if you can work out what MNO^2 . You should know what O, O stands for.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: MNO^2 , anybody?

PS000>: Nitric oxide.

TEACHER>: Something oxide, yeah. Part way there, come on, MN, have a look on your [...] page one of this module. Work, look up what MN stands for. ... Anybody worked it out, come on MNO^2 .

PS000>: Magnesium.

TEACHER>: Very close but not quite right. Not magnesium. ... Have a look [...] look very close it's not mag it's ... No, oh, that's capital N, this is a little NMN. ... That's it right. [...] MN

PS000>: Oxidizes

TEACHER>: Go on, read it, what is it?

PS000>: Magnesium.

TEACHER>: No, have you looked closer?

PS000>: Manganese.

TEACHER>: Manganese, manganese oxide. ... Please. There you go. [...]

PS000>: [...] ...

TEACHER>: Manganese oxide erm the back row decided. Manganese oxide.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Erm

PS000>: Excuse me sir, thanks sir.

TEACHER>: Universal liquid. Or a piece of universal paper or [...]. What does $KMNO$ stand for? What does K stand for? Anybody? Work that one out on your periodic table. K for anybody remember cos we've done this group. ... What's this paper [...] paper called?

PS000>: PH.

TEACHER>: Yeah, that's PH. ... Yes, it is. No, not chrome. ... Anybody ... what's K?

PS000>: Potassium.

TEACHER>: Well done.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Yes, I know because it's come from an old, an old word, an old [...]. ... Er K potassium, yes. Erm, then we've got a manganese [...] $KMNO$. It's got two metals [...]. How, which one's got most, which one's got most oxygen in it, the $KMNO$ or the, or the MNO^2 ?

PS000>: MNO^2 .

TEACHER>: Why?

PS000>: That's a guess.

TEACHER>: Well, look at the numbers. MNO^2 , $KMNO$.

PS000>: Oh, I thought $KMNO$.

TEACHER>: Yeah, why?

PS000>: Cos it's got number four.

TEACHER>: It's got four oxygen atoms and that's only got two oxygen atoms. Well done, Michael. So $KMNO$'s got more oxygen. ... Erm ... what does this word property mean in number four? Property. Now you're gonna tell me, a property is something that you can

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Yes, something that's good about it, very good. So what's, what, what are, what's chlorine got that say no other gas has?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: It's a germ killer, yeah. Anything else?

PS000>: Er.

TEACHER>: How would know it if I brought a jar full into the room?

PS000>: Smell it.

TEACHER>: Smell it.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Right, erm what else? How would we know a jar was full compared with an empty jar? Just to look at if the lid was on.

PS000>: You can see it.

TEACHER>: Why?

PS000>: You can smell it.

TEACHER>: No, we've the lids on this time.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Sir, it was oily and you can see it.

TEACHER>: No ... that was some drops of acid that you could see [...] We're trying to work out what the properties of this gas. If you're not listening you won't be able to do number four. It's smelly, it's

PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Yes, it's poisonous, yes, that's a property, good. Another one?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Mm, that's a use, not a property. ... What colour [...]? It's yellowy green, yes [...]
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: How we doing folks? ... Good.
PS000>: Sir, I've finished.
TEACHER>: Right, goo you know that erm acid thing you were doing this one ... [...] be finishing that off.
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: I dunno, I can't remember.
PS000>: You marked it.
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: And have you done a key?
PS000>: Yes.
TEACHER>: Well, a key should have a little bit at the bottom [...] to say what, what's it stands for. Oh, you've done that red ones, yellow ones, Where's your yellow ones [...] Your key doesn't match your chart. You've put green ones [...] and they're the metals [...]. Your green ones are the alkali earth metals. You've got this [probably pointing] all, all wrong. Tell you what, I'll get you another one. ... How are we doing, ladies? okay?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Number five, oh, Can anybody tell ... er on number five why we got the upside down funnel?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: No.
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Now come on, this is a check of who was listening [...]
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Why have I, why have we got that upside down funnel?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Sh, sh, sh, sh. Sh, sh, er no. What does the gas do to the water?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Mark, Mark, Mark.
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: It does ... but it might also do the gas might do something else as well.
PS000>: Turn the water green.
TEACHER>: How could it turn the water green, what would it have to do in the water?
PS000>: Bubble.

TEACHER>: Come on, we're going back to this shove it in water business again.
PS000>: Oh, it dissolves.
TEACHER>: Dissolves [...] stop it from sucking the liquid back again. [...] dissolves [...] to the stop the liquid from being sucked back into [...]. The gas dissolves.
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: [...] the gas starts to come off when I just put the acid in. Yeah, so you've got to heat it up [...].
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: [...] paper, some PH erm
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: Darren, Darren [...] sit down, please. [...] that funnel. Right, now, how did we control the speed at which the acid went in? With a tap. And then once all the acid was in if you left the tape open what would happen to the gas?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: It would just escape so we sh close the top and the gas has got to [...].
PS000>: Down the tube and into [...]
TEACHER>: Yeah, down the other tube and into the what's the thingumajiggy? ... What do you call it, that tall cylinder thing? Thingumajiggy?
PS000>: [...]
TEACHER>: You'll never guess, it's for collecting gases so we call it a
PS000>: Gas [...].
TEACHER>: Gas jar.
PS000>: Not far off.
TEACHER>: Oh. Now [...] come on. Speed it, u yeah, cos the black powder wasn't powerful enough. Can anybody tell me why the black powder's not powerful enough? Look at the shorthand for it MNO^2 , it's not got so much?
PS000>: Oxygen.
TEACHER>: Very good. It's not got so much oxygen. So you've got to give it some heat to help the oxygen to work. ... Now if anybody's finished and is wondering what to do, check through and make sure everything is up to date. And then I've got some work here for those who thing everything's up to date. ... So don't start this work until everything else is up to date. It's on the end of this [...]. And if anybody's been away and has got or has got missing sheets, I've got spare sheets down here. Question sheets ... Don't forget your acid posters by the way. ... [...] Or you getting another one. ... It's, right I

would. ... The only problem is I haven't got many colours. You'd, you'd do better to use your own colours if you've got [...]. ... [...] How are you doing? Okay, Dean?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Oh, right, well, you need. Oh, not again. Right, who can tell? Yes, go on Michael. [...]

PS000>: To let the acid in.

TEACHER>: To let not out, to let what in slowly. The acid in slowly, right. It lets the acid in slowly and once the acids in, what does it stop next?

PS000>: Carbon dioxide [...]

TEACHER>: So whatever's in there can't get out up there. It's got to go through another pipe, it's got to go through the other pipe. Two, two reasons. To stop the ... gas from escaping and to let the acid in bit by bit.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: Sir?

TEACHER>: Yeah.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Er you could put PH or universal or any antacid indicator.

PS000>: Sir [...]

TEACHER>: Properties ... who can tell me a property of this gas. Look at it in through the in the fume cupboard I can see one from here.

PS000>: Green.

TEACHER>: It's green, right, good. ... It, it's a bit misty, alright, fair enough, that's a property. Anything else? If it can fall down out of that pipe into the jar it must be?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Very good, be heavy. If it erm sucks the water up if you're not careful it must. How can it suck the water up by?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: It hasn't actually done [...] cos I put that funnel on the end to stop it from doing it.

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Yeah, it would cause a vacuum as it dissolves. So it dissolves obviously. Have you got the smell one? Have you put the smell, smell one down? Smells of?

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Swimming baths or bleach or ... You can put some universal indicator or erm PH paper or [...]

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: To stop it from sucking because [...] it dissolves too well. It's like you in there drinking, drinking er coke out of a straw if you, you suck enough ... It'll all end up in your mouth. If you just put a pipe straight in the end of the liquid it would suck the liquid up. Right, Darren, if you've finished the qu

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: To s stop from sucking up [...]

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Now who's finished? ... Number three, you could on the filter paper, I've out some of those PH test papers. <161> ***You could put universal, PH, litmus, anything.***

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform

PIA: Directive > mandate > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect

RF: Simplification

M: Instruction

PS000>: [...] [161 R: Inaudible response]

TEACHER>: Oh, yeah, probably [...] we don't stop just cos you're not [...].

PS000>: [...]

TEACHER>: Are there any? I've got the index out here if you want one.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: I'll thank 'em all very much then.

TEACHER>: Oh, fine, you want to thank them now?

PS000>: Can I thank you all very much for being co-operative? [tape ends]

Text JNR

BNC domain: Educational-informative

G: Learning encounter

Seminar presentation at conference

Participants: Medical consultant presenting communication, 50+, male; Medical consultant, delegate, speaker of prior communication; Medical consultant, chairperson, 40+, male; Medical consultant, delegate, male; Medical consultant, delegate, male; Medical consultant, delegate, male

PS4FW>: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. <162> *We're all aware that for th for their number, **patients with superficial bladder***

cancer provide an enormous amount of our workload,

SA: Representative > report > remind
 RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<163> *and for reasons partly of ... husbanding our precious resources*

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain
 RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<164> *and also because lots of these patients come up with negative checks,* reducing the amount of irritation and upset to them it would be useful if we could do less [...] than we do.

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

Many people have looked at this before <165> *and they've come up with various prognostic markers, some of which are extremely complicated.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (object)
 RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Contrast of differences, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

But perhaps the ... erm the simplest ... erm ... prognostic routes were ... suggested by the MRC working parties which [...] general urology which was mentioned in the last presentation. ... They combined ... erm the four hundred and fifty odd erm ... four hundred and seventeen, sorry, patients in er several MRC studies and looked at them from the point of view of ... erm prognostic markers for occurrence and they came up with two factors which overridingly were more important than the others. The first one was the result of the three-month check cystoscopy, either positive or negative ... and the second one the number of tumours at presentation, either single or multiple. ... And from these two factors you can ... erm form three prognostic routes. A low risk

route ... will have a single tumour at diagnosis and a negative three-month cystoscopy. An intermediate risk group with multiple tumours at diagnosis or a positive three-month cystoscopy. And a high risk group, multiple tumours at diagnosis and a positive three-month cystoscopy. ... The suggested protocols for these patients were as follows. The low risk category one patients would go straight onto annual check cystoscopy following the first three-month check. The intermediate risk group would have a three monthly cystoscopy for a year and then go onto six monthly for a further year and then annual thereafter. And the high risk group would have three monthly check cystoscopies for two years and then go onto annual check cystoscopies. Any patient who recurs after the three-month check cystoscopy is reassessed going back to the beginning and they may be reassigned to one of the, the o o one or other of the ... groups erm depending on that. ... [...] One of the criticisms or possible criticisms of the MRC figures was that these were all patients who had been entered into superficial bladder cancer studies and they don't therefore re represent all [...] because people are selected to go into the trial and perhaps they are lower risk patients than others and in fact ... I believe that the recurrence rate in the MRC studies are lower than you would expect for ... er superficial bladder cancer in general. And so we did a sort of what if analysis looking a at the impact of implementing erm these ... er prognostic categories on our patients. Now this was a retrospective analysis bit, it was done on prospectively recorded information. [...] hundred and fifty-nine patients, all come as presenting with superficial transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder, and they all have prospectively [...] follow-up date for more than twelve months following the first check cystoscopy. ... You'll see that there is a mix er, er of grades and stages and because it's the ... the real world ... erm in some of the tumours a, a precise T category was not ... erm decided by the pathologist. Again a mix of single and multiple tumours. ... When you look at ... er the arrangement of these patients in the prognostic groups you'll see that ... the information from the ... er the number of tumours at presentation and the, the result of the three-month check cystoscopy is quite independent of grade and stage. Er there's no, well, there looks to be a

trend towards higher grade er in, in category three patients an and again more er more T1 tumours. I the differences are not statistically significant. ... Now this is a, a sort of cost benefit, benefit analysis based on what would have happened ... if we'd followed these protocols ourselves. You'll see that the majority of patients fall into the low risk group with progressively smaller numbers in the intermediate and high risk group. Erm ... four patients ... erm ... fro from the group overall subsequently developed [...] cancer. ... <166> *If we look at the actual numbers of cystoscopies performed you will you see ... that ... there were ... the vast majority of work was done in the lower and intermediate risk group patients*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

er and the positive er cystoscopy rate erm was much lower in the lower risk group as you would expect, than in the higher risk group. If we had ... followed the MRC protocols ... er the numbers ... er would have been much smaller in the lower risk group and erm ... [...] the erm ... there was more effort placed in the high risk group [...] than erm ... there would have been [...] we actually did. And a as a result of that, our ... positive cystoscopy rate was more comparable across the three groups than it was previously. You can only say what's what this [...] ... a doctor in this policy would have done in terms of ... delaying diagnosis in the lower risk group patients because clearly the other groups of patients are actually having more cystoscopies performed, but because it's a retrospective analysis you cannot say that you are ... advancing the diagnosis of er of more frequently occurring tumours. There were thirty tumours from [...] patients that had their diagnosis delayed by a mean of ... four months. If we followed the rules ... er the MRC rules strictly ... one of the lower risk group of patients was a G3PT1 tumour and that patient er progressed and in fact all the patients who progressed, all the four out of the hundred and fifty-nine patients who progressed erm from the

total group had either G2 or G3PT1 tumours at diagnosis, and I think there's a very strong case for making these a totally separate group of patients erm for follow-up. ... That just shows graphically what the change in the workload would have been. This is our actual workload and this is what it would have happened if we'd followed the MRC ... er protocols. There would actually be a two percent increase in the number of ... cystoscopies done but the ... work would have be been much better targeted ... er than we actually ... we actually did. ... So in conclusion adoption of the MRC follow-up, follow-up policy would have resulted in ... targeting of cystoscopic follow-up to higher risk group patients, a two percent increase in the cystoscopic resources required and delayed diagnosis of tumour progression in one patient, and as I've said I, I think that G3PT1 tumours should be excluded from ... er ... this type of protocol. Perhaps other uses of ... er this type of erm ... protocol would be to ... use ... flexible cyst er flexible check cystoscopy early in the lower risk group patients, and perhaps give the intermediate and higher risk group patients propolactic [...] chemotherapy. Thank you.

PS000>: [Applause] [162, 163, 164, 165 & 166. Positive evidence: non-verbal response]

PS4FX>: Er, I think it would be useful to have er Mr back and we could er ... discuss both of these papers together. [...] questions? [clears throat]. ... Microphone number one.

PS4FY>: P K from Lincoln. A question to both the speakers. Do you consider the smoker as a high risk group and do you ... change your ... attitude in checking them [...]?

PS4G0>: Erm ... I think it j just adds a little bit of complexity t to it. I think ... trying to keep something very simple ... erm you know a simple rule for everyone to follow [...] and all that, that following this protocol requires is that er ... that the urologist is at least partially sighted. It doesn't depend on a pathologist or any oth other information.

PS4FW>: Yes, I, I'd agree. I, I think if you've got a moderately or well differentiated tumour and i it's solitary and it's small and they're clear at three months tell them to stop smoking by all means [...] [sound of microphone being brushed against].

PS4G1>: Can I just ask you both ... er are you unwilling to modify the standard follow-up er cystoscopy [...] for G3 tumours and for T1

tumours, or is it just for the G3T1? I think Steve you were, you were suggesting that it was only the G3T1 [...].

PS4G0>: Erm ... well ... all the patients who pr progressed had either G2 or G3PT1 tumours at diagnosis. They seemed to be a very high risk group of patients.

PS4G1>: Right and a, a G3PTA?

PS4G0>: Erm well, there quite a few of those and none of them progressed.

PS4FX>: Microphone three [...].

PS4G2>: Chelmsford. If I come to you ... at three months with a PT ... A tumour, that's grade one or two, how long would you be ... er willing to accept that I should have a recurrence before you treat it? How

PS4G0>: But you sorry a G2?

PS4G2>: A, a ... G1

PS4G0>: G1.

PS4G2>: PTA tumour. How, how soon should I get it treated? Does it matter [...].?

PS4G0>: [...] I think it probably ... it probably doesn't. <167> *I mean, the r the risk of progression is I, I, I would think is minuscule* ... erm and erm [...] you're only talking about changes in size, not risk of ... of ... erm muscle invasion, and I think therefore

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture

PIA: Representative > report > state

RF: Contrast of differences, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

PS4G2>: So if it's not causing me any symptoms, I should [...] [167 R: Request for confirmation]

PS4G0>: No, what I'm say, what I'm saying is ... that, that leaving it for a few months probably isn't going to do you any harm. I mean, clearly it will continue to grow and therefore any [...] that you do will be, will be greater.

PS4G2>: [...]

PS4G0>: [...] the longer you leave it ...

PS4FW>: I do think [...] answer for that one er erm I'm not aware of any paper that's published presenting that

Text KPE

BNC domain: Informal

G: Language-in-action

Conversation recorded by Grace

Participants: Grace, Chantel & Ian, 15, students

GRACE>: Monday.

IAN>: [...]

GRACE>: [...] was this.

IAN>: [...]

GRACE>: Er

IAN>: [...]

GRACE>: Ah. [...] lucky for him. ...

IAN>: [...]

GRACE>: [laugh]

IAN>: He's got [...] ...

GRACE>: [laugh] ... [...]

IAN>: Are you stuck?

GRACE>: Why?

IAN>: I'm asking, are you stuck?

GRACE>: Why?

IAN>: [...] are you stuck? Yes or no, are you stuck?

GRACE>: But, why? [...]

PS6U2>: If I ask somebody stuck? you're not gonna go why. Then I'm gonna say little bit.

GRACE>: A little bit?

IAN>: Yes.

GRACE>: So am I, a little bit.

IAN>: [...]

GRACE>: Why?

IAN>: Smelly bitch.

<168> GRACE>: *That's all you can say, innit?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<169> *Can't say nothing else.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > insult

FTA to H + face > insult through off-record politeness: overstate

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<170> IAN>: *Can't say nothing else.* [168 R: Continuation of hyperbole: paraphrase] [169 R: Continuation of hyperbole: repetition]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > confirm, admit
 PIA: Representative > assessment > self-denigration
 FTA to S + face > self-deprecation through humour
 RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

GRACE>: [...] Can I have a pen? [170 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
 IAN>: You got anything to say, say it out loud. Fucking bitch. Alright, if you've got anything to say ... don't smoke [...]. You understand English? [...] Are you cooperating properly?
 GRACE>: God, I don't believe [...].
 PS6U2>: Haven't got one.
 <171> IAN>: ***I have told you about ten times I have not got a pen.***

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
 FTA to H – face > request through off-record politeness: overstate
 RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

GRACE>: Have you got a pen [...]? [171 R: Ignored hyperbole without topic shift]
 IAN>: Bring your own equipment.
 PS6U2>: [...]
 GRACE>: My pen's run out [...], pass me that pencil there. I, is it sharper?
 IAN>: Yeah. ...
 PS6U2>: [...]
 GRACE>: Mm.
 IAN>: [...]
 GRACE>: [...] [...]
 IAN>: [...]
 GRACE>: She's on the [...]. Erm, let me see now.
 IAN>: Haven't got to bring it in Monday.
 GRACE>: Mm. [...] erm half term, I think.
 IAN>: [...]
 GRACE>: Ain't got no one to look at it.
 PS6U2>: [...]
 GRACE>: [...] [...]
 IAN>: It should be on the cover.
 GRACE>: [...]
 IAN>: [...] [...]
 GRACE>: No. [...]
 IAN>: What?

GRACE>: [...] on, it's not working [...]. ...
 PS6U2>: [...]
 <172> GRACE>: You are [...] *you are joking, you know, that's all I can say about you.*

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

IAN>: [...] [172 R: Inaudible response]
 PS6U2>: [...] [...]
 GRACE>: I didn't really think about it.
 CHANTEL>: [...] she's a going some boy. ...
 GRACE>: I didn't think to erm, I didn't really think to tell her to wait. ... [...]
 PS6U2>: You got a cheek.
 GRACE>: I ain't got no books.

Text KB6

BNC domain: Informal
 G: Comment-elaboration
 Conversation recorded by Angela
 Participants: Angela, 29, out work, female; Sue, 29, hairdresser, female; Ben, 3, student, male

SUE>: Not only that, I've gotta fit in like the children as well. Well, Clare was off yesterday.
 ANGELA>: Yeah.
 SUE>: With a cold and whatever. ... And ... and er ... Katie was off the day before with something and ... [...] just managed to get to school that day. They were all, both off last week.
 ANGELA>: Mm.
 SUE>: But my mum's pretty good, you know what I mean, she ... as long as I can arrange it round her, she'll arrange her arrangements around me sort of thing.
 ANGELA>: Yeah.
 SUE>: But if they're sick, I mean, there's no way I can take them to anybody's house.
 ANGELA>: No.
 SUE>: They're not ill enough to be staying in bed. Otherwise I'd have to cancel altogether.
 ANGELA>: Yeah.
 SUE>: And I thinks to myself, well I might as well be going out earning money if they're ... not in bed.
 ANGELA>: No.
 BEN>: Ah.
 ANGELA>: Have you gotta have him today or not?

SUE>: No. Katie, I took out of school [...] and then she went back again.

ANGELA>: Oh. ... [...]

SUE>: Oh yeah, there, there's some people I wouldn't take them to. Do you know what I mean?

ANGELA>: Yeah, I know what you mean. ... [...] [laugh] <173> ***I'm so starving.***

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

SUE>: Do you have a breakfast? [173 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

ANGELA>: No.

SUE>: Oh. ...

<174> ANGELA>: Yeah, [...] ***a sandwich*** [...] ***in a minute.***

SA: Commissive > promise

FTA to H – face > promise. Bald, on record

RF: Polite de-emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SUE>: How the hell do you keep so slim? <175> ***I've completely cut out*** [...] [174 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark + Continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

ANGELA>: Well, we've been rushing around, haven't we? [175 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

SUE>: Haven't got time to think about food.

<176> ANGELA>: No. ... ***Been here, there and everywhere,*** you know what I mean?

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SUE>: Yeah. [176 R: Relevant acceptance token]

ANGELA>: [...] ... How did Ann have her hair cut then?

SUE>: She had it cut into the neck.

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: Well ... to start off with she had it just trimmed at the neck.

ANGELA>: [laughing] Yeah.

SUE>: Right? Just took the ends off

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: without thinning it out, thinning it out at all. And then she wanted me to sort of layer it in which would look better cos she wanted to keep the fringe longer. [...]

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: So she's actually sort of had it

ANGELA>: Cut into the neck.

SUE>: cut into the neck but it's sort of brushed back [...]

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: Looks better. ... But she don't have her st, her hair cut sort of every sort [...] six weeks. But she ought to.

ANGELA>: Yes, true. ... Soon as my perm's ... [...]

PS000>: [...] Eh? [laugh]

ANGELA>: Start again Sue.

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: Right go on then.

SUE>: The woman was lucky she had a perm in then this morning?

ANGELA>: Who?

SUE>: [...] chemist [...]

ANGELA>: Yeah, yeah. ...

BEN>: [...]

SUE>: He's [...] isn't he?

ANGELA>: [...]

BEN>: [...]

ANGELA>: What?

BEN>: [...]

SUE>: How old's this one then?

ANGELA>: Three. ... Just.

SUE>: He's too young to go to nursery then, is he?

ANGELA>: Yeah. They won't take him till next summer. ... Will they, Ben? No. ... So it'll be [...] quite [...] the top Sue.

SUE>: Right.

ANGELA>: Alright?

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: [...] the top, the better.

SUE>: Right.

ANGELA>: [...] No, no, no, no.

<177> SUE>: ***You've already had a disaster in the month*** [...], didn't you?

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

ANGELA>: Yeah [...] [177 R: Relevant acceptance token]

BEN>: You're a hairdresser.

SUE>: You what?

ANGELA>: She's a hairdresser.

SUE>: I'm a hairdresser, yeah.

ANGELA>: Does people's hair like mummy's. Makes me look tidy occasionally. [...]

BEN>: Sue, why are you doing that?

ANGELA>: No, no. Not having it cut. ... Zoe goes to me why don't you have it all chopped off? [...]

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: Oh, I said cos the perm's coming out, shut up. ... Someone gave me a microwave oven this morning ... for nothing.

SUE>: Yeah?

ANGELA>: She rung me up and asked me did I want a microwave oven?

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: I says ... no, she says have you got one I says no, but I was gonna say Ange has, cos I thought she wanted to defrost something.

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: And she said well our mother's ... got one you can have. She, she said you can have it. I said no I'll buy it off her, she said no our mother don't want no money. So I spoke to her mum. And she said no you have it, my love. I've just bought a new one and you can have it. ... So I gotta go round and get it.

SUE>: Who's this then?

ANGELA>: Zoe. You know Zoe?

SUE>: Oh, yeah.

ANGELA>: Her mum. ... giving [...] a microwave oven for nowt. I thought that's alright.

SUE>: They're ever so handy.

ANGELA>: [...] I thought. Well I was gonna buy one, but what's the point?

SUE>: Well [...] [laugh]

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: When you gotta pick it up then?

ANGELA>: Some time today or tomorrow. I don't know.

SUE>: Yeah? ... You're friendly with Zoe, are you?

ANGELA>: Yeah. ... Yeah, I used to go to playgroup when er ... she used to take Adam and our, I used to take our Lee up.

SUE>: Yeah. ...

ANGELA>: Yeah, I don't want a lot off the back mind Sue, then it can grow.

<178> SUE>: *No. I ain't cut any off the back at all.*

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

ANGELA>: [...] [178 R: Inaudible response]

SUE>: I'm just taking the ends off the [Clarification via literal language]

ANGELA>: It's a bit knotty innit, at the ends?

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: I think half of that was the highlights, see? ... Innit?

SUE>: [laugh] Yeah. Who did, who did your highlights?

ANGELA>: Erm [...] Zana.

SUE>: Who?

ANGELA>: Like when Angie said, [...]

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: [laughing] You ought to have seen her when she looked in the mirror. She went argh.

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: [laughing] I said quick we'll get a toner on, we'll get a toner. [...] Fine now. She said I got, <179> *she said to me Sue I want a lot, all over.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

SUE>: Yeah. [179 R: Acceptance token]

ANGELA>: So I thought right. That's how she wants it, so I done a lot. When she took the hat off she went erm ... erm ... erm ... I don't think I wanted that many! ...

SUE>: Mm. ... I got used, I got used to it now.

ANGELA>: Yeah. When you first seen it though. I thought ... bloody hell.

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: I said ... it looks really nice Ange, I said. [laughing] ... <180> *I said it looks lov*, I said what we'll do, I said ... we'll rush down the

road ... and we'll get a tint. I said it, I think it suits you.

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Humour,
 Evaluation: positive, Clarification
 M: Narration

SUE>: Oh, dear. [180 R: Back-channel response]

ANGELA>: Well, what can you say? When you just ... [...]

<181> SUE>: [...] *nothing you can do. Nothing at all you can do.*

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

ANGELA>: I thought ooh. I was going [...] [181 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

SUE>: And you don't know the [...] colour until you've actually washed it off anyway.

ANGELA>: Yeah.

SUE>: I mean I ha, I hate doing them.

ANGELA>: Ooh. ... Mhm.

SUE>: Right.

ANGELA>: [...] [laugh]

SUE>: Yeah.

ANGELA>: Do you want a sandwich now, Sue?

SUE>: No.

ANGELA>: Sure?

SUE>: No ... *I'll have one in erm*

<182> ANGELA>: *In a minute.*

SA: Representative > report > predict
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

SUE>: When you've done. [182 R: Non-recognised hyperbole]

ANGELA>: Alright.

BEN>: Mum.

ANGELA>: Mm?

BEN>: I [...]

ANGELA>: Don't tell me.

BEN>: Look.

ANGELA>: What?

BEN>: I do a poo.

ANGELA>: Oh [...]

SUE>: [laugh]

ANGELA>: [...] [laugh]

SUE>: [laughing] What a morning!

Text KB7

BNC domain: Informal
 G: Comment-elaboration
 Conversation recorded by Ann
 Participants: Ann, 46, team leader, female;
 Stuart, 33, factory operative, male

ANN>: Yeah, I pushed one down and the other one [...] down [...]

STUART>: Automatically yes. So, same as this. If you press [...] this one, if you press record ... it won't, because there's a tape in but if you just press, press record [...] automatic [...] and you press [...] record and the play button ... but you can't press just the record button. They automatically both go down.

ANN>: [...]

STUART>: Provided there's a tape in the

ANN>: In the machine.

STUART>: in the machine that

ANN>: I saw it actually when I was ... just doing it and it went ... how loud it was. How could you be unobtru but it isn't, look. Can't hear it. Cos you can hear it *bzzzzzzzzzzzz*.

STUART>: Yeah.

ANN>: I thought ... [...] loud.

STUART>: [...] noisy [...]

ANN>: Yeah.

STUART>: You're gonna

ANN>: You could be an ob, an obtrusive [...] making that noise.

STUART>: No, no, it doesn't.

ANN>: Though it doesn't make a noise cos I was doing it wrong.

STUART>: Yes. It's going slowly now.

ANN>: [laugh] Yeah.

STUART>: Going much more slowly now as it records more ... conver, conversations.

ANN>: That's it. ... Mm ... Don't stop talking now. [...] silly. [laugh] ... <183> *It's all gonna go quiet now, isn't it?* Nobody else'll say anything. ... [Clarification via literal language]

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

STUART>: [...] at all. [183 R: Collaborative completion]

ANN>: [laugh] That's ridiculous! [laughing] You gotta

STUART>: [...] We'll just have to ... put it down there some time and just ... put it on.

ANN>: Yeah.

STUART>: So you wouldn't know when it's on or when it's off.

ANN>: Mm.

STUART>: Just have to try and, take a little while to get used to it. Once you're used to it, it's probably [...]. It's all a matter of getting used to being recorded. Conversation.

ANN>: Yeah, well it sounds ever so funny when you hear it [...]

STUART>: I know. Yeah.

<184> ANN>: *Horrible*. You think ... I don't sound like that! [laugh]. Really makes you think. I wish [...] done something about my ... the way I speak.

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (object)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

STUART>: Mm. [184 R: Back-channel response]

<185> ANN>: *Mine's terrible* because I've got a low voice, a deep voice anyway [Clarification via literal language]. Sound more like a man, I do. I do on the phone, don't I?

SA: Representative > assessment > self-denigration

FTA to H + face > self-denigrate. Bald, on record

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

STUART>: Don't know really. I've not really heard you much on the phone. [185 R: Non-recognised hyperbole]

ANN>: Used to telephone, didn't you?

STUART>: Well, yeah, but

ANN>: Didn't know it was me.

STUART>: Oh yeah, I knew it was you so it didn't make a lot of difference.

ANN>: People have told me on the phone that I sound [cough] cos I've got a deep voice I

STUART>: You sound different. ... Vera does.

ANN>: Does she?

STUART>: Mm. ... <186> *She sounds funny on the phone, most odd*. Phone her up and think ... that's not Vera I'm talking to. Doesn't sound like Vera [Clarification via literal language]. But it is ... although it doesn't sound like her. Funny, innit?

SA: Representative > report > inform

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Description

ANN>: What, her voice is different?

STUART>: No, it just sounds

ANN>: Or does she talk different because she's on the phone? [186 R: Request for clarification]

STUART>: No ... just sounds.

ANN>: Some people do. [clears throat] They put their phone voice on.

STUART>: Yeah. Yeah.

ANN>: Don't they?

STUART>: Yeah.

ANN>: Oh, I can't put any voice on, I've just got me own. [laugh]

STUART>: Mm.

ANN>: I find people do tend to put a ... quite a lot do, put a telephone voice on. ...

STUART>: Specially if you're phoning a posh restaurant.

ANN>: Yes.

STUART>: Or something like that. You tend to sort of ... I'd like to book a table for two

ANN>: [laugh]

STUART>: on Saturday night. Rather than say ... look, mush, I want a

ANN>: [laugh]

STUART>: I want a table, you know. ...

ANN>: [cough] ... Oh, I'd better go and wash our dishes, dear.

STUART>: Not many to do now [...] <187> *done them all*.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action

FTA to H – face > request through off-record politeness: give hints: motives for doing X

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, Clarification

M: Argumentation-exposition

ANN>: Most of them. There's only yours. Have you had [187 R: Non-recognised hyperbole]

STUART>: What about

ANN>: enough to eat?
 STUART>: Yes, thank you. Fine. I would have done it actually when, when I took the plate out, but the water in the bowl was cold. Thought it was hot but it was cold.
 ANN>: I think I've used most of the hot water. I think I need to put the immersion on for just ... a little while.
 STUART>: Mm.
 ANN>: I need a bath as well but
 STUART>: Mm.
 ANN>: I've used quite a few buckets of water washing walls.
 STUART>: Washing the walls and ... [...] ... What's going on outside? ... Car or lorry or something going by, by the sound of it. ...
 ANN>: About that little ... flat in ... [...] in Albany Road.
 STUART>: Yeah.
 <188> ANN>: *You have to realize that ... we're never gonna get away from work.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Directive > advisable > advice, recommend
 FTA to H – face > advice through humour
 RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Instruction

<189> *Cos when the wind blows you can smell a tandoori* and [laugh]

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour
 M: Argumentation-exposition

STUART>: [laugh] [188 & 189 R: Laughter]
 ANN>: It's when you walk up that way you know you're getting near it.
 STUART>: Yeah.
 ANN>: cos you can smell it. Won't bother you?
 STUART>: No. Not really.
 ANN>: Mhm.
 STUART>: [...] fact it'll be quite handy in a way really, you know, <190> *it's*
 ANN>: [...]
 STUART>: *handy to live on the ... on your ... right next to work in a way*, cos you don't have to ... worry about

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (situation)

RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

ANN>: Getting there. [190 R: Collaborative completion]
 STUART>: getting there so much, do you?

Text KBA
 BNC domain: Informal
 G: Comment-elaboration
 Conversation recorded by Anthony
 Participants: Chris, 26, warehouse op, male; Kevin, 31, warehouse op, male; Dave, 20, warehouse op, male; Achmed, 30, warehouse op, male

CHRIS>: I'll be watching Jaws tonight [...]
 KEVIN>: [...] watching [...]?
 CHRIS>: Yeah.
 KEVIN>: [...]. Looks a bit fucking crap like the rest of them but [...]
 PS000>: That ... one and two were quite good.
 CHRIS>: They got Mr Bean on Saturday as well.
 PS000>: Mm.
 CHRIS>: Is it Mr Bean on Saturday? Is it?
 <191> KEVIN>: *Three's ... a load of crap.* That's the 3D one.

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise
 PIA: Directive > advisable > advise
 FTA to H – face > advice through off-record politeness: give hints: motives for doing X
 RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]
 Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [191 R: Inaudible response]
 CHRIS>: This one though I think it's not, I think it's just the people having nightmares about it. ... [191 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
 ACHMED>: I don't know. It's supposed to be down in th, that, him following that, following that family, innit? Supposed to be [...]. Supposed to be following the family wherever they go on the beach.
 CHRIS>: Is it?
 ACHMED>: Something like that. ... Michael Caine's in it. <192> *Although er it looked pretty*

pathetic [...] it was on. We had a preview of it at home.

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise

PIA: Directive > advisive > advise

FTA to H – face > advice through off-record politeness: give hints: motives for doing X

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

DAVE>: Fucking miss erm ... We missed Carrot, Carrot was on last night, weren't it? [192 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

CHRIS>: Mm, Jasper, yeah.

DAVE>: Yeah, fucking, my Mrs said it was really funny.

CHRIS>: I like Mr Bean [...]

PS000>: [...]

<193> DAVE>: *Mr Bean, that's fucking brilliant, that is.*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (NPP)

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Description

<194> CHRIS>: *He just cracks me up.* I tell you what, I can sit there ... two things I like [...] no three. ... A good film [193 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

DAVE>: Yeah. [194 R: Acceptance token]

CHRIS>: I mean a good film. ... Cartoons.

DAVE>: Oh fuck, yeah [...]

CHRIS>: I love cartoons. Tom and Jerry I like.

PS000>: [...]

PS000>: What dickhead gone?

PS000>: Gone to get his lunch.

PS000>: What home?

PS000>: Yeah.

PS000>: Oh you [...]. Hello, mum.

PS000>: [laugh]

KEVIN>: Oh yeah, <195> *I tell you what, cartoons are absolute*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Assessment

<196> *They crack me up* [...] cinema?

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Eh? [195 & 196 R: Request for repetition]

KEVIN>: You got er *The Rescuers?* [...]

Text KPC

BNC domain: Informal

G: Language-in-action

Conversation recorded by Frances

Participants: Frances, 31, sales assistant, female; Francis, 6, student, male; Kaley, 5, student, female; Brett, 1, pre-school, male; Frank, 31, managing director, male

FRANCES>: Just talk like what you've been doing at school and things like that. What've you got, Brett?

BRETT>: Pen.

FRANCES>: A pen haven't you. What are all these [...]?

FRANCIS>: [...] look like?

FRANCES>: What did she look like? ... [...] television it's not be [...], is it?

FRANCIS>: Pretending it's Friday.

FRANCES>: You're pretending it's Friday, are you? Yes, we're not gonna forget to sing happy birthday today, are you?

FRANCIS>: No.

FRANCES>: When he come in and give him a big kiss. <197> *Can somebody please go and watch Chloe a minute?* What? Er, if you don't stop eating those biscuits there'll be trouble. Go on. Go and see Chloe. ... What you drawing, Kaley?

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > confirm

PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + minimise imposition + please

RF: Polite de-emphasis

M: Instruction via Argumentation-exposition

[197 R: Ignored hyperbole: action not performed]

KALEY>: No, I'm writing the date.
 FRANCES>: You're writing the date. Are you writing Friday then or Thursday?
 KALEY>: No more cake, Friday.
 FRANCES>: No more cake, Brett. Your dad will [...]
 BRETT>: No more, no cake.
 KALEY>: No cake.
 FRANCIS>: No, no.
 FRANCES>: Oh no, no, no.
 FRANCIS>: No, no, no cake.
 FRANCES>: Dear me.
 FRANCIS>: January [...] ... [children shouting]
 FRANCES>: What you shouting at, Brett? Where're the matches for the birthday cake? ... Kaley, I'm just going to put this in the bin. Watch that Brett doesn't touch anything on the table.
 KALEY>: Right. ...
 FRANCIS>: There's his eyes.
 FRANCES>: Whose eyes?
 FRANCIS>: Jack Spratt.
 FRANCES>: Ooh! ...
 KALEY>: Some people have got work to do.
 FRANCES>: Right, who's gonna help set the table for daddy. Come on then. Knives and forks.
 FRANCIS>: Done this last time.
 FRANCES>: Okay. ... Brett, come out of the window.
 FRANCIS>: I didn't know what it was.
 FRANCES>: What?
 FRANCIS>: Making that funny noise.
 FRANCES>: And, what was it?
 FRANCIS>: It's when somebody comes in mm ...
 FRANCES>: Well, then.
 KALEY>: We're all going to sing [...]
 FRANCES>: You're gonna sing what?
 KALEY>: [...]
 FRANCES>: Steady.
 KALEY>: Wait till I [...]
 FRANCES>: Right, well, you sing it first. I think I've forgot the words. ... Get off the table. You can't have any cake until teatime. ...
 KALEY>: [singing] Just happy, happy they're [...] hat on and he's coming out to play.
 FRANCES>: And is that a picture of the sun?
 KALEY>: Yes.
 FRANCES>: That's very good.

KALEY>: Now you have to sing it.
 FRANCES>: Oh. Brettsy. [singing] The sun has got his on hip hip hip hooray. The sun has got his hat on and he's coming out to play. Hooray.
 KALEY>: Hooray.
 FRANCES>: Hooray.
 FRANCIS>: Right, now we are going to [...] ... [shouting] You're a person.
 BRETT>: [crying]
 KALEY>: Brett, sorry.
 BRETT>: No, [shouting] no.
 FRANCES>: Brett, stop shouting.
 BRETT>: [crying] Oh
 KALEY>: You smacked me [...]
 BRETT>: [screaming]
 KALEY>: He's scream at me and [...]
 FRANCES>: Brett, now you stop that this minute. Kaley, I want you to go upstairs and get me a pad for Brett, please. Hurry up so that he's got a paddy on at teatime. Come on, Kaley.
 BRETT>: [...] tea.
 FRANCES>: What?
 BRETT>: Tea.
 <198> FRANCES>: *You're gonna have some tea in a minute*, when daddy comes. [Clarification via literal language]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Directive > mandate > instruct
 FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: minimise the imposition + be indirect
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Instruction via Argumentation-exposition

BRETT>: Yes. [198 R: Acceptance token]
 FRANCES>: Yes.
 FRANCIS>: [...] will be here?
 FRANCES>: Six o'clock.
 FRANCIS>: Ooh!
 FRANCES>: Teatime. ... You'd better watch and get that paddy first or there'll be trouble.
 BRETT>: [...]
 FRANCES>: What? Oh, my goodness. He's a monster. Yes [...]. One, two, one, two, three, four.
 BRETT>: [...]
 FRANCES>: What? One, two, three. Are you gonna have a potato fork? There you are. On the table. ... There's the potato knife. ... Three [...] there's four [...], aren't there? Steady. Put them on then [...]. There's Francis [...] and

Kaley's. Kaley, come on. What did you do at school today then?

KALEY>: What?

FRANCES>: What did you do at school? Come and tell me. ... What?

BRETT>: [...]

FRANCES>: Oh.

BRETT>: Gotta smack.

FRANCES>: You gotta smack. Who smacked you? [...] Potato smacked you, I don't think he did. Potato power, mm. Sing a song, Brett. ... Hooray, hooray. ... Hooray. ... Kaley, did you do any sums today? No? What did you do? Did you do some writing then? Did you do all your work from the [...].

KALEY>: Yeah.

FRANCES>: So you've been good then. I think [...] wants some tea.

BRETT>: Wants some tea.

FRANCES>: I think she wants some tea. ... [banging noise] Stop banging, Brett.

FRANCIS>: Mum.

FRANCES>: What?

FRANCIS>: I want, I want there's some, there's some [...] and I know just the answer to the question. [...]

FRANCES>: What?

FRANCIS>: [...]

FRANCES>: [...] What've you done? Pick it up, put the knife down now on there. Now pick your fork up, get down and pick it up. ... What? Oh, just pick it up. ... What you doing? Pardon me?

BRETT>: [...]

FRANCES>: Really, mm.

BRETT>: Yeah.

FRANCES>: So we're get you having some tea now, mm? ...

FRANCIS>: I wish daddy was back, I wish daddy was back.

FRANCES>: What for?

FRANCIS>: [...]

<199> FRANCES>: *You starving?*

SA: Directive > elicit > inform

RF: Emphasis

M: Description

KALEY>: No way. [199 R: Non-recognised hyperbole]

FRANCES>: Well, he won't be long. But will the chicken be cooked? ... So what did [...] for you today [...].

FRANCIS>: She'd been sick.

FRANCES>: She'd been sick. Why did she eat something that was nasty?

FRANCIS>: No.

FRANCES>: Then, why was she sick?

FRANCIS>: I don't know.

FRANCES>: Get down, Brett, this minute.

FRANCIS>: [...] you have to go and my dad where [...] where it was just clean and you could just sit on it but nowhere Sarah's side.

FRANCES>: Where'd she been sick, do you know?

FRANCIS>: She'd been sick on the floor.

FRANCES>: She'd been sick on the floor. ... Please, don't sit on the table. Right to keep us going ... Kaley, don't be silly. ... Kaley [...] ...

Hey, boys. Who are you shouting [...]?

[laughing] What? [...] Did you get a paddy for me, please? One, oh, look at that clever girl,

yes. Another one? Brett, put them down, please.

Where's Kaley's gone? Well, put it down.

KALEY>: [...] the paddy.

FRANCES>: Hurry up, Kaley. Where's Francis [...].

FRANCIS>: There.

FRANCES>: In there?

FRANCIS>: There, mum. There.

FRANCES>: Come on. ... Come on, one, two, three. Oh dear, pick it up. <200> *Just a minute,*

just a minute. Watch this here. Pick it up, Brett.

Can you find it? Have you found it?

SA: Directive > mandative > instruct

FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: minimise imposition + off-record

politeness: be incomplete, use ellipsis

RF: Polite de-emphasis

M: Instruction

KALEY>: Yeah. [200 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]

FRANCES>: Oh. Come on then. There's a good girl. Brett, what are you doing? Come on. ...

Get up, get up, Brett. Well, what are you doing for god's sake? [laughing] What? Where's it gone? Not there. Right you get a [...]. ... Who's this, look? Who's that? Is that Penny?

BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: Penny, the doll.

BRETT>: The doll.

FRANCES>: The doll, yes. Get your fingers out your mouth. What? ... Hooray, one, two, three.

BRETT>: Another one.
 FRANCES>: Another one. Another what? ...
 [shouting] Kaley.
 BRETT>: [shouting] Kaley.
 KALEY>: Coming.
 BRETT>: [shouting] Kaley.
 FRANCES>: Have you got the paddy?
 BRETT>: The paddy.
 KALEY>: Tea.
 FRANCES>: I said, have you got the paddy?
 Where is it then? What a nut-case! ... Will you
 put those down, please? Give Kaley hers back
 now.
 KALEY>: Want something to eat.
 FRANCES>: Give Brett his, give Francis [...] his
 KALEY>: I want something to eat.
 <201> FRANCES>: *Well, just a minute*,
 daddy'll be here soon and you can have some.
 Get down. You can't have the party without
 daddy when it's his birthday.

SA: Directive > mandative > instruct
 FTA to H – face > instruction through negative
 politeness: minimise imposition + off-record
 politeness: be incomplete, use ellipsis
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Instruction via Argumentation-exposition

<202> KALEY>: *Well, I'm starving*. [201 R:
 Challenged hyperbole through continuation of
 hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform
 PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
 FTA to H – face > request through off-record
 politeness: give hints: motives for doing X
 RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

FRANCES>: Did you eat your dinner at
 school? [202 R: Relevant next contribution:
 literal remark]
 KALEY>: Yeah. [...]
 FRANCES>: What?
 KALEY>: And I eat my pudding.
 FRANCES>: Oh.
 KALEY>: We had [...]
 <203> FRANCES>: *The dentist said to daddy
 if you drink lots water after you've had
 something to eat, then it stops your teeth going
 quite as bad*. Because you can't wash them after

food. And then you won't need so many pulling
 out next time. ... Er stop arguing, please.

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

KALEY>: Mama, we had a [...] [203 R:
 Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
 FRANCES>: What would like to eat then?
 FRANCIS>: Something. What can I have to
 eat? My bread bun?
 FRANCES>: No. [...] with the chicken. If you
 eat a bun or a cake, you won't eat your chicken.
 [...] to mummy that [...] letter.
 FRANCIS>: I'm hungry.
 KALEY>: Mama [...].
 FRANCES>: I'm gonna get, do you want to
 wee wee? You have a wee [...]
 BRETT>: No.

FRANCES>: You want to draw? Well, go in
 the sitting room where your drawing pad is.
 Come on. Want to draw [...]. Come round here
 then. Come and get this paddy off. Come on,
 we'll just get the paddy on before teatime.
 What's the [...]?
 <204> *Shut up a minute*.

SA: Directive > mandative > instruct
 FTA to H – face > instruction through negative
 politeness: minimise imposition
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Instruction

<205> *I don't care if you're starving or not*,
 you're not getting anything before [...]. Lie
 down. Well, why don't you just absolutely fold
 him up? [...] yourself. Well, share it. [...]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Expressive > H criticism > disdain
 FTA to H + face > disdain through indirection
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

[205 R: Refusal to make a contribution by
 addressee > Kaley]
 FRANCIS>: Mm?
 FRANCES>: You [...] I'm gonna fold it up.
 FRANCIS>: Okay.
 FRANCES>: And then I'll back you.
 FRANCIS>: Is it, is it [...]?
 KALEY>: Is it a music park? [204 R: Ignored
 hyperbole]

FRANCIS>: Amusement.
 FRANCES>: Brett, get off daddy's knife and fork now. Don't you wee wee in that paddy, mind. Where's your turtle one gone? ... You can ask Shirley as well. Ask Shirley if Brett went on the [...] at all. Ask Shirley if Brett went on the [...].
 KALEY>: Ask Shirley if Brett went on the [...]. ... Can I tell dad something?
 FRANCES>: Ask if Shirley's there. ...
 FRANCIS>: He is [...], he is my your mum's [...].
 FRANCES>: Look just put the phone book down.
 KALEY>: Can I tell dad something? ...
 FRANCIS>: Tell dad I wanna tell him something.
 FRANCES>: It's all gone. Toy's eat it all. What's going on? Kaley, you get some milk out the fridge, please. ... <206> *Oh. Right, there's gonna be trouble in a second, mind.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > predict
 PIA: Directive > mandative > threat
 FTA to H – face > threat through off-record politeness: give hints: motives for doing X
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<207> *Kaley, you can talk in a minute* cos [...] when Shirley comes back, Shirley wasn't there [Clarification via literal language]. Kaley, don't cry. Brett, give Kaley a cuddle now.

IIA: SIA: Directive > mandative > permit, allow
 PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct or forbid
 FTA to H – face > instruction/prohibition through negative politeness: minimise imposition + be indirect
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Instruction via Argumentation-exposition

[206 R: Ignored hyperbole]
 BRETT>: No.
 FRANCES>: Yes, you villain. Milk. ...
 FRANCIS>: Ee, you've gotta [...]
 FRANCES>: You what?
 KALEY>: Brett [...] on the head. [207 R: Ignored hyperbole]
 FRANCES>: You, naughty boy. Now get off. Did you hit Kaley? You kiss her better now. Kiss Kaley this minute. Give her a kiss. Kiss it

now. That's it, shake hands. Right [...]. I'll tell you what we need to do with you.

KALEY>: What?
 FRANCES>: Those fingernails done. Yes, you should look <208> *when you fell over they were all broken.* ...

SA: Representative > report > hypothesise
 RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Description

What did, oh my, ... Look at them, <209> *they're all broken.* How long did daddy say he was gonna be, Francis [...]?

SA: Representative > report > describe
 RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Description

[208 & 209 R: Refusal to make contribution by addressee > Kaley]
 <210> FRANCIS>: [...] *minute.*

SA: Representative > report > inform
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Narration

FRANCES>: Oh [...]. The chicken isn't cooked. [210 R: Back-channel response + Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

FRANCIS>: Did you tell him?

FRANCES>: No.

KALEY>: Daddy's, I wanna tell him that [...] I'll tell him that [...]

FRANCES>: Francis, [...] will you come off the floor and go in the sitting room until I shout you for tea. ... Shall we have some of this? Yes, I think we should. There's the mouse. There's the mouse in the house. What you sticking your fingers in? What, what, what? It's not funny, Kaley. When he's been putting his fingers in that birthday cake there'll be trouble.

KALEY>: He hasn't.

FRANCES>: Have you?

KALEY>: No. I [...] ...

FRANCES>: Stop it. ... Do you have to make so much noise?

KALEY>: Yes.

FRANCES>: Why?

KALEY>: Cos we like to.

FRANCES>: You're giving me a headache.

KALEY>: All this noise in class.
 FRANCES>: Oh, is that why you're getting kicked out? Ha?
 KALEY>: That's why we did it [...].
 FRANCES>: What's the matter with you? Brett. ... What, are you getting all excited about misses, aye? Yes.
 BRETT>: Mum, mummy.
 KALEY>: Boo. ...
 FRANCES>: Come on then fetch [...]. You get off those cakes or there's going to be trouble. Look, you can't have a cake. You've got to have some tea. Come here. Come on. Give mummy a cuddle.
 BRETT>: No.
 FRANCES>: Give us a love. Oh don't bash me. Don't bash me. Which one does Brett want?
 KALEY>: I know.
 FRANCES>: Which cake does Brett want? Which one?
 BRETT>: Pink.
 FRANCES>: The pink one.
 KALEY>: I [...] one.
 FRANCES>: The chocolate one. He's not having it Kaley until after tea. Not yet. <211> *You can have it in a minute*, when daddy comes [Clarification via literal language]. You going to tell daddy you've been a good boy today?

IIA: SIA: Directive > mandative > permit, allow
 PIA: Directive > mandative > instruct
 FTA to H – face > instruction through negative politeness: minimise imposition + be indirect
 RF: Polite de-emphasis
 M: Instruction via Argumentation-exposition

BRETT>: Yeah. [211 R: Unchallenged hyperbole]
 FRANCES>: Had three [...] and a cocoa. ... What's Chloe doing? Don't hit her, be careful. I've read your home messages. No [...] after Tuesday. So what we gonna do with Kaley?
 KALEY>: Or Monday.
 FRANCES>: You, little toerag. That's naughty. He punched me in the eye. He's a villain. ... [laugh] What?
 KALEY>: There's one, two.
 FRANCES>: Have you been eating this cake? ... You've just wee weed in this paddy. You're supposed to stay [...]. Where's Auntie Susan? She's at school.

KALEY>: Who was that at the door, was it [...]?
 FRANCES>: [...] Auntie Susan and [...] coming from [...]. And we're gonna sing happy birthday to daddy. Mummy's card. Where's [...] card? Are you gonna watch out the window for Susan? ... Oh, you're not doing that [...] you've already [...].
 BRETT>: No, no.
 FRANCES>: Yes, yes.
 BRETT>: No, no.
 FRANCIS>: It's not a joke [...].
 FRANCES>: Right.
 BRETT>: Auntie Susan.
 FRANCES>: Let's not all shout.
 FRANCIS>: Let's all be quiet.
 FRANCES>: That's a good idea, Francis.
 FRANCIS>: But I need to get some quiet.
 KALEY>: [...] Auntie Susan, auntie Susan. ...
 BRETT>: Gone. Gone.
 FRANCES>: Who's gone?
 BRETT>: Gone.
 FRANCES>: Who's gone? ... Chloe. ... Oh, what's the matter now? [...] chair Francis [...]. Why don't you go to your bedroom until tea's ready.
 KALEY>: No.
 FRANCES>: Yes.
 FRANCIS>: Don't want to.
 FRANCES>: I think that would be a good idea. ... What are you doing, Kaley? What did you say you were doing? ... Let's have some lights on.
 BRETT>: Mummy, mummy, mummy.
 FRANCES>: I think the chicken's cooked. ...
 BRETT>: Mummy [...].
 FRANCES>: [...] well, why not?
 BRETT>: Mummy.
 FRANCES>: [...] Who's this? Who's this?
 FRANCIS>: Great auntie Susan.
 FRANCES>: Who is it? Is it anyone or is it
 KALEY>: It's not, is it?
 KALEY>: Yes.
 FRANCES>: Oh, no.
 KALEY>: Have you got [...]?
 FRANCES>: [...] What you gonna say? Don't forget when you see daddy what you've got to say straight away.
 FRANCIS>: Happy birthday.
 FRANCES>: Aha. You come and give him the present.
 FRANCIS>: Me?

FRANCES>: Yeah. Come on. ... Let Francis give it him.

FRANK>: [...] What's this then? Oh thank you. It's, ooh! Thank you.

Text KP9

BNC domain: Informal

G: Language-in-action

Conversation recorded by Craig

Participants: Craig, 13, student, male; Jo, 18, shopworker, female; Claire, 17, student, female; Frank, 45, male; Paul, 38, male

CRAIG>: Is your Mum coming up today?

JO>: It's okay. You've got light out in the back of your car.

CRAIG>: Who?

JO>: So you can only put your headlights on, get little lights at the back.

CRAIG>: Yeah.

JO>: I think it's the passenger side one what's gone.

CRAIG>: Oh, what, what brake lights?

JO>: No ... the actual driving light at the back.

CRAIG>: Cos I like, I've got a faulty one, the police ... went and stopped us one.

CLAIRE>: Went and pulled her over ... for it.

JO>: Alright. I'll get it done.

CRAIG>: But it does work.

JO>: for you. Yeah, no ... you know the ... was it Thursday

CRAIG>: Last

JO>: when I went up? Well, last week whenever it was. Last Sunday when I followed you

CRAIG>: Yeah.

JO>: he said that ... erm, I saw that

CLAIRE>: Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't.

CRAIG>: Yeah.

CLAIRE>: It's really weird.

CRAIG>: I got like

CLAIRE>: No, we, we just [...] for a light.

JO>: [...]

CLAIRE>: You know your hand ... it was [...] last night

JO>: No.

CLAIRE>: Right, well [...].

CRAIG>: They were up here last night.

CLAIRE>: [...]

JO>: Yeah, I went with them [...].

CRAIG>: Oh, wasn't it his erm ... where his aunty got married? Someone's dad. This bloke ... cos they were up here last night being really rowdy.

FRANK>: Mm, mm!

CRAIG>: Cos he co

FRANK>: I can box.

CRAIG>: Yeah. Cos yo, the one in the tie was a right wanker!

FRANK>: Oh, yes. <212> *Yeah, he was holding loads of glasses.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

CRAIG>: It was his Dad who got married. [212

R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

FRANK>: Ah?

CRAIG>: It was his Dad who got married.

<213> FRANK>: *He was an obnoxious git!*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > insult (NPP)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

CRAIG>: It was [mimicking] Oh! Come over here [...]. [213 R: Relevant next contribution: non-verbal response]

CLAIRE>: [laugh]

CRAIG>: [laugh] ... [mimicking] Can we really [...]?

PAUL>: I think that's right. [laugh]

CRAIG>: What?

PAUL>: I put, I put the cake there anyway.

CRAIG>: No, but he was erm

FRANK>: Jo's [...]

<214> CRAIG>: *He kept whistling at all the girls,*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

going shut up! You've already been told once.

<215> *He's gonna come over in a minute and get him!* He goes

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

CLAIRE>: Oh! [214 & 215 R: Back-channel response]

CRAIG>: you know, telling him [...], <216> **he was stubbing all the cigarettes out,**

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

<217> **drinking all the drinks on the table.** He was a right jobbo!

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

CLAIRE>: Sorry. [216 & 217 R: Request for repetition]

CRAIG>: [laugh] ... Beg your pardon.

JO>: You could have said that a bit louder. [laugh]

CRAIG>: I think I might. [laugh]

JO>: [laugh]

CRAIG>: Do you mind jumping in the back?

FRANK>: No, it's alright.

CRAIG>: I was imagining you sitting in the back anyway. [...] ... In the back [...].

<218> CLAIRE>: **I had a wicked boogie last night!**

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Narration

CRAIG>: Where d'ya go? [218 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

CLAIRE>: Ha. I went to this ... some of the football er AGM of Phil's

CRAIG>: [laugh]

CLAIRE>: It was, they had a disco up this ... at the Down Town Diner in Ashford.

CRAIG>: Oh, I know.

CLAIRE>: We went with this ... that banger.

CRAIG>: No, it's dropped. It looks a bit black out there, I think.

CLAIRE>: Looks like it's going to rain.

JO>: It is. Looks black out there.

<219> CLAIRE>: **Great!**

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Assessment

CRAIG>: Well, I mean,

CLAIRE>: A barbecue in the rain.

PAUL>: Yeah.

CRAIG>: You can probably, I say, you can hold the umbrella over me and I'll cook. [laugh] [219 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

FRANK>: Yeah, well, we'll be serving with the door open with it.

JO>: Yeah.

CRAIG>: My feet ache. Well, I can't cook cos I've got

JO>: Well, my feet ache as well. I, my legs as well.

CRAIG>: Twenty past twelve we finished last night.

JO>: That's what I heard.

CLAIRE>: Yeah.

CRAIG>: I got back right, and ... my friend's children

JO>: I'm glad I never wear

CLAIRE>: Did you come up here last night like?

CRAIG>: You still didn't clear that tablecloth with all, I mean, you didn't like [...], did you? No. We didn't even finish the last table.

PS000>: We didn't come up here till about ten.

<220> CRAIG>: **There was loads of [...] washing up in here still to do last night,** you just had to leave it.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > blame, accuse

FTA to H + face > blame, accusation through indirection

RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

CRAIG>: And we just had to leave it.

[220 R: Refusal to make a contribution by addressee > Jo]

CLAIRE>: We could [...]
 CRAIG>: Who was up here? Was anyone up here?
 CLAIRE>: Did they tell you about that nanny I was [...]?
 CRAIG>: Yeah, came up at ten o'clock.
 FRANK>: He only came up here cos they were closing.
 CRAIG>: Well, he might be.
 PS000>: [...]
 CLAIRE>: No, just that
 CRAIG>: Well, Danny sent them back cos they dirty.
 CLAIRE>: Were they?
 CRAIG>: Yes. They were disgusting!
 CLAIRE>: I washed them up.
 CRAIG>: Was there anyone up here last night?
 CLAIRE>: They were, they were hu, they're alright now.
 PS000>: Oh, they're alright. I had a damn good clear up here.
 CLAIRE>: With Damian?
 PS000>: Yes.
 CRAIG>: Ha! I'll love it if he's here today.
 CLAIRE>: Today.
 CRAIG>: Ah, little Damian! Matthew.
 CLAIRE>: Matthew.
 PS000>: Tarquin.
 CRAIG>: [laugh]
 CLAIRE>: Why d'ya say Damian?
 CRAIG>: Cos he's evil. He looks like, you know, have you seen it?
 CLAIRE>: [...]
 CRAIG>: Yeah. Have you seen it erm?
 CLAIRE>: Hello!
 PS000>: What is wrong with you two? You're so dumb!
 CRAIG>: I hate him. Your Mum loves him. [laugh]
 CLAIRE>: Come and give Aunty Barbara a big cuddle!
 <221> CRAIG>: *He gets on your nerves though.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (NPP)
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Description

PS000>: Oh, that little one
 CRAIG>: No!

PS000>: that was there today? He was cute!
 [221 R: Continuation of figures: irony]
 CLAIRE>: What? Yeah.
 CRAIG>: [singing] Doo doo, doo doo.
 PS000>: [laughing] [...].
 PAUL>: Ah, you're joking!
 PS000>: [laugh] ... Want two or three?
 PAUL>: Well, I did.
 CRAIG>: What happened?
 PAUL>: She's meant go to the bun shop. But ah, ah!
 CLAIRE>: [...] [...]
 CRAIG>: [laugh]
 <222> PAUL>: *Ah, man's gonna starve.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > predict
 PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
 FTA to H – face > request through off-record politeness: give hints: motives for doing X
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition via Description of future state (Prediction)

CRAIG>: Are you going down there? [222 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
 CLAIRE>: Go upstairs and get some [222 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]
 PS000>: Me.
 CRAIG>: I'll walk down there with you.
 JO>: I mean ... buns.
 PAUL>: I dunno where the bun shop is.
 CRAIG>: The bun shop. I know where it is.
 CLAIRE>: Where?
 PAUL>: Do you wanna take my
 CRAIG>: Just down there.
 PAUL>: car, Craig? [laugh]
 CRAIG>: Yeah, I'll take your car.
 PS000>: [...]
 PAUL>: Well, you know what? I'm so hungry!
 CLAIRE>: Ah, yeah, we'll leave it and we all just, we miss it out.
 CRAIG>: [tut]. And no one's going there? It's alright, I'm not hungry.
 CLAIRE>: No, Claire was going but she had, didn't have time on the way back
 CRAIG>: Mm.
 PS000>: [...]
 CLAIRE>: Cor I really ache!
 JO>: Get a quarter pounder ... large fries.
 CRAIG>: Ah!
 JO>: I don't like any burgers in there but I love it!

CLAIRE>: Yeah, get McDonalds.
 CRAIG>: [laugh]
 JO>: I was being bossy last night, just couldn't
 hack it. What d'ya think?
 CLAIRE>: [laugh]
 JO>: What?
 CLAIRE>: Yeah, well, Matthew's alright. He's
 not like
 CRAIG>: Thomas ain't in a good mood, is he?
 Tom ain't in a [laughing] good mood.
 CLAIRE>: Why?
 CRAIG>: [laughing] Dunno.
 CLAIRE>: He was alright with me.
 CRAIG>: He goes
 CRAIG>: Right, you finished
 CRAIG>: where's your
 CRAIG>: those nearly?
 CLAIRE>: Yeah, they've bought us them out
 <223> *and they were dirty a minute ago*, so I'm
 putting them back.

SA: Representative > report > inform
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Description

CRAIG>: I went to him ... alright Tom? He
 goes, shut up! [laugh] [223 R: Ignored
 hyperbole without topic shift]
 CLAIRE>: Do you want us to put them back in
 now? <224> *The customers have started rolling
 in?*

SA: Directive > elicit > inform
 RF: Simplification, Emphasis
 M: Description

CRAIG>: Pardon? [224 R: Request for
 repetition]
 CLAIRE>: Do you want us to put them back
 in? Are there customers yet?
 CRAIG>: Ah, so you've nearly finished those
 lot?
 CLAIRE>: You look tired.
 JO>: I feel it. I had about ... Friday night I
 finished work here at twelve and then up again
 at [...] ... and I got about two hours sleep then
 and I started to [...].
 CLAIRE>: I worked till to, last night in the end.
 JO>: Did you?
 CLAIRE>: Cos I said to, I said I know Sally
 can't work, I said ... but she wasn't supposed to
 be working anyway. But I thought you were
 asked to.

CLAIRE>: Yeah, no, I was supposed
 JO>: That's right.
 CLAIRE>: to do every other
 CRAIG>: Yeah, with me.
 CLAIRE>: so, then I told him that I'm not
 doing it any more [...].
 JO>: Well, I don't like to do that one.
 CRAIG>: Ain't you doing no more?
 CLAIRE>: I can't do it next week, I can't do it
 next week.
 CLAIRE>: What you doing next week?
 CLAIRE>: Erm ... Emma's boyfriend is having
 a party at [...] Village Hall.
 CLAIRE>: Mm. I've got a party at Morecambe
 Village Hall.
 JO>: Mm
 CRAIG>: Are you going?
 CLAIRE>: Twentieth party. Twenty first
 birthday. Should be a good laugh actually, all
 the boys [...]
 CRAIG>: When are they having a party?
 Claire?
 CLAIRE>: Ah?
 CRAIG>: When are they having a party?
 CLAIRE>: Shoes in a plastic bag.
 CLAIRE>: Who?
 CRAIG>: Emma and ... Simon.
 CLAIRE>: Next week.
 CRAIG>: Next week? Can I come?
 CLAIRE>: Am I too late to ..., Craig do you
 wanna do something?
 CRAIG>: Yeah, alright.
 CLAIRE>: dry those.
 CRAIG>: [...] ... alright, I'll dry them.
 CLAIRE>: Cos I've gotta get ... er Craig, you
 can come if you drive home.
 CRAIG>: Pardon?
 CLAIRE>: You can come if you drive home.
 <225> CRAIG>: No, *I'm gonna get ... out of
 me head* [laugh] ... [laughing] I see him putting
 them over here. ... Oi!

SA: Representative > report > warn
 RF: Humour, Evaluation: negative
 M: Description of future state (Prediction)

CLAIRE>: Mm. [225 R: Back-channel
 response]
 CRAIG>: Now.
 CLAIRE>: Did you say milky? <226> *Looks
 like pure hot milk.*

SA: Representative > report > describe

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis
M: Description

CRAIG>: Did someone write ... one [226 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

CLAIRE>: I don't feel like you're under pressure to do things, do you?

CRAIG>: It's nice that top.

CLAIRE>: [laughing] You're joking?

CRAIG>: Nah.

JO>: I think it's alright.

CRAIG>: Cor!

<227> CLAIRE>: *Well, no one else thinks it is.*

SA: Representative > report > disagree, dissent
FTA to H + face > disagreement. Bald, on record but motivated by modesty maxim

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [whispering] [...]. [227 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

CRAIG>: Who? [whispering] Yeah, oh, I don't like her.

CLAIRE>: [...]

<228> CRAIG>: *She's got a moustache.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > insult (NPP)

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

CLAIRE>: Well, Vicky has, but she can't help it. [228 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

<229> CRAIG>: *No, Vicky's got a beard.*

SA: Representative > report > disagree, dissent
FTA to H + face > disagreement through humour

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour, Emphasis

M: Description

<230> CLAIRE>: *No, I've got a beard.* [229 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole: repetition]

SA: Representative > report > disagree, dissent
FTA to H + face > disagreement through humour + self-deprecation

RF: Simplification, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Description

CRAIG>: [tut]! Oh. Teaspoon. [230 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

PS000>: If you dry up and put them there now cos it's nearly [...].

JO>: I got nice baggy arse here. [230 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

<231> CRAIG>: [laugh] ... *Are they ... riding jodhpurs, aren't they?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm

RF: Evaluation: negative, Humour: teasing

M: Description

JO>: Yeah, well, such a shame. [231 R: Relevant acceptance token + Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

CRAIG>: Can I have the erm ... grey thing here? ... You gotta wear that now?

PS000>: [...]

CRAIG>: [whistling]

PS000>: Oh, don't take no notice, notice, love.

CRAIG>: [laugh]

PS000>: No, no, it's quite short.

<232> PAUL>: *It's horrible!*

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (object)

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > disdain

FTA to H + face > disdain through indirection

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

CRAIG>: [...] [232 R: Inaudible response]

[232 R: Refusal to make a contribution by addressee > Jo]

CLAIRE>: Jo, is yours starting at half past?

JO>: [...]

CRAIG>: Yeah, you gotta wear your sunglasses. ... Wow! I'm gonna copy you. [laugh]

CLAIRE>: [laugh]

CRAIG>: [laugh] ... Well, don't she

PS000>: [...]

CRAIG>: Of course.

CRAIG>: Nice one!

CLAIRE>: Stay with me, <233> *don't move.*

SA: Directive > request > request for action

FTA to H – face > request. Bald, on record
 RF: Simplification, Emphasis, Clarification
 M: Instruction

CRAIG>: We'll ask her later. Ask the same person and I'll catch it on tape. Go on. ... Matthew! ... Can someone help me? [233 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
 CLAIRE>: [whispering] When Billy's clear.
 CRAIG>: Ah?
 CLAIRE>: Shh!
 PS000>: You alright?
 CRAIG>: Cheers man. Cheers. ... I ain't doing no more. Forget it.
 CLAIRE>: Don't do any more then!
 CRAIG>: [laughing] Alright then.
 CLAIRE>: [laugh] ... For God's sake, no point wasting it.
 CRAIG>: Alright. [laugh] ... See ya later.
 CLAIRE>: Get back in there!
 CRAIG>: What?
 CLAIRE>: Get back in the kitchen!

Text KDV

BNC domain: Informal
 G: Comment-elaboration
 Conversation recorded by Sandra
 Participants: Sandra, 38, ancillary nurse, female; Kyle, 9, student, male; Deanne, 19, student, female

SANDRA>: Do you know Tony and Jackie on the PTA?
 DEANNE>: Yeah. Yeah.
 SANDRA>: Yeah, Kyle goes to Cubs with Robin. I pick
 DEANNE>: Oh!
 SANDRA>: him up.
 DEANNE>: Yeah, Laura's in Robin's class.
 SANDRA>: Oh!
 DEANNE>: So er, anyway, I er ... I've done this thing today, I've to come up with, I'll do this afternoon. I'm quite proud of it!
 SANDRA>: [laugh] ... What do you do Dudley Allen then?
 DEANNE>: What the school?
 SANDRA>: Yeah. Do you
 DEANNE>: No, I'm, I'm only on the PTA.
 SANDRA>: You're just
 DEANNE>: That's it.
 SANDRA>: on the PTA? You don't actually work

DEANNE>: I work at the erm
 SANDRA>: I know you work at Crown Hills, don't you?
 DEANNE>: Yeah. And teach the
 SANDRA>: They've got erm pilot scheme teaching the kids to drive, haven't they?
 DEANNE>: Yeah, they said they have.
 SANDRA>: Seems like erm a good idea actually.
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: Keeps them off the streets, doesn't it?
 DEANNE>: Yeah! I've been talking to some of them about it, it's meant to be, cos I didn't know it was going on, and I saw them in the paper, says oh! I saw you in the paper! Did you see me as well, miss?
 SANDRA>: Oh! Oh!
 DEANNE>: [laugh] ... *Cos sometimes, some take a good picture and you know straight away the kids*
 SANDRA>: Mm.
 <234> DEANNE>: *and others can, you know ... sit and stare at it for an hour, still wouldn't know who it was.*

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

SANDRA>: That [laughing] bird's really having a go, int it? [234 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
 DEANNE>: Oh he's comical
 SANDRA>: He [...]
 DEANNE>: he is! <235> **He has us in fits** and the funny thing was we were sat listening to him the other night, all having us dinner, we're sat at table and it was ever so quiet listening to him and ... he sort of erm ... he mimics the other bird

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis, Clarification
 M: Description

SANDRA>: Yeah. [235 R: Acceptance token]
 DEANNE>: he doesn't actually say, well he does say the odd word if you listen carefully, of his own
 SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: but other than that, he mimics everything this one does, but cos it's in a softer tone than when Cork does it, he ... sounds quite funny.

SANDRA>: It's nice actually. They're company for each other, aren't they?

DEANNE>: Mm, yeah. I think

SANDRA>: And they

DEANNE>: when ... we're out, you know ... when there's nobody here

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: like when we're all sitting in the front room at night and then they sa, I think they chirp away to each other quite happily, you know.

SANDRA>: Ah, ah! ... [laugh] ... He don't know what to play with next, his mirror or his swing.

DEANNE>: I know.

SANDRA>: Dashing from one to the other.

DEANNE>: [laugh] ... That mirror goes through it!

SANDRA>: It's a nice

DEANNE>: But erm

SANDRA>: cage that is, int it?

DEANNE>: Yeah, it was er ... a bargain that was! It was erm ...

PS000>: Addams on Uppingham Road.

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: Well, the one in town closed down ... you know, next to Lewis's?

SANDRA>: Oh yeah.

DEANNE>: And so they had ... the stuff from there that wasn't ... that hadn't sold and

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: took it down to that shop ... and er, it was, I got it from there and it was ten pound!

SANDRA>: Good God!

DEANNE>: So, well say, I did, Lovell did. [clears throat]

SANDRA>: I didn't even realize the one in town had gone ... [laughing] till the other day.

DEANNE>: Didn't you?

SANDRA>: I thought Addams had gone

DEANNE>: Did you?

SANDRA>: [...]

DEANNE>: I know! [laugh] ... And I went round town on Saturday ... and I'd gone more or less from work as well so ... I'd got my big bag with me and ... ooh, my shoulder! <236> *I mean, we're in town for a couple of hours, shoulder were killing me!*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

SANDRA>: Oh! [236 R: Back-channel response]

DEANNE>: So when I went, I had to go again on Monday ... I took just my purse in my pocket and thought oh this is bit, cos I mean I knew what I was going for, you know, weren't looking round for anything in particular ... and I thought this is bit risky! <237> *So I nipped in and bought one of them little, tiny bag,*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Emphasis

M: Description via Narration

<238> *I've never had tiny bag before.*

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis, Humour

M: Description

SANDRA>: [laugh] [237 & 238 R: Laughter]

DEANNE>: And er, ooh I love it! Every time I go out now I keep chucking this little bag [laughing] over my shoulder

SANDRA>: Oh!

<239> DEANNE>: *it's great, you know!*

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<240> *So used to having a great big thing, I am.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

SANDRA>: Yeah. [239 & 240 R: Acceptance token]

DEANNE>: I think the bigger bag you put, the more you su rubbish

SANDRA>: Rubbi Oh!

DEANNE>: you put in it.
 SANDRA>: The bag I used to use for work when I was a hired help, oh my God!
 DEANNE>: Mm! And you get a different one
 SANDRA>: [...]
 DEANNE>: and you think next time I'll have one a bit bigger, you know, and then, next time one a bit bigger still
 SANDRA>: Yeah. That one weren't big enough, I couldn't get everything in it.
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: And so, you just keep getting
 <241> DEANNE>: **You end up**
 SANDRA>: Now I
 DEANNE>: **like a horse's nose bag over your shoulder**

SA: Representative > assessment > self-deprecate
 FTA to S + face > self-deprecation through humour
 RF: Evaluation: negative, Humour, Emphasis
 M: Description

SANDRA>: Yeah! [241 R: Acceptance token]
 DEANNE>: [laughing] don't
 SANDRA>: Now I've erm ... changed my job, I just take my ordinary handbag.
 DEANNE>: Mm.
 SANDRA>: Mind you, I've gonna wear that out now, my leather bag, aren't I? Need another one.
 DEANNE>: Well, I got that one. That's the little one I bought.
 SANDRA>: Yeah! That's nice.
 DEANNE>: And it was ... 4'99 from a shoe firm. <242> **I thought, that's ideal just for**
 SANDRA>: That's leather, int it?
 DEANNE>: Yeah! It is leather. See. **Ideal for just walking round town.**

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)
 RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<243> SANDRA>: **Oh! That's great!** 4'99?
 [242 R: Back-channel response + Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment

DEANNE>: Yeah! [243 R: Relevant acceptance token]
 SANDRA>: Ooh! I'll have to have a look in there.
 DEANNE>: But they were all funny prices, some had got 8'99 on, and some had got 4'99, and I, couldn't see the difference. I couldn't figure out which were ... and when the girl ... er, you know, when, when I took it to the counter she ... she said, ooh this is good value for [laughing] 4'99! Int it leather? Ooh! You know, I said yeah! I mean it's got a sticker on it, genuine leather. I think they've either been priced wrong or somebody had
 SANDRA>: Mm.
 DEANNE>: I think somebody had sort of started pricing them and then somebody else had probably took over and they ended up with the wrong price on but ... I didn't mind! [laugh]
 SANDRA>: Well, you weren't gonna argue the toss!
 DEANNE>: No.
 SANDRA>: I got a dress in Marks's this week before last, 7'99 reduced from twenty nine, ninety
 DEANNE>: Oh!
 SANDRA>: nine.
 DEANNE>: Usually have a good sale though, don't they? They don't
 SANDRA>: Yeah. It was the only one. Apparently it was some of the summer stock left. You know, it's that floppy Viscose?
 DEANNE>: Mm, mm.
 SANDRA>: You know?
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: And it's, burgundy with cream spots ... button down front and then, sort of pleat starting from just below the waist.
 DEANNE>: Oh that sounds nice!
 SANDRA>: And fitted, you know?
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: 7'99!
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 <244> SANDRA>: **I couldn't believe it! My size!**

SA: Representative > report > recount
 RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Narration

DEANNE>: I got some sko some skirts last year from there ... my mum did, you know, she were quite pleased with them cos ... usually they're quite [...], aren't they? [244 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

SANDRA>: I love Marks's sale! [laugh]

DEANNE>: Yeah. ... I am, it's not a shop I go in very often. I'm ... I'm not a ... Marks's or Lewis's, anything like that, I er, er

SANDRA>: Oh, I'm just Marks's. I just like, I like the Marks's.

DEANNE>: Yeah. No, I'm not, I'm not very ... but, when I do go in ... I have a sort of look round <245> *and the prices usually*

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: *astonish me!* And erm

SA: Representative > report > admit

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SANDRA>: I find I get more value for my money though, cos it lasts me longer. The stuff I buy from Marks's is always good quality. [245 R: Challenged hyperbole]

DEANNE>: Yeah. I don't like buying kid's

SANDRA>: They last longer.

DEANNE>: clothes from there. Because I think tha i ... I don't like anything that lasts long on kids. If yo, if you understand what I mean. I'd rather

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: them wear it out ... I'd rather it

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: wear out and me throw it away than it still be good and ... don't know what to do with it, you know, you're thinking

SANDRA>: [laughing] Yeah.

DEANNE>: Oh, this is still too good to put in the rag bag basically, you know, that sort of [...]. I'd rather have it

<246> SANDRA>: *Oh, I've got loads of people I pass stuff on to.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Directive > advisive > advise, suggest

FTA to H – face > advice through off-record politeness: give hints: conditions for doing X

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

DEANNE>: Yeah. Well, I

SANDRA>: I mean

DEANNE>: do if I've got anything, but I find half the time, I mean, it's like jeans and things, if you go into Marks's you can spend 15 pound on a [246 R: Acceptance token + Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

SANDRA>: Oh! I never buy, I never buy for him in Marks's.

DEANNE>: No. Kids' jeans 15 pound! And they

SANDRA>: I tell you what I do for jeans, I get them from car boot sales now!

DEANNE>: Yeah. Well, I've been, I've just bought, I bought some on Monday for Laura ... and I got them from Rascals. Now they were only ... one pair were ... er, 11'99, and one pair, well I mean she is ten now ... one pair were 11'99, and one pair were ... 13'99 I think, but then we've got ten percent off ... so that weren't too bad. And then ... one pair were, didn't fit right when she got them home, so, I've took them back ... and, got another pair. And I've also saw some in there for Danny as well, and they were only 7'99. Well, I pay that anywhere for Danny's. The black jeans.

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: So I thought that were quite good really.

SANDRA>: Mm!

DEANNE>: Being a shop like that, cos that's usually, well ... can be dear in there. But normally I get them off the market.

SANDRA>: Where is Rascals?

DEANNE>: It's in the arcade. You know in one of the arcades?

SANDRA>: Oh, I know! They do all the page boy outfits and things in there? Is that it?

DEANNE>: Erm ... I don't know, they could do. I've never really looked at that side of it, you know, so I don't really know. But they most probably do.

SANDRA>: I think that's where his page boy outfit come from. Corner of [...] Street in the arcade? Is it that one?

DEANNE>: No, it's not on the corner, it's further in.

SANDRA>: Oh, I know!

DEANNE>: You know the Swiss Cottage, opposite there.

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: That's where it is.

SANDRA>: I know! Yeah.

DEANNE>: But, as I say, again, it's not a shop I often go in. I mean, I ... they've got a, a stall on the market, I've seen something on the market ... on that stall, but they've not got it in ... their size and they'll say to you, ooh, go over to the shop, you know, and you go over

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: to the shop and then you find more things you like when you're in there.

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: But it's not, normally, a shop I just go to. It's usually from the market stall, when I get sent over there. Cos I like the market, I really do. <247> *The only thing I dislike it for, you can never find the same stall if you've got to take anything back.*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (situation)

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SANDRA>: Back, yeah. [247 R: Collaborative completion + Acceptance token]

DEANNE>: [laugh]

SANDRA>: That's it, it's when you come to take stuff back int it, the market? [Relevant next contribution: literal remark] I got a, good buy for him on ... that coat he's wearing, got it in Benny's.

DEANNE>: Mm.

SANDRA>: I'd never been in there before but

DEANNE>: Oh, it's cheap!

SANDRA>: but it's good! Yeah!

DEANNE>: Yeah!

SANDRA>: And er, it's Cam Campri.

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: And it ...

DEANNE>: Oh, I thought you said Campari

SANDRA>: was 36 quid

DEANNE>: what you

SANDRA>: Yeah!

DEANNE>: said. [laugh]

SANDRA>: And er, it was 36 pound, but she knocked another 3 pound off cos there was a little mark on the front which just ... sponged off as soon as I got home.

DEANNE>: Mm, mm! That's the way to do it!

<248> SANDRA>: *We were thrilled with it, you know.*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Narration

DEANNE>: Well, considering there's not supposed to be any VAT on kid's things, I mean [248 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of figures: irony]

SANDRA>: Phworgh! God!

DEANNE>: only the price of the adult ones, aren't they?

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: I mean, it's like the jeans, I say, for Laura I paid 14'99 for a pair there, and 11'99 for the other pair. Well, I've been ... and got myself two pair ... <249> *cos I mean, it's more or less all I wear* ... just a, a couple of weeks before, and I'd only paid 12'99 a pair for my own!

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SANDRA>: Mm! [249 R: Back-channel response]

DEANNE>: So I mean, I had actually paid more for ... hers er, than, you know. Well, I think they're so, my own I don't mind paying a bit more for really, because they're so ... last me such a long while.

SANDRA>: Yeah.

<250> DEANNE>: *I wear them day in, day out, you know.* I mean, I ... I've got like five pair at the moment.

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<251> *Some what I call are comfy ones, some that I can't breathe in, you know!*

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (object)

RF: Contrast of differences, Humour, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Description

SANDRA>: [laugh] [250 R: Unchallenged hyperbole] [251 R: Laughter]

DEANNE>: [laughing] My going out ones.

SANDRA>: Oh, I can't wear jeans now. When I've lost weight. There's a weight-watchers opened in the school. Oh!

DEANNE>: Oh, I know, I went the first night.

SANDRA>: Did you?

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: Any good?

DEANNE>: Well ... I only, th <252> *I mean ... the woman made me feel dead small* because I said to her ... you know, she was asking everybody why they'd come and I said, well I've only come to give Chris moral support, which was the truth because ... until about three hours before ... we went, I didn't even know it was there

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Narration

SANDRA>: Mm. [252 R: Back-channel response]

DEANNE>: and she rang up and said that she wanted to go and would I go with her? And I said yes, you see. Of course, the woman said why do you come? So I says, well, I've come for Chris really. <253> *So she said, oh they all say that!*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Narration

<254> *And she made me feel about two inches high,*

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Interest intensification, Evaluation: negative

M: Narration

SANDRA>: Yeah. [253 & 254 R: Acceptance token]

DEANNE>: *you know!*

SANDRA>: Are you going again? [253 & 254 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

DEANNE>: Well, I didn't go, no, cos Chris int going, so I didn't bother going but ... I must admit, I mean, when she gave me the papers and what have you that goes with it, I come

home, I put it in the cupboard and I've not even looked at it since.

SANDRA>: Mm. Three pound eighty

DEANNE>: [...]

SANDRA>: int it?

DEANNE>: Yeah. But the re th the actual thing's free.

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: The erm

SANDRA>: Registration.

DEANNE>: Yeah. It's supposed to be eight pound or something

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: normally.

SANDRA>: I'm trying to diet on my own. Well, I've been doing it for a

DEANNE>: In fact

SANDRA>: fortnight.

DEANNE>: I mean ... it's okay like if you're getting weighed with other people, and yes, it's quite nice and you've got the encouragement and everything, but when all's said and done, dieting ... dieting is all down to willpower. It don't matter how much

SANDRA>: I know.

DEANNE>: at any class, you can't buy that.

SANDRA>: No.

DEANNE>: It's all down to yourself. ... I'm not into dieting, I'm into food. [laugh]

<255> SANDRA>: *Oh, I'm into food all the time!* Trouble is, I got three dinner ... parties coming up, you know, well ... out

SA: Representative > report < admit, confess
FTA to S + face > confession + self-contradiction through positive politeness: claim common ground

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

DEANNE>: Yeah. [255 R: Acceptance token]

SANDRA>: for dinner and dinner parties ... [sighing] <256> *so I'm sort of frantically trying to cut down*, and then, you know, one dinner party and then I put it

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

DEANNE>: And then eat, yeah, that's it. [256 R: Collaborative completion + Acceptance token]

SANDRA>: straight back on again!

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: What do you do, cut out your social life, you know?

DEANNE>: Well ... that's what the argument's always been, int it? You know, I mean ... even at these diet clubs, oh well, you know don't stop going out just eat what you, but if you go out and you're eating ... sweets for ... you know, after your dinner

SANDRA>: Mm.

DEANNE>: you have a sweet and all that sort of thing, <257> *I mean you can't ... I can't resist them*, if I go out for a meal, I've got to have the sweet, I'd rather have the sweet

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

SANDRA>: Mm. [257 R: Back-channel response]

DEANNE>: than the main!

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: I mean th the starters I'm never too fussy about. I can take or leave that but ... I do like the main course, I do like

SANDRA>: Depends on the starter, if it's a nice, a special starter then, ooh! I want it! You know, but

DEANNE>: No, I'm never ... no, they don't bother me. They often put me off my meal. But erm ... sweets, I could eat ... well ... mine and somebody [laughing] else's! If I put my mind to it, you know!

SANDRA>: If they're, if they're nice ones, yeah.

DEANNE>: [laugh]

SANDRA>: Yeah. If they're nice ones.

DEANNE>: Yeah, just the nice ones. I mean, cheesecake!

SANDRA>: Ah! Ooh, yeah! Especially

DEANNE>: [...]

SANDRA>: when it's a homemade one.

DEANNE>: Mm. I mean, crumble, I like crumble.

SANDRA>: I've just stopped baking cos I'm dieting, I have

DEANNE>: Yeah.

SANDRA>: stopped baking!

DEANNE>: Well, I must admit, I have, I mean I don't do ... well ... I used to make quite nice cakes, since I've had this new cooker mine won't ri I mean they rise, there's no doubt about that, they rise, but I can take them out, put them on a cooling rack and watch them deflate!

SANDRA>: Deflate. Oh!

DEANNE>: [laughing] You know! They just

<258> SANDRA>: *Sickening!*

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > complain (event)

PIA: Expressive > commiserate

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Assessment

DEANNE>: go down and ... well, that irritates me, so I've, so I've give up that. The only thing I can make is my normal, what I call a family fruit cake, which is very simple and quick, i well not quick really but, I usually have it on when the Sunday roast's doing so ... but erm ... and that's about it, you know. They rai they do fine but [258 R: Relevant next contribution: literal paraphrase]

<259> SANDRA>: *I can't resist it, once I've made it, I can't resist it.*

SA: Representative > report > state

RF: Interest intensification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

DEANNE>: I love it when it's warm! [259 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

SANDRA>: Ah! Oh, yeah!

DEANNE>: [...]

SANDRA>: Ooh!

DEANNE>: [laugh]

SANDRA>: I tell you, I just, I just started to [...].

DEANNE>: There we go.

SANDRA>: Have you noticed I've done it with Loving Care? Not

DEANNE>: Your colour? I, I

SANDRA>: Yeah.

DEANNE>: thought, yeah, I thought it looked a nice colour, it does look, you know, it does look nice and shiny and

SANDRA>: It's been done, it's been done about two weeks

DEANNE>: and it's

SANDRA>: now.

DEANNE>: er
 SANDRA>: And it gave it some condition, you know, when I
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: did it with that. So er
 KYLE>: [laugh]
 DEANNE>: It looks much better a bit shorter, it's got much more shape to it. It looks
 SANDRA>: Yeah.
 DEANNE>: nice, yeah.
 SANDRA>: It'd just grown out that, I knew
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: you know, the last
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: week or so, it just got that bit
 DEANNE>: I mean, the side bits look nice heavier cos it's ... it gives you that ... it goes up that way.
 SANDRA>: Yeah.
 DEANNE>: Instead of just coming down
 SANDRA>: It does.
 DEANNE>: in a V shape
 SANDRA>: Yeah.
 DEANNE>: it goes up that way.
 SANDRA>: I need it to go up that way
 DEANNE>: That's right.
 SANDRA>: it just suits
 DEANNE>: Yeah.
 SANDRA>: me better. Thanks ever so much Julie for cutting it.
 DEANNE>: Alright. [...] 22.
 SANDRA>: No, I'll er ... prefer to go this way.
 DEANNE>: [...] [...]
 SANDRA>: Ooh yeah!
 DEANNE>: Well
 SANDRA>: I prefer it [...].
 DEANNE>: [laugh]
 SANDRA>: Oh! Aren't you good?
 DEANNE>: No, just that he was ... you know, just a bit concerned that's the logo thing and I thought well what does it look like? I know it's a black raven on ... the thing and the [...] written over the top of it. ... The only thing is i it would have been nicer if it had of printed. I mean that sort of yo er, yo er, although, really you want them to see that cos they know what it's about then, then they'll read that, but, it would have been nice if that had of been ... darker
 SANDRA>: Yeah.
 DEANNE>: like this, but that, I'd done, you know, you could do on the typewriter and that so
 SANDRA>: No. <260> **That's brilliant!**

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)
 PIA: Expressive > H praise > applaud
 FTA to H – face > applause through indirection
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Description

DEANNE>: Well, I thought that was quite good. [260 R: Relevant next contribution: literal paraphrase]
 SANDRA>: Well, it's eye-catching, isn't
 DEANNE>: Mm!
 SANDRA>: it? It's what you want.
 DEANNE>: Just coloured in quick. I mean, it'll be a photocopied finally [...]
 SANDRA>: Oh, I had to learn how to use that photocopier, ooh and a [...] and, oh my giddy aunt!
 DEANNE>: Oh, well, it's all
 SANDRA>: [laugh]
 DEANNE>: experience, int it?
 SANDRA>: She reckons she's gonna teach me computers.
 <261> DEANNE>: **Great stuff!**

SA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > approve
 RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Assessment

SANDRA>: [sigh] ... We'll see! [261 R: Negative evidence: non-verbal response + Challenged hyperbole]
 DEANNE>: Well, we're just trying to get ours to work tonight, it's broke down.
 SANDRA>: What, the computer?
 DEANNE>: The, mm.
 SANDRA>: [...]
 DEANNE>: Er, I think it's the, the lead ... you know, that goes from the computer
 SANDRA>: Oh yeah!
 DEANNE>: to the plug?
 SANDRA>: You tried wiggling it about?
 DEANNE>: Yeah. [...]
 SANDRA>: Could be two ends broken and
 DEANNE>: and then it, yeah. And then it, so Mick took
 SANDRA>: Oh, well then.
 DEANNE>: it to pieces and, see if he can, of course it's one of them that you can't put back together, like

SANDRA>: Oh!
DEANNE>: moulded on, aren't they?
SANDRA>: Yeah. You gotta buy a new lead haven't
DEANNE>: Yeah.
SANDRA>: you?
DEANNE>: So he's gonna get one of them really. That's a lot of money! Tt! Lucky anyway.
<262> SANDRA>: [laughing] *It's always something, innit?*

SA: Directive > elicit > agree
RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

DEANNE>: Well, that's it! [262 R: Relevant acceptance token]
SANDRA>: Right! See you in a few weeks again.
DEANNE>: Okay then. Yeah.
SANDRA>: Thanks ever so much Julie!
DEANNE>: Alright then.
SANDRA>: Bye!
DEANNE>: Bye! Thank you.
SANDRA>: Got your comic?
KYLE>: Yep.
SANDRA>: You've been ever so, ever so noisy you have!
DEANNE>: [...] Ooh, yeah!
SANDRA>: Ain't he been [laughing] noisy?
DEANNE>: Definitely!
SANDRA>: [laugh] ... See you Julie!
DEANNE>: Okay. Ta-ta!
SANDRA>: Bye!

Text JSH BNC domain: Institutional G: Debate and argument House of Commons debate
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PS000>: Order, order. Questions for the Secretary of State for employment. Cheryl Gillan.
MRS CHERYL GILLAN>: Number one, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of spending by industry on training in each of the last five years.
PS000>: [...]

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT: MR DAVID HUNT>: Madam Speaker, we estimate that British employers spend ... er, approximately twenty thousand million pounds a year on training. The last recorded figure in 1987 was eighteen thousand million pounds.
MADAM SPEAKER: MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mrs Gillan.
MRS CHERYL GILLAN>: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank my right honourable friend for that reply. Would he agree with me that one of the major contributing factors to our rapid recovery from recession in advance of all the other European communities
PS000>: Hear, hear.
PS000>: Very good point.
MRS CHERYL GILLAN>: has been that British industry has continued to maintain its investment in training?
PS000>: Hear, hear.
MR DAVID HUNT>: I agree with my honourable friend ... er one of the ... er satisfactory features of the CBI er survey last week, one of the many, was that eighty-four percent of firms er in the UK intend to increase or maintain their spending on training and of course she's absolutely right, they will be the firms that will benefit most from that investment in training as we continue through recovery into growth in the longer term.
MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Barry Jones.
MR BARRY JONES>: But the right honourable gentleman will recollect that in aerospace ... in steel ... and in textiles there are now no large apprenticeship schools, when in his own ministerial memory he may remember that there were. What action is he taking to specifically gain ... er activities that will ensure there will be apprenticeship schools? From him we have ... too many press releases and not enough action.
PS000>: Hear, hear.
MR DAVID HUNT>: It would destroy jobs, er all I would say to the honourable gentleman is that he will have noticed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer er used one of the announcements in his budget statement on the 13th of November last year er to announce that we shall be introducing a modern apprenticeship scheme,
PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR DAVID HUNT>: which will be available for school leavers next year and that the Chancellor has allocated ... in the Department of Employment budget, for training credits and the new modern apprenticeship er over a billion pounds er which will be utilised to introduce those apprenticeships. <263> *What I very much hope is that industry will now respond by coming forward, particularly this year with trail blazing apprenticeship schemes that will ensure that we have got the most relevant structures in place for those modern apprenticeships next year.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
 RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Oliver Heald.
 MR OLIVER HEALD>: Would my right honourable friend care to pay tribute to the work of the training and enterprise councils in ... helping women particularly who want to get back into work by providing child care facilities? Er, and would he also like to comment on the threshold scheme in Northampton which he visited last week, which is an example of partnership between the public sector, the private sector, the TECs er promoting this sort of work? [263 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]
 MR DAVID HUNT>: I'm very grateful to my honourable friend. <264> *I do indeed pay tribute ... to over one thousand two hundred top business and community leaders who serve on our eighty-two training and enterprise councils and who indeed is quite right in ... er earmarking, do a ... tremendous amount of work on equal opportunities.*

SA: Expressive > compliment, applaud (NPP)
 RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive
 M: Argumentation-exposition

The child care initiative launched by my predecessor involving expenditure of over forty million pounds over the period is giving training and enterprise councils the opportunity to come forward with some very imaginative and innovative schemes. <265> *One of those I saw in Northampton was extremely impressive*

and is founded, as my honourable friend says, on positive partnership.

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (object)
 PIA: Expressive > H praise > applause
 FTA to H – face > applause through indirection
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis
 M: Description via Narration

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Tony Lloyd.
 MR TONY LLOYD>: Madam Speaker, what, what actually would shift the Secretary of State from his, his mood of complacency? <266> *Between 1990 ... and 1992 over a million skilled workers were put out of work in this economy, nearly half a million semi-skilled workers lost their jobs.* The number of people trained in industry dropped by three hundred thousand and the Secretary of State tells the House that this is a success. This isn't the opposition talking the country down, it's the Government doing the country down. [264 & 265 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > recount
 PIA: Expressive > H criticism > accuse, blame
 FTA to H + face > accusation through indirection
 RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I'm sorry that the opposition is continuing to talk the country down.
 PS000>: [...]
 <267> MR DAVID HUNT>: We ... *we have in fact er had a very impressive record on competitiveness.* We now in manufacturing where there's been a decline in employment since the 1960s, we now have four million workers in manufacturing producing more than seven million produced fifteen years ago. That's a tribute to the British work force and don't let the honourable gentleman forget that we now have one point four million more in work, in the UK than we had ten years ago.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform
 PIA: Representative > assessment > self-commendation > praise

FTA to S – face > self-commendation through indirection

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

Let him start talking up our achievements rather than pointing to an agenda which his party has already signed up to which would destroy millions of jobs through statutory works councils, statutory minimum wage and statutory compulsory working week. <268> ***That's a recipe for disaster.*** [266 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperboles]

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (object)

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > reproach

FTA to H + face > reproach through indirection

RF: Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [267 & 268 R: Inaudible response]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: James Pawsey.

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Question number two, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the levels of employment in the United Kingdom, Germany and France. [267 & 268 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT: MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, the United Kingdom has sixty-nine percent ... of its working age population in work and it is rising.

Germany has sixty-five percent and it is falling and France sixty percent and now also falling.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Pawsey.

<269> MR JAMES PAWSEY>: ***May I thank my honourable friend for that extremely helpful reply and for the encouraging figures which he has given to the House this afternoon?***

IIA: SIA: Directive > request > request for permission

PIA: Expressive > thank

FTA to S – face > thanking through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H

RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Very encouraging [...]. [269 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Clearly it happens to er underline the fact that the United Kingdom economy is in much better shape when compared to the economies of our principal European competitors. Would er my honourable friend agree with me that one of the reasons why we've come out of the recession so well is the fact that we don't have a social contract? and [...].

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR JAMES PAWSEY>: Would he agree with me that the social contract, the absence of a social contract ... certainly hasn't damaged er rates of take-home pay?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

<270> MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er ... ***Madam Speaker, I entirely agree, I entirely agree with my ho honourable friend***

SA: Representative > report > agree

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

er the absence of the social chapter in Britain accounts in part for our higher levels of employment and the reforms which we carried out in the 1980s and the figures speak for themselves, as do the er people who speak for industry, <271> ***for example, when Black & Decker announced their intention to bring their operations er fully into Britain,*** out of Germany [Clarification via literal language], a company spokesman said anyone familiar with this sit situation in Germany will grasp that because of costs it is become very difficult to do business there. If members opposite had their way, it would be very difficult to do business here.

SA: Representative > report > recount

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Bill Campbell-Savours.

MR BILL CAMPBELL-SAVOURS>: Would ... would the minister ... answer a question on a matter of concern to businessmen in the county of Cumbria? After the tax increases in the budget of this year o on April which are in to be

introduced in April the 1st, does the minister believe that they have ... implications for the economy of the United Kingdom? Does he think they will lead to further unemployment? And does he think they'll have enough ... the effect of increasing unemployment in my part of the United Kingdom? [270 & 271 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Madam Speaker, I am sure that my right honourable friend the Chancellor's proposals to er reduce the burden of national insurance contributions will have a very beneficial effect er on employment a and on businesses, but er if members opposite, and er the honourable gentleman er says what he thinks clearly, if members opposite are arguing that higher public expenditure and higher taxation will have an impact on employment, then he's absolutely right. <272> *That is why on this side we resist the proposals which come from members opposite to add to public expenditure every day of the week.*

SA: Representative > report > argue, explain

RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance]

Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Julian Brazier.

MR JULIAN BRAZIER>: Would my ... right honourable friend, sorry, would honourable friend agree that the way you build jobs in an economy is through having successful businesses? Businesses like Chartered Papermill where one of our honourable friends will be opening a new plant ... er shortly where they have ... have won awards for quality, for training and for exports, national and regional, during the last three years. That is the way that we build jobs surely, not through bureaucratic regulations. [272 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, ... I entirely agree with my honourable friend, regulation and bureaucracy are the enemy of employment and that is why the Prime Minister has ensured that every Government Department is looking at regulations and bureaucracy to reduce the burden, and that is why in the forthcoming European elections on this side of the House, we'll be arguing for less bureaucracy and less regulation, not more which destroys jobs.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Michael Connarty.

MR MICHAEL CONNARTY>: Number four, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what matters he intends to raise at the summit with the United States Government which might assist employment prospects in Britain.

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: Madam Speaker, this is a job summit and I intend to talk about jobs.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: [...]

MR MICHAEL CONNARTY>: I'm very grateful to the minister for being brief though of course he passed on no information of any worth. The five hundred and forty-three thousand less people in employment in Britain than there was a year ago and four hundred and fifty-one less in employment than in 1979. Surely, it's time to talk to the United States about how they succeed by having a minimum wage in most states and giving trade union rights to people that we deny the same firms employees in this country.

<273> MR DAVID HUNT>: *When the honourable gentleman said I gave no information, I said I intended to talk about jobs, and in this country we believe, we believe that er there are three things very important a at this forthcoming summit.*

SA: Representative > report > challenge

FTA to H + face > challenge through negative politeness: impersonalise H

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

First of all, the importance of a stable economic framework. Secondly, the importance of a flexible labour market and thirdly, the removal of barriers to enterprise. Finally, I'll just say this to him, I agree that we have a great deal of things to learn from the United States, not in the way he suggests but it is a fact that er over the economic cycle of OECD between 1979 and 1989 ... er America, the United States saw growth of twenty-six percent which created eighteen and half million jobs in their free enterprise economy. The European community, on the other hand, ... also saw a growth of output of over twenty percent, twenty-three point seven percent but that gave rise not to

eighteen million but to only six million additional jobs, and I just say to the honourable gentleman the lesson for Europe is to go further down the route that I have suggested of further deregulation and less bureaucracy and a stable economic framework, than to go down the route that he is advocating in his short address and question to me. I believe the way ahead lies with more free enterprise.

PS000>: [...] [273 R: Inaudible response]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Sir Peter Hordern.

SIR PETER HORDERN>: Er, would my ... would my right honourable friend confirm ... that in the United States ... there are no government training schemes of any kind? Is it not extraordinary therefore that in the United States where there is the most rapid growth of technology and of productivity, there are no government training schemes. And does this not make a nonsense of the opposition's repeated claim that Government training schemes are the way forward? [273 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR DAVID HUNT>: What I, w what I will say to my honourable, my right honourable friend is that er when I recently visited the United States I did find that the private industry councils, on which our training and enterprise councils have been based, have provided a very valuable experience for us in learning the lessons that he had indicated of ensuring that the private sector is fully involved in decisions over training, and I believe that the figure I gave to my honourable friend early today, combined with over two billion that my department spends on training, forms a very effective public private sector partnership.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Sir John Prescott.

SIR JOHN PRESCOTT>: Will the Secretary of State make clear to the summit that after fourteen years of this Government we have seen unemployment treble to three million unemployed? <274> *That we have three million full time employer ployees replaced by three million part time and self employed, with the worst trained and education labour force of any attending the summit?* Will he also ask the Americans how, as he claims, they've created eighteen million jobs with a minimum wage provision? ... And also make clear how much Britain is paying in family credit support to

maintain low paid subsidised wages by the taxpayer in this country?

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > inform

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MR DAVID HUNT>: Still the honourable gentleman talks down Britain. [274 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole]

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: I think he has to ... I think he has to think very seriously before he starts to decry the achievements of this nation. <275> *For instance, I have given one which is in the last ten years we have nearly one and half million more people in work than we had ten years ago.* That is a signal achievement. If I also say to him that the lesson we learn from the United States is not to go down the route that he and his party have signed up to, in signing up to a socialist manifesto for the European elections. He is proposing, which is the last thing you would find in the United States, statutory works councils, statutory minimum wage, compulsory working week. It's about time he dropped those proposals which would cost millions of jobs.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform

PIA: Representative > assessment > self-commendation > praise

FTA to S – face > self-commendation (to defend from the opposition's accusation) through indirection

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: positive

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Alan Howarth.

MR ALAN HOWARTH>: At the summit, will my right honourable friend enquire about the progress in the employment of disabled people and the advantages to the American economy in consequence of the Americans with disabilities act? Will he accept that in the United States of America, the land of free enterprise, it was concluded that voluntary arrangements would

never sufficiently overcome discrimination against employment and will he respond positively to the view of the Employers Forum on Disability and the Law Society as well as three hundred and eleven honourable members of this House who have signed EDM number two that the time has now come for legislation to ban discrimination against in er disabled people in respect of employment in this country? [275 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I, I know my honourable friend feels very strongly on this subject. What I would hope that we could achieve in this country is more through erm opportunities for disabled people, greater opportunities for disabled people ... to gain access into work and as my honourable friend knows, we have put forward some proposals we're presently considering the position following the representations that have been made to us after the ... er new access to work scheme was announced and I hope to make an announcement on that aspect shortly. But I just say to my honourable friend, I don't think er compulsion er is the route with that we should follow. I believe we must give increasing opportunities to disabled people to get into work.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Derek Enright.

MR DEREK ENRIGHT>: Number five, Ma'am. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps are being taken to co-ordinate the variety of initiatives to combat unemployment in areas of industrial decline.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, examples include the introduction of it new integrated regional offices and the creation of a single regeneration budget from April the 1st of this year.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Er, Mr Enright.

MR DEREK ENRIGHT>: Grateful to the minister for that reply, <276> *but would he not agree with me that where local authorities ... erm local chambers of commerce and trades councils er and his own Department of Employment, are already working well together with good small initiatives, to put upon them English Estates, TECs, British Coal Enterprise Ltd. er is in fact to do precisely what he does not ... advocate to make*

a mushrooming of bureaucracy? ... And will he not undertake to evaluate these initiative to see if they really ... do work or whether they're just providing jobs for the boys?

SA: Directive > elicit > agree

RF: Simplification, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

<277> MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, *Madam Speaker, I, I agree with er the honourable gentleman that it's extremely important that the various agencies do play a part in working together to ensure effective action with minimum bureaucracy*, and I know that the honourable gentleman has been anxious to ensure that that happens in his own constituency and his own area where he is dealing with the problems of high unemployment er and the fall out from the closures of pits in his area and if the honourable gentleman has any specific er, er measures which he would like us to look at then I'd be very happy to consider those. [276 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > agree

RF: Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Philip Oppenheim.

<278> MR PHILIP OPPENHEIM>: Er, *but is my honourable aware ... that employment prospects in Amber Valley were devastated by pit closures ... mainly in the 1970s but that now the area, but that now the area has some of the lowest unemployment in Europe, certainly lower than in Germany?* And the reason is mainly due to the success of new manufacturing businesses. Doesn't this, doesn't this illustrate that the best way to create sustainable jobs in the long term is not subsidising unsustainable old industries but by allowing better conditions for enterprise, better labour relations in themselves to attract new jobs to the area? [277 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift through continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Directive > elicit > inform

RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Madam Speaker, I entirely agree with er ... my honourable friend. The way to secure future prosperity is by embracing change not resisting it, and as my honourable friend er indicates, by using our skills to best effect and competitively in a global market place. Were we to embrace the policies of members opposite in the European Community we would shut the job, the door to the jobs which will come from that inward investment. <279> *Because we have opted out of the social chapter, we do indeed have the opportunity that comes from being, if I may quote er President Delors, a pa a paradise for inward investment.* [278 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark + Continuation of figures: hyperbole + metaphor]

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > + assessing > praise (entity)

PIA: Representative > assessment > self-commendation > praise

FTA to S – face > self-commendation through indirection

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Kevin Barron.

MR KEVIN BARRON>: Could I say to the minister and bring him back to the real world ... about regeneration? ... The Government are about to announce er at Templeborough in Rotherham a three point seven five million pounds project. The project is estimated to create a hundred and seventy-five jobs. Last year out of the two thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine that were lost in the Rotherham borough from coal, engineering and steel there were two hundred and sixty which I a actually support er made by English Estates ... that jobs lost at Templeborough steel plant in November. This year seventy-five jobs lost at Brinsworth strip mill last week and there's four hundred job losses that are currently being negotia negotiated in United Engineering Steels in Sheffield and Rotherham. <280> **That**

regeneration project is a flea on a dog's back into the jobs that have been lost in that ... area at the moment. When are we going to meet the needs of those areas for jobs and not have these things where we're getting less than twenty percent job replacement through g regeneration? [279 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of figures: metaphor + hyperbole] [Clarification via literal language]

IIA: SIA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > criticise (object)

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > reproach

FTA to H + face > reproach through indirection

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Well, Madam Speaker, we'll start making progress when members opposite realise that jobs come from companies being competitive, from private enterprise being able to sell goods and services competitively and it is members opposite who believe that the State can provide employment. On this side of the House, we believe that Government agencies can assist the market to operate effectively and real jobs will come from free enterprise which members opposite stand against. [280 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Steen.

MR STEEN>: Madam Speaker, ... I wonder if the minister is aware that in the economically declining fishing port of Brixham in South Devon the second largest fishing port in the West Country ... that the Employment Service Agency want to build ... a new building on a prime site in the centre of Brixham ... in order to put both the pay-out office and the job creation office in the same building and they're prepared to pay over the odds with Government money and push out private enterprise who want to build that site. Isn't it a far better use of public money to create training and job creation rather than to buy a prime site with public money?

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, I'm very much aware of the case that the ... my honourable friend has er mentioned because he has written to me er about it, and I have looked into the circumstances er of it, and I understand that the Employment Service have

made no final decision on that particular site, and I'd be happy to respond to my honourable friend er once I've had a chance to discuss it further with the Chief Executive of the Employment Service whose responsibility it is, but if I could just say to my honourable friend the principle of integrating er the work of the job centre and the payment of benefits on one site is a good one which is for the convenience of er people who make use of the job centres er and er as er, er the honourable er gentleman, the member for Workington is indicating from a sedentary position, was a recommendation which was supported by the Public Accounts er Committee, and I believe and I believe that it er makes sense to proceed on a value for money basis with this policy but I will certainly look at the particular example in my honourable friend's constituency with interest.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Kate Hoey.

MS. KATE HOEY>: Number seven. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to increase the level of support to the South East London training and enterprise council.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT: MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Er, there is of course er no such TEC. ... However if the honourable member is referring to her own TEC, which is called South Thames TEC ... then the Department's regional director ... is currently negotiating the level of resources for 1914 with the TEC and of course also with other London TECs.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Kate Hoey.

MS. KATE HOEY>: Yes, thank you, I'd like to thank the minister for her reply ... some of us in South London will still call it the site of East London TEC, no matter what the minister wants to call it. But could I say to the minister that she will be aware that the South Thames TEC actually is the first TEC to get involved in kids club network and that one of the very useful things that has happened in my constituency is the setting up the first kids after school club in, in, in Vauxhall. Would the minister like to ... say, like to welcome that initiative but also to ensure that the money which the South Thames TEC are going to be able to put into that will be able to continue and not only continue in that one but to allow the increase of this after school provision so that

those many women in my constituency and who, the many women in South London who are unemployed, will have the opportunity to get back to work and get back to training with that very necessary provision for child care?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Can I say first of all to the honourable lady that yes, of course, I welcome er the particular initiatives er and indeed I have visited it as I think she will know, er and I'm very pleased to congratulate all those concerned in setting it up. We have, of course, made it clear that those TECs who were piloting ... er the out of school childcare initiative ... er will continue er to be funded er along with all other TECs from 1994-5, and although of course I cannot preempt the TEC's judgement and take a view on that particular scheme, er I can say that funding will continue for TECs for that purpose.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Ian Taylor.

<281> MR IAN TAYLOR>: *Would my honourable friend er recognise that just up the River Thames from er the South Thames TEC is the Surrey TEC which is doing an excellent job with local industry in re-skilling particularly younger people?* And this partnership with industry, not just dependent on what the Government does, but what industry itself does to try and help people get back into jobs with the new challenges that are coming from the difficulties that are presented by ... higher calibre needed particularly for school leavers and other, and will he w would she welcome the Surrey TEC's initiative?

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > inform

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H

RF: Evaluation: positive, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Er, yes, I have pleasure indeed in worre er in welcoming the er Surrey TEC's initiative er and indeed similar initiatives er in other TECs up and down the country. <282> *I'm delighted to welcome er the various initiatives that result from partnerships between industry and Government er and in particular "Investors in People", which encourages training and skilling er on a*

lifelong basis, and I have pleasure in confirming that that is not confined to the private sector and that today ACAS became the first civil service er body to receive the full award of “*Investors in People*”. [281 R: Relevant acceptance token + Relevant next contribution: literal remark + Continuation of hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
PIA: Expressive > welcome
RF: Simplification, Contrast of differences, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr David Winnick.

MR DAVID WINNICK>: Number eight [...]. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he intends to meet representatives of trade unions to discuss the position of the ban on union membership at GCHQ. [282 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR DAVID HUNT>: The Prime Minister and I had such a meeting on the 20th of December.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Er, Mr Winnick.

MR DAVID WINNICK>: But is the Secretary of State aware that the campaign against the ban on union membership at GCHQ remains as strong as ever and will continue until victory is secured? There was no justification for the ban in the first place ... and is the Secretary of State not concerned that the International Labour Organisation has expressed much concern over the continuing ban and it may well be that in view of the fact that the Government is not willing to compromise in any way, the ILO may well decide to formally rebuke and reprimand the Government? If that is the case, you'll be the first ever case of a Western government being so reprimanded.

MR DAVID HUNT>: Madam Speaker, there are a number of points in that supplementary question, let me deal first of all with ... on GCHQ we've done exactly what the ILO requested us to do, we've had er discussions with the civil service unions to see if a solution could be found. <283> *No one ever imagined for a moment that it would be easy to find a solution which would satisfy both sides*, but as far as the Government is concerned the dialogue remains open. I'm confident that we

have nothing to fear from an examination of our industrial relations policies, er at the ILO. We believe we can demonstrate that these polici er policies comply with all the ILO conventions that we have ratified.

SA: Representative > report > state
RF: Simplification, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Michael Allason.

MR MICHAEL ALLASON>: Would my right honourable friend confirm ... that the former director of GCHQ, Sir Brian Tovey, stated that during the imposition of martial law ... in Warsaw and during the Soviet anva invasion of Afghanistan ... some ten thousand hours of cover were lost ... at GCHQ? And will he not confirm that is a perfectly good reason for the ban on external ... er interference by trade unions in the activities of GCHQ? And will he also ... assure the House that the existing trade assoc the staff association works perfectly well and there is no reason whatever for an external trade union to interfere in GCHQ's affairs? [283 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR DAVID HUNT>: Well, I can, I can confirm what my honourable friend says, namely that between 1979 and 1981, ten thousand working days were lost at GCHQ and we just cannot run the risk of anything like that ever happening again. ... So far as my honourable friend er is concerned he is right erm and we indeed suggested that the staff federation should be affiliated to the Council of Civil Service Trade Unions to enable staff who belong to the federation to gain access to the facilities available to unions affiliated to the CCSU. Sadly, sadly, the Civil Service Unions did not feel able to accept this proposal.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Anne Clwyd.

MRS ANNE CLWYD>: But isn't it er true according the reports in the Financial Times, that the Government at this moment is planning to withdraw Britain from the ILO, precisely because the ILO has censured Britain ... a censure that is normally a sanction that is normally applied to countries like Haiti and North Korea? <284> *Isn't it a fact that this Government is becoming isolated, not only in Europe but throughout the world for its anti-worker and its anti-union policies?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
 RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance]
 Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MR DAVID HUNT>: There is no truth that er ministers intend to withdraw from the ILO or to seek ... an opportunity to do so and despite TUC criticism, as I said earlier, we believe that our policies comply with all the ILO conventions which we've ratified ... <285> and *as my honourable friends have pointed out, our overriding objective is to ensure the maintenance of continuous operations at GCHQ which is vital to the protection of national security*. However ... the Prime Minister has made it clear that the Government is ready to discuss any further proposals that the uish union may wish to put forward that are consistent with our overriding objective of safeguarding national security. [284 R: Challenged hyperbole]

SA: Representative > report > state
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Graham Riddick.

MR GRAHAM RIDDICK>: [...] speak. <286> *Would my right honourable friend not agree that because of their irresponsible behaviour in disrupting GCHQ's vital work in the early 1980s the trade unions only have themselves to blame for this ban?* [285 R: Continuation of hyperbole: repetition]

SA: Directive > elicit > agree
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR DAVID HUNT>: I couldn't agree more with my honourable friend. It is very important indeed to ensure that the staff of GCHQ are not subject to potential conflicts of interest ... and as I said earlier the Prime Minister and I listened for some considerable time ... to the s to er to the points put forward by the trade unions to see whether or not that overriding er ... national objective could be maintained but we were not convinced, we were not convinced

that erm ... the trade unions could overcome those potential conflicts of interest and it behoves ill the party opposite ... to try and put a different gloss on the fact that we in this country thanks to our legislation, have put harmony in place of strife and [shouting] we are not prepared to allow the opposition to put that major achievement at risk. [286 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark + Continuation of figures: metaphors]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Raynsford.
 MR RAYNSFORD>: No ... number nine, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the number of jobs which have been lost in banking and financial services in London over the past four years.

PS000>: [...]

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Figures from the labour force survey showed that in the banking, finance, insurance and business services in greater London, the number in employment since 1989 has risen by seven thousand.

MR RAYNSFORD>: What message has the minister to give to the five hundred and five employees of Barclays Bank in London whose new year began with receipt of a redundancy notice ... at the very moment when the bank's new chief executive was having his pay doubled to seven hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds a year? What comment has the minister to make on this example of corporate ethics or does she, like the Prime Minister, believe it's no matter for her?

<287> MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: *What is the matter for the honourable gentleman is giving his constituents hope, what he appears completely unable to do.*

SA: Expressive > H criticism > insult
 FTA to H + face > insult through negative politeness: impersonalise H + hedge
 RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...]

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: You will ... the House will note, the House will note, Madam Speaker, that the phraseology of the honourable gentleman's original question was how many jobs have been lost. In fact, jobs had risen and

he didn't even have the grace to welcome that. Perhaps he would like
PS000>: Hear, hear.

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: to tell his constituents that with London's share of world trade in financial services is increasing and is now at twenty-seven percent ... that the financial services sector round the UK four point three billion, that those employees that he refers to are in fact in an industry which even if it is redistributing employment, it's nevertheless growing. Can I say to the honourable gentleman, why doesn't he give encouragement to Britain's performance in the financial services sector? Why don't the whole lot of them start encouraging things?

PS000>: [...] [287 R: Inaudible response]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Dr. Spink.

DR. SPINK>: Would my honourable friend, is my honourable friend aware that employment in London and the South East has actually risen by over two hundred in the ten years from March 1983? And, will she confirm that some of the hundred and fifty thousand places in the new apprenticeship scheme will be available in London? [287 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Yes, I have pleasure in confirming that and I also have pleasure in confirming ... that another good sign for young people, apart from the creation of modern apprenticeships, is also the way that the numbers waiting more than eight weeks for a YT place has now declined from over three thousand to just over three hundred. That there are now a large number of TECs in the country with no young people waiting, modern apprenticeships are going to help that process even further, and why aren't modern apprenticeships being welcomed? ... I take it that the honourable gentlemen are in fact cheering the Government, thank you very much.

PS000>: [...]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Tony Banks.

<288> MR TONY BANKS>: Is the, is the minister, *is the minister aware that Barclays have laid off or declared seven thousand redundancies, National Westminster has announced four thousand redundancies and yet you still have to wait ages in the queue at the bank?* Why is that?

SA: Directive > elicit > inform

RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Humour, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [laugh] Hear, hear. [288 R: Laughter]

MISS ANN WIDDECOMBE>: Perhaps the honourable member should do a competitiveness survey and go somewhere else for his queue. I don't know, but what I can tell the honourable gentleman is ... that even though there were losses in the banking industry for the last year ... there have been strongly offsetting rises in insurance and business services. It's generally good news in the financial sector. That is the message which the honourable gentleman might be telling both those in the queue and the cashiers. [288 R: Relevant next contribution: literal remark]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Sir David Congdon.

MR DAVID CONGDON>: Question number ten, Madam Speaker, ... number ten. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what evidence he has on non-wage labour costs in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Ten.

PS000>: David Congdon.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, er Madam Speaker, er non-wage costs never get into employees wage packets but do make it more expensive for employers to provide a job. On average for every one hundred pounds in wages an employer in Britain must pay ... twenty pounds extra, in Germany thirty pounds and in France and Italy forty pounds.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Congdon.

MR DAVID CONGDON>: Does my honourable friend agree that one of the reasons this country is so successful at attracting inward investment is because of those lower non-wage labour costs? Does he also agree that the imposition of the social chapter, which both parties opposite would like to force on this country, would not only destroy our competitive advantage, but more importantly would destroy jobs?

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: I entirely agree with er my honourable friend, er not only er is the lower non-wage cost a reason for inward

investment being attracted to Britain, but it's also why together with our general economic policy, why workers in Britain enjoy in real terms, some of the best take home-pay packets in Europe.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Alex Carlile.

MR ALEX CARLILE>: Given the favourable non-wage labour cost which the minister told us about a moment ago, <289> **how does he justify the enormous discrepancy in wages between England and Wales as an average and areas like South Wales and Northumberland** where average weekly earnings are up to sixty-five pounds less ... than the average? [Clarification via literal language]

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > inform

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action

FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]

Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

<290> ... **and will he explain to us why the Government is not tackling huge wage differentials in this country?**

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > inform

PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action

FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]

Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

<291> MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: **Well, I have to say I'm amazed at the honourable gentleman asking that question.** If he had his way, and we signed up for the social chapter, those extra costs would have to be met out of those pay packets and there'd be even less for people to take in wages, so the honourable gentleman shouldn't be complaining about low pay when he wants to add to the costs of employment along with the rest of his party. [289 & 290 R: Challenged hyperbole through continuation of hyperbole]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > reproach

FTA to H + face > reproach through indirection

RF: Express surprise, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Michael Bates.

MR MICHAEL BATES>: Does my honourable friend agree with Klaus Stratzburg who is a supervisor with Black & Decker in Lindburg, in Germany who when asked to comment as to why he felt that Black & Decker were closing their plant in Germany to move it to Spennymore in County Durham, said it's simple ... industry must be flexible, the social chapter isn't? [291 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, Madam Speaker, ... I ... I entirely agree with the sentiments which have been expressed by Black & Decker, and I have to say to members opposite that when companies like Mercedes are starting to source outside of Germany, with companies like Volkswagen are starting to look er outside Europe and Peugeot and others, alarm bells should be ringing for those members who are genuinely concerned about jobs, because there is no doubt that the social chapter is driving people out of work, and the longer that members opposite adhere to it er, then the ... the greater will be the ... er the possibility o of er people er in Europe er embracing policies which will make those countries in Europe less competitive and less able to provide employment.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: John Prescott.

MR JOHN PRESCOTT>: Can the minis, can the Minister of State in view of his many visits to America, say whether he agrees with the Secretary of State's earlier statement that American does not have a minimum wage legislation?

MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, I think er if the honourable gentleman checks the record he will find that my right honourable friend said that America did not have a national statutory minimum wage, <292> **but I'm most ... I'm most grateful to the honourable gentleman for reminding us of the international comparisons** because he will know that the country in Europe which has embraced his policy of a statutory minimum wage is Spain, and Spain has twice the level of unemployment of the European average and twice the level in this country.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
PIA: Expressive > thank
FTA to S – face > thanking through negative politeness: be indirect + impersonalise H
RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Anthony Coombs.

MR ANTHONY COOMBS>: In recognising the crucial importance of lower non-wage costs in Britain compared to Europe, is my honourable friend aware of the fact that Lemmerz, a German wheel maker has transferred all its heavy wheel making operations to my constituency for precisely that reason?

PS000>: [...]

MR ANTHONY COOMBS>: and also the carpet companies in my constituency are now going to Germany to buy up their now redundant carpet-making machinery precisely because German companies can't compete in the kind of regime that they are have imposed upon them? [292 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

<293> MR MICHAEL FORSYTH>: Er, I, *I'm most er grateful to my honourable friend ... for giving yet another example of how the social chapter has exported jobs out of the eleven into Britain.* That's good news for Britain as long as we ensure that we never ever sign up to the social chapter with its job destroying, er job destroying characteristics.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
PIA: Expressive > thank
FTA to S – face > thanking through negative politeness: be indirect + impersonalise H
RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Michael Clapham.

MR MICHAEL CLAPHAM>: Number eleven, Madam Speaker. To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many modern apprenticeships will be available in 1994-95; and in which industries they will be concentrated. [293 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR DAVID HUNT>: Madam Speaker, the full range of modern apprenticeships will be offered to sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds ... in September 1995 ... and there will be some prototypes.

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID HUNT>: starting at the er later this year.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: [...]

MR MICHAEL CLAPHAM>: [clears throat] I note the minister didn't give er the numbers of apprenticeships, and there's possibly a reason for that. The minister will be aware that in the last year of the Labour Government, there was a hundred and fifty thousand apprenticeships in manufacturing alone ... whilst in manufacturing in 1991 there was only fifty-one thousand apprenticeships. Clearly the minister's response is inefficient, it's, it's quite inadequate, and what is required is a much more positive stance from the minister. <294> *And can the minister tell us ... whether or not he will be, he will be giving the opportunity to mature entrants to the apprenticeship scheme so that people that have been thrown on the scrap heap over this last fifteen years will have an opportunity?* And can he tell us whether or not he's had discussions with British Coal enterprise ... to allow miners that have been made redundant to come into the new apprenticeship scheme so that they will have new skills which will help them to get new jobs?

IIA: SIA: Directive > elicit > inform
PIA: Directive > requestive > request for action
FTA to H – face > request through negative politeness: don't coerce: give options: be indirect + question + impersonalise H
RF: Interest intensification, Contrast of differences, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR DAVID HUNT>: The honourable gentleman knows that the new modern apprenticeship scheme that the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on the 13th of November, is of course designed to encourage more young people to train up to NVQ level three and to encourage even more young people to train to even higher levels. Of course, during the er ... during the course of this year we will be considering prototypes which will enable

those young people to reach that high level of qualification ... but he will be aware that under the national training and education target there are some of those targets which are directly related to the points that he has raised <295> *and the important priority for this Government is to ensure not only that we have young people training to an even higher level ... but through programmes like "Investors in People", that we encourage every member of the work force and those ... er who are primarily unemployed at the present time, to train to even higher levels of qualification.* [294 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole + literal paraphrase]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform
 PIA: Commissive > promise
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Questions to the Prime Minister ... er Mr the, the Reverend Martin Smyth.

REV. MARTIN SMYTH>: Number one, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February. [295 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

MR TONY NEWTON>: I've been asked to reply. My right honourable friend, the Prime Minister is in Moscow for a series of meetings ... including meetings with President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Reverend Martin Smith.

REV. MARTIN SMYTH>: Madam Speaker, has the ... Lord President of the Council noticed the response of ... Mr Reynolds in *Dail Eireann* when Miss Mary Harney asked what representations has he ... had been made to United States over Gerry Adams' visit? The response was that we do not get involved in trying i in ... to get foreign Administrations to ... try to tell them what decisions they should make. Would he ask his right honourable friend to press the Prime Minister to exercise the same restraint over the United Kingdom, particularly Northern Ireland?

MR TONY NEWTON>: Well, as the honourable gentleman will know, the issue over

visa was of course a decision for the US authorities, though our own advice as the House knows er was clear. <296> *So far as the main thrust of the honourable gentleman's question is concerned, er he will know that we believe it to be right ... and indeed in the interests of all the people in Northern Ireland that the British and Irish Government should work closely together.* As he knows, the talks process brings together the two Governments and the main constitutional parties in working together to find an accommodation, and I think that is right.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state
 PIA: Directive > advisive > advise, recommend
 RF: Simplification, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Stephen Day.

<297> MR STEPHEN DAY>: Er *would my right honourable friend ... agree with me that the appearance of Gerry Adams on the ... "Walden" programme proved beyond any doubt that whatever Sinn Fein say ... Sinn Fein have rejected the er Downing Street declaration?* Would he not join me in urging Sinn Fein to reconsider their position on this? ... And would he also agree with me and confirm to this House that this Government will never do what Mr Adams requests and that is become a persuader of the people of Northern Ireland to join a united Ireland? And will he, will he recognise from me that many on these benches remain committed to the union of Northern Ireland and Great Britain? [296 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift through continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Directive > elicit > agree
 RF: Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MR TONY NEWTON>: My, my honourable friend will know that my right honourable friend has me on many occasions made clear the British Government's position in relation to the question of persuasion. As to the rest of his question, then, of course, I and <298> *I suspect and perhaps I know that everybody in the House would urge Sinn Fein er to consider very seriously a positive response to the joint*

declaration. [297 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole: paraphrase]

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > conjecture, guess

PIA: Representative > report > state

RF: Simplification, Emphasis

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mrs Margaret Beckett.

PS000>: [...]

<299> MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: *As ministers are still proclaiming that "back to basics" is the lodestar guiding Government policy while **the Prime Minister's dodging all questions about it.** Doesn't this show yet again that "back to basics" is making this Government a laughing stock? [298 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift through continuation of hyperbole]*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Expressive > H criticism > reproach

FTA to H + face > reproach through indirection

RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative

M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: My er ... the right hon, the right honourable lady I'm er ... I don't know whether I'm sorry to say or not, it's a bit out of date, my right honourable friend has just today ... given a clear explanation of the "back to basics" theme.

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: And he has er ... and he has once again ... once again made it clear, he has once again made it clear that that is particularly important in such areas as standards in education, law and order and the provision of public services.

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: And it applies also to the range of our increasingly successful economic and business policies. [299 R: Challenged hyperbole]

PS000>: [...]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mrs Beckett.

MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: I notice that yet again the Lord President's list and

presumably the Prime Minister's ... doesn't include the standard of telling the truth about tax.

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: Why is the Government ... why is the Government ... refusing to come clean ... about the size of the further tax increases that British families will face in 1995?

MR TONY NEWTON>: Madam Speaker, what er ... I and my right honourable friend will go on emphasising is the contribution which our tax policies are making to the economic strength and the improved standards of living of this country.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mrs Beckett.

MRS MARGARET BECKETT>: But as the Lord President must be aware ... my honourable friend, the Shadow Chief Secretary, has questions tabled to this Government about the extra taxes people will pay in 1995 to which an answer is not being provided. The government must have the figures, we know the Government has the figures and the people of Britain will have to pay that extra tax, so why haven't they got the guts to tell them how much they'll have to pay?

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: My right honourable and honourable friends have answered many questions and will continue to answer the questions ... that the honourable, the right honourable lady's friends ask. But what we want to know from the right honourable lady ... what we want to know from the right honourable lady is when they will come clean about the public spending policies that will put taxes in this country up.

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Michael Shersby.

MR MICHAEL SHERSBY>: Is my ... is my right honourable friend aware that yesterday the chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue told the Private Accounts Committee that some five hundred and fifty million pounds of unclaimed tax still remains to be picked up by taxpayers who've been affected by the er ... the change in the tax regime in the last couple of years where for example women are now assessed independently? Is he [...] further aware ... that that amounts to about eight hundred and eighty thousand pounds per parliamentary

constituency? Will the government do everything possible to ensure that the Inland Revenue makes this widely known to every taxpayer in the country?

<300> MR TONY NEWTON>: The, ***the Government, and I'm sure that er the Inland Revenue are always anxious to make sure that taxpayers are properly informed of their rights er and receive their correct entitlement***, and I have no doubt that every effort will be made to achieve what my honourable friend seeks.

SA: Representative > report > state
RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: positive
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Ieuan Wyn Jones.

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: Number two, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February. [300 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer the honourable gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Wyn Jones.

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the ... real value of pensions has gone down for many years now following the break.

PS000>: [...]

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: Following the break ... following the break ... following the break with the link with earnings <301> ***and the fact that value of pensions in the UK is out of line with virtually every other comparable European country*** ... and in view of the fact, and in view of the fact that the

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform
PIA: Expressive > H criticism > accuse, blame
FTA to H + face > accusation through indirection
RF: Simplification, Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: [...] [301 R: Inaudible response]

MR IEUAN WYN JONES>: compensation package ... for VAT for pensioners will not compensate them in full as was promised, ...

<302> ***and in view of the fact that we've had extremely cold weather for the last week, will the Government now introduce a special heating allowance for pensions?***

SA: Representative > report > recount
RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance]
Evaluation: negative
M: Argumentation-exposition via Description

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: Madam Speaker, I r ... the er honourable gentleman must have a rather er curious source for his statistics, because what has actually happened is not merely that the Government have protected the real value of the state retirement pension but the combination of our policies both in social security, in the pensions field and in the economic world have led to a position in which pensioners average real incomes have risen more than forty percent since this Government took office. [301 R: Challenged hyperbole] [302. R: Ignored hyperbole]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Lady Olga Maitland.

LADY OLGA MAITLAND>: Number three, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February.

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer my honourable friends to the reply I gave some moments ago.

LADY OLGA MAITLAND>: [...] Honourable friends, join me in condemning the non-sensible advice given by Liberty to truancy schoolchildren that they should defy police, <303> ***and isn't it absolutely typical that the party opposite tend to support them?***

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
RF: Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: I would certainly join my honourable friend in condemning the advice which has been reported in the ... paper today. Er the Government's efforts to improve the campaign against truancy and the to succeed in getting errant pupils back to school which is where they should be, I believe is and should be widely supported. <304> ***For Liberty to be***

opposing it in the way that they are shows that they don't remotely understand the best interests of our children or our schools. [303 R: Relevant next contribution: continuation of hyperbole]

SA: Representative > assessment > - assessing > insult (NPP)
 RF: Express surprise, Emphasis, [Enhance] Evaluation: negative
 M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Jamieson.
 MR JAMIESON>: Er, would the Leader of the House then express his concern ... that at the end of the March when the Tory Party conference comes to Plymouth, there's a hundred and thirty-five children are going to miss a day and a half of their schooling because of that conference? [304 R: Challenged hyperbole]

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: I, I do not suppose they will be playing truant.

PS000>: [...]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr John Wittingdale.

MR JOHN WITTINGDALE>: Number four, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February.

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer my honourable friend to the reply I gave some moments ago.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Wittingdale.

MR JOHN WITTINGDALE>: Has my right honourable friend had time to study the recent annual survey of grant-maintained schools which shows that since becoming grant-maintained, schools have been able to recruit more teachers, improve their results and offer better facilities for their pupils? <305> ***Does he not therefore find it extraordinary that the Labour and Liberal parties remain committed to the abolition of grant-maintained schools***

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
 RF: Express surprise, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

<306> ... ***and that in local government they are waging a relentless campaign of hostility***

against GM schools, as typified by the behaviour of Essex County Council?

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
 RF: Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
 M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: My honourable friend is certainly right that the latest survey confirms the benefit of grant-maintained status. Those schools are achieving improved academic results, better staying-on rates and lower pupil-teacher ratios. They are popular with parents and it's no surprise that well over a thousand schools have voted in favour of such status. As to my honourable friend's confi concerns about Essex, and of course his constituency ... borders mine, he will be as pleased as I, to know that in Essex there are now sixty-three secondary and fifty-five primary schools operating with grant-maintained status. That represents sixty percent of secondary schools and seventeen percent of primary schools, and despite the er endeavour to which he refers of Essex county council, I can tell him that the latest school to decide to hold a ballot on such status is Notley High School, Braintree. [305 & 306 R: Relevant next contribution: literal paraphrase]

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Bryan Davies.

MR BRYAN DAVIES>: Number six, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February.

PS000>: [...]

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer the honourable gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Bryan Davies.
 <307> MR BRYAN DAVIES>: ***Madam Speaker, when my ... constituents complain about high fuel bills and watch the bosses of privatised utilities coining money ... am I to say to them that as far as the Prime Me Minister is concerned it's nothing to do with him?***

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > inform
 PIA: Expressive > H criticism > accuse, blame
 FTA to H + face > accusation through indirection

RF: Contrast of differences, Evaluation:
negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MR TONY NEWTON>: The er honourable gentleman's question appears to be founded on a rather ... curious premise. Er what has ... what has happened ... what has happened to electricity prices is that have fallen six percent in real terms over the last two financial years and if he wants to know another interesting statistics I can tell him that in 1979 the electricity companies, then nationalised, lost the equivalent in today's prices of four hundred and sixty-five million pounds. In 1992-93, they paid four hundred and twenty million pounds to the Exchequer in corporation tax. [307 R: Challenged hyperbole]

PS000>: Hear, hear.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr John Butcher.

MR JOHN BUTCHER>: Would my right, would my right honourable friend agree that the use of American ... and French and British planes ... to bomb the hills around Sarajevo may not necessarily produce lasting peace in Bosnia? And would he further agree that if the idea is to achieve a demilitarised zone, policed effectively around Sarajevo then the best chances of so doing are by ensuring that Russian soldier ... in United Nations uniforms, in integrated units with British and French forces so help in the policing of that zone?

MR TONY NEWTON>: Mada Madam Speaker, my honourable friend knows well that the purpose er of what has been said and what is being considered about air strikes er is to is, is to bring about er the er cessation of the sort of bombardment that we have seen in Sarajevo, and I think everybody will want to see that effort successfully er completed.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr George Foulkes.

MR GEORGE FOULKES>: Number seven, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February.

PS000>: Hear, hear

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer the honourable gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: [...]

MR GEORGE FOULKES>: Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Government is announcing today by means of written answer, an increase of fifty pence in the prescription charges? Why is there no oral statement in this House? Is it, is it because having taxed the disabled and taxed the divorce the Government are aff afraid to face to the music and make an announcement that they are increasing tax on the sick?

MR TONY NEWTON>: It er, first of all, I can confirm that an announcement is being made today, ... er secondly, ... secondly ... secondly, I can confirm that it is not usual for such announcements to be made by way of oral statement. Thirdly, I can tell him that eighty percent of prescribed items are now free of charge compared with sixty percent in 1979. <308> *Fourthly, fourthly, I can tell him that prescription charges will raise nearly three hundred million pounds in the forthcoming year.* Fifthly, I can tell him that that will pay for over two hundred thousand cataracts operations ... or over seventy thousand hip operations ... and sixthly, I will ask him to tell me where he would find the money.

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > state

PIA: Commissive > guarantee

RF: Simplification

M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Nigel Evans.

MR NIGEL EVANS>: Number eight, Madam Speaker. To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 15th February. [308 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

MR TONY NEWTON>: I refer my honourable friend to the reply I gave some moments ago.

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Mr Evans.

MR NIGEL EVANS>: Has my right honourable friend had an opportunity to see the report from three Is, Investors in Industry, in which they have surveyed five hundred of the companies in which they invest? And the confidence factor of those businesses is higher now than it's ever been since they started the surveys in 1988. Isn't this further evidence that this Government has the right policies for British business and the British people?

MR TONY NEWTON>: My honourable friend is absolutely right. This survey shows that firms

in both the North and South of the country report greater improvement than in the previous survey and have become more optimistic about their own prospects. <309> *The fact is that the whole of British business in now increasingly confident about the economy and about this Government's policies for business.*

IIA: SIA: Representative > report > confirm
PIA: Representative > assessment > self-commendation > praise
FTA to S – face > self-commendation through indirection
RF: Simplification, Emphasis, [Enhance]
Evaluation: positive
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Time's up. Mr Blunkett. [309 R: Ignored hyperbole + topic shift]

PS000>: [...]

MR DAVID BLUNKETT (SHEFFIELD, BRIGHTSIDE)>: Point of order, Madam Speaker, I seek your ruling on the fact that the Secretary of State for Health ... has declined to make a statement to the House on the increase of fifty pence in prescription charges, ... but that the ... the Leader of the House effectively made a statement in Prime Minister's questions on the same issue, misleading the House into believing ... that the Government were actually applying this money to patient care rather than to meeting their own political incompetence. <310> *Isn't it a disgrace, Madam Speaker, that the government should duck the opportunity to make a clear statement ... on a sixty, on an increase which is the sixteenth since they made the promise in 1979 that they would not increase prescription charges?*

SA: Directive > elicit > confirm
RF: Interest intensification, Express surprise, Evaluation: negative, Emphasis
M: Argumentation-exposition

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: Ministers of course always determine for themselves ... whether they answer by means of a written question or whether they come to the Dispatch Box and make a statement. This is something over which I, I as speaker, have no control whatsoever. Yes, Mrs O'Mahon, Mrs Mahon. [310 R: Challenged hyperbole]

MRS ALICE MAHON (HALIFAX)>: Er Madam Speaker, I'm seriously concerned about ... a minister misleading the House, and I seek your general guidance ... on a matter. Last night on the "World in Action" programme the minister for Health, the member for Peterborough, categorically denied that there was no two tier system and he said ... I have no evidence of a two tier system developing in the NHS. The Minister has made the same statement to the House. The programme went on to produce evidence that a two-tier system exists. It showed, for example, that radiotherapy patients were treated, not on the basis of need, but on the ability to pay through GP fundholding. Has the Minister said whether he intends to make a statement to the House to acknowledge that the two-tier system exists and to admit that he has misled the House?

MRS BETTY BOOTHROYD>: The honourable Lady would not expect me to comment on something that was on television last night and which I did not even see. It is up to the Minister to decide whether he wishes to come to the House to make a statement. It is not a point of order for me.

“Cómo hacer una montaña de un grano de arena”: un estudio de la hipérbole en la interacción desde el marco de la pragmática, el análisis conversacional y la lingüística de corpus

1. Introducción

El lenguaje figurado ha sido, desde antiguo, ampliamente estudiado en el marco de la retórica, aunque la retórica contemporánea ha tendido más bien a restar importancia a las figuras y a relegar su estudio al dominio de la crítica literaria. Recientemente, en los últimos veinte años, el lenguaje figurado parece haber despertado un nuevo interés en otras disciplinas. Sin embargo, dentro del amplio repertorio de figuras retóricas existentes, metáfora e ironía verbal han suscitado el mayor interés. Tanto es así que la mayoría de los investigadores se han centrado casi exclusivamente en ellas. Lógicamente, como resultado del estudio intensivo de dichos tropos, otras figuras retóricas han sido relativamente ignoradas o relegadas a un segundo plano. Éste es precisamente el caso de la hipérbole o exageración, objeto de estudio de la presente tesis.

Esta forma no literal que denota exceso ha sido curiosamente descuidada por los estudiosos del lenguaje a pesar de que se trata de una característica muy común del habla cotidiana. Su elección entre la amplia gama de figuras o tropos está motivada por la escasez de estudios publicados al respecto, a pesar de su frecuencia de uso, puesto que se ha demostrado que después de la metáfora, la exageración es con mucho la figura retórica más común (Kreuz *et al.* 1996). No obstante, a pesar de su ubicuidad, muy poco se conoce acerca de este tropo. La mayor parte de los estudios publicados al respecto se han limitado a comparar la frecuencia y el uso que de este tropo se hace en distintas culturas (Prothro 1970, Cohen 1987, Edelman *et al.* 1989). El resto de estudios se encuentran inmersos en teorías del humor o en tratados sobre la ironía verbal. Asimismo, el interés por la hipérbole se encuentra en diversos análisis comparativos sobre funcionamiento pragmático, donde se contrasta el grado o extensión con que distintas figuras retóricas asumen una misma función o fin discursivo.

Por otra parte, cabe mencionar que dentro de las teorías del lenguaje figurado no todos los aspectos de la figuralidad han despertado el mismo interés entre los investigadores.

Aunque el lenguaje figurado ha sido objeto de estudio de muy diversas disciplinas (lingüística, filosofía del lenguaje, retórica, crítica literaria, psicología cognitiva, etc.), la mayor parte de estos estudios, salvo raras excepciones, se ha limitado a explicar el proceso de comprensión de las figuras retóricas, dada su naturaleza de carácter no literal. En comparación y como consecuencia del estudio intensivo de los mecanismos cognitivos en la recepción de las figuras, su proceso de producción ha sido ignorado o marginado. Por este motivo, actualmente una de las mayores limitaciones en las teorías del lenguaje figurado es precisamente la producción y el uso de las figuras retóricas.

Aunque la gran mayoría de estudios se centran, casi exclusivamente, en la comprensión, el proceso de producción de las figuras nos parece de igual o mayor importancia, dado que al examinar las funciones que las figuras asumen en el discurso se podría llegar a explicar la existencia del lenguaje figurado en la comunicación humana. Sólo en los últimos quince años ha empezado a interesarse la psicología cognitiva por el funcionamiento pragmático de los tropos, pero aunque la literatura acerca de los fines discursivos que desempeña la ironía verbal y la metáfora es amplia, el estudio de otras expresiones indirectas o figuradas como la hipérbole ha sido relegado a un segundo plano. En este sentido, son notables excepciones, por ejemplo, los trabajos de Roberts y Kreuz (1994) o Colston y O'Brien (2000a, 2000b).

Asimismo, aunque el proceso de recepción, en términos de comprensión de las figuras retóricas, ha sido ampliamente estudiado, escasa atención se le ha prestado a las reacciones verbales del oyente a dichas figuras y a su colaboración en la construcción conjunta de un marco figurado. Ésta es un área de investigación de reciente aparición y la escasa literatura que existe al respecto se centra principalmente en la metáfora y la ironía verbal. La única excepción es el estudio publicado por McCarthy y Carter (2004) donde se enfatiza la idea de que la dimensión interactiva de la hipérbole es un aspecto indispensable para la comprensión de esta forma no litera, dado que el proceso actúa en dos direcciones.

2. Antecedentes

Dentro de la retórica, se ha hecho especial hincapié en definir, ilustrar y clasificar la hipérbole con relación a otras formas del lenguaje figurado. Las definiciones que de este tropo encontramos generalmente responden a la etimología de los términos griego y latino,

que no es otra que la designación en tales lenguas de los conceptos de exceso y exageración. Así, Herrera (1978; citado en Mayoral 1994: 234) observa: “los romanos le dieron por nombre Superlación o exceso o crecimiento, que sobrepuja la verdad por causa de acrecentar o disminuir alguna cosa”. Otros retóricos han subrayado la doble naturaleza, amplificadora o atenuante (Smith 1657, Fontanier 1830, Dumarsais 1988), e incluso un elemento de cuantificación como característica definitoria de la exageración (Ravazzoli 1978). Entre los retóricos, Mayoral (1994) merece especial atención por haber subrayado la doble dimensión, por un lado cuantitativa (engrandecedora o empequeñecedora), y por otro, cualitativa (laudatoria o vituperadora) de la hipérbole.

En términos de clasificación, esta estrategia figura comúnmente entre los fenómenos de transferencia del significado, en particular, dentro de las anomalías de la relación signo-referente. Aunque tradicionalmente se ha considerado como tropo dentro de las figuras de palabra, esta clasificación ha sido cuestionada en más de una ocasión porque, como arguye Mayoral (1994: 243), “sus formas de realización discursiva trascienden con frecuencia los límites de la unidad palabra, circunstancia que queda reflejada en el doble tratamiento que se le suele asignar, ya como tropo de palabra, ya como tropo de pensamiento”.

Entre los méritos de la retórica moderna cabe destacar el hecho de haber subrayado una peculiaridad de la hipérbole que cuestiona la tendencia clásica de afrontar el estudio de las varias figuras en “elegantes” taxonomías. Se trata de la naturaleza compuesta del tropo, en cuanto figura que a menudo se combina con otras formas indirectas o no literales, por ejemplo, metáfora, ironía, símil, metonimia, antonomasia, etc.

Respecto a los trabajos más recientes, llama precisamente la atención la escasez de estudios publicados al respecto, a pesar de que Kreuz *et al.* (1996) han demostrado que después de la metáfora, la exageración es con mucho la figura retórica más común. Parece que desde otras disciplinas la hipérbole se ha considerado como una figura clásica cuyo estudio pertenece única y exclusivamente a la retórica. De ahí que apenas se le haya concedido importancia en otros ámbitos de estudio. Los estudios existentes se hallan mayoritariamente circunscritos a teorías sobre la ironía verbal o tratados sobre el humor.

En lingüística, se ha estudiado el fenómeno de la exageración como parte del proceso de intensificación gramatical. En este sentido, Bolinger (1972) ha subrayado que la magnitud es la categoría que mayoritariamente se exagera, pero no la única. Asimismo, Bolinger (1972) destaca, junto con Malcev (1964) y Spitzbardt (1965), por ofrecer una clasificación

semántica de los intensificadores, muchos de los cuales son hiperbólicos. También en lingüística se ha hecho especial hincapié en explicar los diversos cambios semánticos producidos como consecuencia de esta figura. “La hipérbole [...] engloba bastantes modificaciones del significado de las palabras. El proceso lleva consigo, generalmente, un empobrecimiento gradual del valor o énfasis original de muchos vocablos” (Fernández 1993: 540). Asimismo, las distintas formas lingüísticas que dicha figura puede asumir han despertado el interés de muchos investigadores en esta disciplina (Spitzbardt 1963, Bolinger 1972, Norrick 1982, McCarthy y Carter 2004).

La gran mayoría de estudios en torno a la hipérbole se han concentrado en contrastar el uso que de este tropo se hace en diversas culturas (Spitzbardt 1963, Cohen 1987, Hübler 1983, Edelman *et al.* 1989). Asimismo, existen estudios, aunque no han sido verificados empíricamente, sobre el uso diferencial que de este tropo hacen hombres y mujeres, y que típicamente atribuyen el acto hiperbólico al lenguaje femenino (Jespersen 1922, Lakoff 1975).

De especial relevancia es el enfoque pragmático, dado que la hipérbole no puede ser estudiada en oraciones aisladas o descontextualizadas. Entre los enfoques pragmáticos destaca la filosofía del lenguaje, donde la hipérbole constituye una desviación del principio cooperativo de Grice (1975), al violar la primera máxima de calidad, a saber, no digas aquello que crees falso, y por tanto, representa un fenómeno inferencial porque urge al oyente a buscar una implicatura conversacional que va más allá de la interpretación literal de las palabras del hablante. También la teoría de la cortesía participa de este enfoque pragmático. En este marco destaca el modelo de cortesía lingüística propuesto por Brown y Levinson (1987), donde la hipérbole figura como estrategia de cortesía positiva para crear un marco de solidaridad o afiliación entre los participantes, así como estrategia de cortesía “off-record”, para realizar actos de habla que podrían dañar la imagen de alguno de los interlocutores en la interacción pero sin que quede constancia de ello.

Durante los últimos veinte años la psicolingüística se ha centrado en los procesos cognitivos inherentes a la comprensión del lenguaje figurado, aunque sin descartar completamente el proceso de producción de las figuras en términos de funciones pragmáticas. Uno de los conceptos de mayor relevancia en lingüística cognitiva es la noción de “contraste”, definida como la incongruencia o discrepancia entre el sentido semántico de una aserción y su referente situacional. El contraste en el caso de la hipérbole

viene dado porque la hipérbole exagera la realidad (Colston y O'Brien 2000a, 2000b). En esta misma línea, se han publicado también estudios sobre el contraste entre lo que se espera que suceda y lo que realmente sucede que hipérbole, lítote e ironía presuponen (Sperber y Wilson 1981, Jorgensen *et al.* 1984, Gibbs 1986, Kreuz y Glucksberg 1989, Colston, 1997b, Colston y Keller 1998).

Respecto al funcionamiento pragmático del tropo, cabe destacar que la literatura es escasa y los estudios existentes se han limitado a enumerar, sin profundizar, ni ejemplificar, los distintos fines discursivos que esta figura puede asumir en el discurso. En la antigüedad y durante la Edad Media, la retórica es sinónimo de persuasión y argumentación; es el arte de convencer mediante el lenguaje, y por tanto, las distintas figuras retóricas adquieren un valor argumentativo. El Renacimiento, en cambio, traería consigo un cambio del canon de la argumentación al canon de la invención. Durante este periodo el lenguaje figurado adquiriría una gran importancia y la retórica se vería restringida a la Elocutio, el uso artístico del lenguaje (Levin 1982: 114). Desde entonces, tradicionalmente se le ha atribuido a esta figura una función puramente estética u ornamental. Sin embargo, la mayor parte de los estudios sobre el funcionamiento pragmático del tropo los encontramos en el marco de la psicolingüística e inmersos en tratados sobre la lítote y la ironía, entre otras formas no literales, con el fin de contrastar la magnitud o el grado con que las distintas figuras retóricas desempeñan las mismas funciones (Roberts y Kreuz 1994, Colston y Keller 1998, Colston y O'Brien 2000a, 2000b). Entre los distintos fines discursivos atribuidos a la exageración se encuentran los estéticos, cómicos y persuasivos, además de considerarse un mecanismo para evaluar, enfatizar, expresar sorpresa, clarificar, proteger la imagen del hablante, atraer la atención del oyente y conferir credibilidad a las palabras del emisor.

Finalmente, el estudio más reciente y más influyente en nuestra investigación es el publicado por McCarthy y Carter (2004): “‘There’s millions of them’: Hyperbole in everyday conversation”. Este trabajo merece especial atención por analizar uno de los aspectos más frecuentemente olvidados del tropo: su dimensión interactiva como acto de colaboración entre hablante y oyente. Asimismo, destaca por calcular el grado de hiperbolicidad de distintas expresiones y enfatizar la necesidad de estudiar este fenómeno dentro del marco del análisis conversacional. Es también uno de los pocos trabajos

centrado única y exclusivamente en la exageración y en su uso en el discurso oral. El material analizado se compone de conversaciones reales tomadas del corpus CANCODE.

3. Objetivos, descripción del corpus y metodología

En lugar de examinar el proceso de comprensión, la presente investigación se centra en la producción y el uso de la hipérbole, dado que estos ámbitos de estudio han sido ampliamente ignorados en la literatura sobre el tema. Subyace a esta investigación un intento de ofrecer un marco general para la descripción y comprensión de la hipérbole en la interacción. Como objetivo principal destaca el análisis de las distintas formas en que los hablantes utilizan esta figura en la conversación cotidiana, principalmente desde el punto de vista de la producción del tropo, pero sin descartar totalmente el proceso de recepción, dado que se hace especial hincapié en la naturaleza interactiva de los mecanismos de exageración. Dicho fin se materializa con mayor concreción en los objetivos que a continuación se detallan.

Objetivo 1. Ofrecer una definición adecuada de la noción de hipérbole que nos ayude a diferenciar claramente la exageración de figuras retóricas afines como son la ironía verbal o la lítote. Enumerar los criterios necesarios para la identificación y denominación de la exageración en el discurso de tal forma que nos permitan excluir aquellos usos literales o no hiperbólicos de las expresiones.

Objetivo 2. Establecer una tipología de elementos hiperbólicos de acuerdo con las siguientes variables: campo semántico, categoría gramatical, extremo de la escala e interacción con otras figuras retóricas.

Objetivo 3. Explorar el menospreciado proceso de producción de la hipérbole, tanto en términos de uso (géneros y formas textuales) así como de funciones (retóricas y actos de habla). De esta forma, nos hacemos eco de la idea de que el estudio de los procesos cognitivos del tropo se debe completar con el análisis de la producción del mismo.

Objetivo 4. Examinar la naturaleza interactiva del tropo, como actividad conjunta entre hablante y oyente, al analizar las respuestas verbales y demás contribuciones del oyente al acto hiperbólico del hablante.

Estos objetivos se corresponden con las preguntas a las que el presente estudio pretende dar respuesta y que a continuación se enumeran.

1. ¿Qué es la hipérbole? ¿Cómo podemos reconocer e identificar esta figura? ¿Qué tipo de indicios pueden ayudarnos a diferenciar los usos exagerados de las expresiones de aquellos que son literales?
2. ¿En que categorías gramaticales se materializa la hipérbole, y cuál es más productiva? ¿Se utiliza este tropo principalmente para ampliar o atenuar? ¿En qué campos semánticos se puede clasificar y cuál es más comúnmente exagerado? ¿Es la hipérbole una estrategia productiva en la creación de otras figuras retóricas?
3. ¿Qué tipos de actos de habla están sujetos a la exageración, y en cuál de ellos predomina? ¿Por qué ciertos tipos de acto de habla hiperbólicos se realizan de forma indirecta?
4. ¿Qué funciones retóricas asume la hipérbole en el discurso, y cuál es más frecuente? ¿Por qué los hablantes a veces prefieren expresarse de forma indirecta o exagerada en lugar de utilizar el lenguaje literal? ¿Qué tipo de relación se establece entre las expresiones literales y exageradas contiguas?
5. ¿Qué tipos de género oral y forma textual hacen uso de la hipérbole, y en cuál es dicha figura más recurrente? ¿Qué tipo de fin discursivo, uso del lenguaje y relación entre participantes presenta una mayor tendencia a la exageración?
6. ¿Cómo reaccionan normalmente los oyentes a la exageración del hablante, y qué tipo de respuesta predomina? ¿Por qué es tan común encontrar exageraciones en las narraciones?

El corpus examinado se compone de conversaciones reales extraídas del *British National Corpus*. El BNC es una colección de textos orales y escritos en inglés británico contemporáneo recogidos en formato electrónico y con una extensión aproximada de 100 millones de palabras, de las que un 10% son transcripciones de textos orales.

La elección del discurso oral como objeto de estudio responde a la escasez de estudios publicados en torno a la hipérbole en el habla cotidiana. La mayoría de las investigaciones se han centrado en el lenguaje escrito, especialmente en el estudio de los clásicos literarios, o hacen uso de textos ficticios o irreales. Hasta la fecha sólo existen dos estudios de la hipérbole en el habla: McCarthy y Carter (2004) y Sell *et al.* (1997). Éste último examina el uso que hacen los padres de diversas figuras retóricas en interacciones con niños de preescolar. Al estudiar la exageración en el discurso oral se pretende también demostrar que aunque la hipérbole ha sido tradicionalmente relegada al ámbito de la crítica literaria,

no está en absoluto confinada al texto literario. Antes bien, se trata de una característica muy común del habla cotidiana. Sorprendentemente, la gran mayoría de personas todavía considera la hipérbole como una técnica literaria u ornamental exclusivamente. Rara vez, se percatan de que hacemos un uso constante de dicha figura en la vida cotidiana.

En total el corpus analizado asciende a unas 52.000 palabras. Los dieciocho textos seleccionados al azar provienen del componente oral del BNC. Se analizó la totalidad de las interacciones en búsqueda de hipérbolos, dado que una de las mayores limitaciones de los estudios basados en oraciones aisladas o descontextualizadas es que ignoran la ecología en que encontramos y usamos el lenguaje figurado (Katz 1996: 2). Cinco son los contextos de uso en los que dicho componente oral está organizado y a los que pertenecen los diversos textos analizados: educativo o informativo, laboral, institucional, ocio e informal, siendo de 10.000 palabras el límite de extensión establecido por ámbito.

La metodología adoptada combina las aportaciones de la lingüística de corpus con los métodos del enfoque pragmático y el análisis conversacional. De esta forma, nos hacemos eco de la propuesta de McCarthy y Carter (2002: 37): “quantitative and qualitative analyses should complement each other”. El uso de un corpus garantiza la autenticidad de los textos y nos permite tener acceso al contexto, a una amplia variedad de géneros, etc. De especial relevancia es el enfoque pragmático, dado que la hipérbole no puede estudiarse fuera de contexto. Es un tropo referencial y como tal no es posible identificarlo sin el recurso a la referencia (Ravazzoli 1978: 74). El contexto juega un papel crucial no sólo a la hora de determinar si debemos interpretar una aseveración de forma literal o figurada, sino que además nos permite medir el grado de figuralidad o exageración de la expresión. Asimismo, es necesario atender a las restricciones de disposición, secuencia y toma de turnos del análisis conversacional si se quiere dar buena cuenta de la naturaleza interactiva y compleja del tropo.

4. Análisis, resultados y conclusión

Como punto de partida, en el capítulo cuatro, una vez revisado el estado de la cuestión, se ofrece una definición y caracterización del concepto de hipérbole. El fenómeno se puede definir brevemente en los siguientes términos: la hipérbole es una figura por la cual la cantidad o calidad de un hecho objetivo es, ya sea de forma premeditada o involuntaria,

subjetivamente aumentada o rebajada en diversos grados pero siempre con algún tipo de exceso en una oración que los oyentes normalmente no interpretan literalmente o perciben como falsa. Entre los objetivos destaca también la necesidad de diferenciar esta figura de tropos afines, tales como la ironía verbal o la lítote, dado que la noción de contraste es una característica definitoria de la hipérbole, pero no es exclusiva del tropo. Cada una de estas tres figuras implica un contraste entre aserción y realidad. La principal diferencia radica en que la exageración, al igual que la lítote, establece un contraste de magnitud, mientras que la ironía produce un contraste de tipo entre aserción y realidad. A su vez, para distinguir entre hipérbole y lítote hay que determinar primero si el exceso afecta a la proposición o al referente situacional. La hipérbole describe situaciones moderadas de forma extrema, mientras que la lítote describe hechos reales extremos con moderación. Esta distinción nos parece importante, dado que a menudo se equiparan erróneamente lítote y meiosis.

En el cuarto capítulo también son objeto de estudio los criterios de identificación del tropo, de tal forma que aquellos usos literales de las expresiones puedan ser excluidos. En la literatura existente, la fase de identificación ha sido totalmente ignorada o restringida a la discrepancia entre aserción y realidad, lo cual presupone tener conocimiento del referente situacional. Sin embargo, cuando dicho referente no viene especificado en el texto o sólo se puede identificar de forma aproximada, si el contexto es pobre o el test de la imposibilidad material no se aplica es necesario hacer uso de otros criterios que nos permitan identificar esta figura en un corpus como el BNC. Entre los criterios que orientan al oyente hacia una lectura hiperbólica de las expresiones se encuentran la lista de indicios que McCarthy y Carter (2004: 162-3) proponen: disyunción con el contexto, aceptación de la discrepancia entre aserción y realidad, cambios de alineación, creación conjunta de mundos imposibles, aceptación y continuación por parte del oyente, intensificación y formulaciones extremas, interpretación relevante y apoyo sintáctico para subrayar la amplificación. Otros indicios que alertan de la presencia de una exageración en el discurso son el uso de etiquetas del tipo “si se me permite exagerar”, mitigadores, interjecciones y exclamaciones.

Una vez identificados los 343 elementos hiperbólicos del corpus analizado, se ofrece una tipología de acuerdo con las siguientes variables: categoría gramatical (taxonomía léxico-gramatical), campo semántico (clasificación semántico-etimológica), extremo de la escala (auxesis o meiosis) y tipo de naturaleza (simple o compleja), dependiendo de si

existe o no interacción alguna con otras figuras retóricas. La división trazada entre auxesis y meiosis revela que con mucho la tendencia más generalizada es la de aumentar la realidad al exagerar. Esto explica que tradicionalmente se haya asociado al engrandecimiento, y rara vez al aminoramiento, el uso de la exageración. En cuanto a la clasificación léxico-gramatical, cabe destacar que aunque la hipérbole puede manifestarse en una amplia gama de formas lingüísticas, los recursos son mayoritariamente léxicos. La tipología semántico-etimológica, a su vez, reveló la existencia de dos grupos bien definidos: la dimensión cuantitativa y la cualitativa. Esta última presenta una evaluación subjetiva de un hecho objetivo por parte del emisor. Por contra, la esfera cuantitativa, mucho más numerosa en nuestro corpus, aumenta o disminuye una cantidad o magnitud en exceso. Dentro de este marco, llama la atención la abundante presencia de elementos pertenecientes al campo semántico de la pureza, donde la exageración se expresa en términos de todo o nada. Esto sugiere una tendencia al uso de términos absolutos, que no admiten variación o excepción, al exagerar. Finalmente, examinamos el grado en que esta figura se combina con otras figuras retóricas. En este sentido, los resultados parecen indicar que la hipérbole es una estrategia productiva en la creación de otros tropos, especialmente de la metáfora. No en vano, Kreuz *et al.* (1996: 92), tras estudiar el grado de fusión de ocho formas no literales, concluyen que la hipérbole es con mucho el tropo que más se combina con otras figuras retóricas.

El capítulo quinto se centra en la teoría de los actos de habla como aproximación al estudio de las distintas funciones de la hipérbole. Aunque existen diversos análisis de los actos de habla de la ironía verbal, hasta la fecha no existe ningún estudio publicado sobre la exageración. Al estudiar los distintos actos de habla en conversaciones reales, se intentó paliar la escasez de trabajos basados en ejemplos reales. Entre las principales críticas a la teoría de los actos de habla se encuentra precisamente la objeción de que el material utilizado es ficticio o irreal. Además, el análisis de la totalidad de las conversaciones en lugar de frases aisladas nos brindó la oportunidad de examinar la naturaleza interactiva de ciertos actos como confirmar/acordar o refutar/discrepar. Cabe mencionar que a partir de este punto el objeto de estudio deja de ser el elemento hiperbólico para convertirse en la frase o segmento exagerado, que en ocasiones se compone de varios de los elementos anteriormente mencionados. Como objetivo principal destaca la creación de una tipología de los diferentes actos de habla que esta figura asume en el discurso y su distribución entre

las distintas fuerzas ilocutivas. Los resultados del análisis parecen indicar que aunque tradicionalmente el estudio de la hipérbole haya sido relegado al tipo de acto representativo o asertivo, esta figura no se reduce a las aserciones. Otras fuerzas ilocutivas están también sujetas a la exageración. En nuestras transcripciones esta figura aparece en actos de tipo directivo, comisivo y expresivo, demostrando así que la teoría de los actos de habla en general y la clasificación de los actos de habla en particular ofrecen un marco de estudio apropiado para la descripción de esta figura. Sin embargo, la exageración no se distribuye de manera homogénea entre las distintas fuerzas ilocutivas. El análisis revela que este tropo se manifiesta principalmente en actos de tipo asertivo, lo cual viene corroborado implícitamente por la literatura existente, dado que la mayoría de los investigadores se han limitado al análisis de dichos actos.

Aunque la mayoría de los actos de habla hiperbólicos se realizan de forma directa, analizamos también el concepto de acto indirecto para determinar los motivos que en ocasiones urgen a los hablantes a expresar su intención comunicativa indirectamente, a través de otra fuerza ilocutiva. Observamos que son típicamente los actos expresivos y directivos los que se realizan de forma indirecta, normalmente bajo la forma de aserciones, porque a menudo implican actos contra la imagen negativa del oyente y por tanto necesitan ser mitigados. Una de estas estrategias de mitigación en la teoría de cortesía lingüística propuesta por Brown y Levinson (1987) es el uso de fórmulas indirectas. Stubbs (1996: 205) explica sucintamente esta dimensión protectora: “if an illocutionary force is indirect or off the record to some degree, it will be possible to claim, if challenged, that it was never issued”. Sin embargo, dado que la mayoría de los actos de habla encontrados en los textos analizados son de naturaleza directa, no parece que en general se deba considerar a este tropo como una figura ofensiva.

El capítulo sexto examina los distintos fines discursivos que esta figura desempeña en la comunicación. Aunque la función estética predomina en los textos literarios, ésta no es la única función atribuible al tropo. En este capítulo se pretende descubrir la variedad de funciones, tanto afectivas como proposicionales (además de la puramente ornamental) que la hipérbole asume, con el fin de determinar por qué los hablantes a menudo prefieren expresarse de forma indirecta, a través de la exageración, en lugar de utilizar el lenguaje literal. Al contrario que la mayoría de las investigaciones previas, nuestro estudio se centra única y exclusivamente en la exageración, en vez de intentar comparar el grado en que

distintas figuras retóricas desempeñan las mismas funciones. Tampoco este capítulo se limita a identificar el repertorio de funciones, sino que se definen, explican y ejemplifican los distintos fines discursivos. Los resultados del análisis revelan que la exageración cumple al menos nueve funciones comunicativas: expresar sorpresa, contrastar diferencias, evaluar, provocar la risa, clarificar, enfatizar, simplificar, intensificar el interés del oyente y desenfatar. Dada la amplia gama de fines discursivos, tanto proposicionales como afectivos, debemos rechazar sin género de duda la idea de que la hipérbole es un mero ornamento, o un vicio, en favor de una concepción cognitiva y comunicativa del tropo (Cacciari y Glucksberg 1994: 448). No obstante, no todas estas funciones parecen tener la misma importancia en los textos examinados. Algunos fines discursivos son más recurrentes que otros: enfatizar, evaluar y expresar sorpresa. Éstos son a nuestro juicio las principales funciones de la hipérbole. Aunque esta figura asume fines informativos, puesto que las funciones interpersonales del tropo son más numerosas y recurrentes, no podemos sino enfatizar el papel central que la dimensión afectiva desempeña en la descripción y comprensión de esta figura.

Respecto a la pregunta: ¿Por qué los hablantes a menudo prefieren las expresiones exageradas a las literales?, el análisis realizado, en consonancia con los hallazgos de estudios previos, sugiere que esta figura retórica reporta ventajas sobre el uso del lenguaje literal. Por ejemplo, la exageración desempeña funciones que son difíciles, o imposibles, de realizar a través del uso de expresiones literales (v.g. generalizar). Asimismo, cuando tanto las expresiones exageradas como las literales asumen las mismas funciones, la exageración parece desempeñarlas en mayor grado (v.g. expresar sorpresa). Finalmente, aunque a ninguna expresión o uso del lenguaje se le puede atribuir una única función (Pollio *et al.* 1977: 10), otra ventaja del tropo sobre el lenguaje literal es que parece desempeñar más fines discursivos que sus equivalentes literales. Todo ello demuestra que esta figura no es un mero sustituto del lenguaje literal, sino que añade matices que las expresiones literales no aportan. No se puede considerar, por tanto, una forma creativa o imaginativa de decir algo que se podía haber dicho literalmente.

Finalmente, el capítulo sexto explora la relación existente entre expresiones hiperbólicas y literales contiguas, demostrando que los hablantes no utilizan las unas en lugar de las otras, sino por añadidura. Esto sugiere que en lugar de intentar reemplazarse, exageración y lenguaje literal se refuerzan y complementan mutuamente. Por tanto, dicha relación,

basada principalmente en el principio de reiterabilidad (v.g. paráfrasis, explicación, resumen, etc.), se podría definir como una relación de complementariedad entre literalidad y figuralidad.

El séptimo capítulo examina el uso del tropo en distintas formas textuales y géneros orales, con el fin de determinar en cuál de ellos es más pronunciada la tendencia al uso de la exageración. El análisis de formas textuales (narración, descripción, etc.) afecta al nivel de la frase o segmento discursivo en que aparece el tropo. Los resultados parecen indicar que aunque la hipérbole es un acto puramente subjetivo, a menudo se corresponde con el modo expositivo-argumentativo. A dicha conclusión parecen llegar otros investigadores como Perelman y Olbrechts-Tyteca (1994: 448) al afirmar que la técnica de superlación responde básicamente a fines argumentativos.

En segundo lugar, analizamos el empleo de esta técnica en los géneros orales. Aunque a este tropo ya se le había relacionado con determinadas formas textuales, especialmente con la narración, el área de los géneros orales no había sido estudiada con anterioridad. Para hacer frente al estudio de los géneros es necesario analizar la totalidad de los textos, de ahí que nos beneficiáramos de la elección de interacciones completas como objeto de estudio. Como objetivo principal cabe destacar el análisis de la influencia que ejercen los distintos factores contextuales en la frecuencia y el uso de la figura. El primer paso consistía en identificar, definir y caracterizar los géneros orales presentes en nuestro corpus, prestando especial atención al objetivo que perseguían, a sus principales características léxicas y gramaticales así como al concepto de estructura situacional (Günthner y Knoblauch 1995: 13), según el cual se examina su organización interactiva siguiendo los procedimientos del análisis conversacional.

De acuerdo con la tipología de géneros conversacionales que Carter y McCarthy (1997: 8) proponen, se identificaron seis géneros en nuestro corpus: toma de decisiones, debate y argumentación, lenguaje en acción, comentario y elaboración, aprendizaje y servicios. Los géneros narrativo e identificativo también aparecen en las transcripciones analizadas pero inmersos en algunos de los géneros anteriormente mencionados, demostrando así que los géneros se funden y desafían una definición exacta. El estudio de los géneros orales responde a uno de los objetivos principales del presente estudio: demostrar que la hipérbole es una característica muy común del habla y que lejos de limitarse al texto literario, hacemos un uso constante de este tropo en muy diversos contextos. De esta

forma, nos adherimos a la idea de que muchos de los mecanismos cognitivos son inherentemente figurados (Pollio *et al.* 1977, Lakoff y Johnson 1980, Gibbs 1993, Turner 1998, Arduini 2000). Por su parte, el análisis realizado reveló que los dos géneros que muestran una mayor tendencia al uso de la exageración son los llamados lenguaje en acción y comentario-elaboración, lo cual sugiere que el uso del tropo no es una cuestión de estilo personal únicamente, y lo que es más importante, que un factor determinante del empleo del tropo es la informalidad de la situación. La hipérbole parece estar íntimamente ligada a los encuentros informales, puesto que estos dos géneros se corresponden única y exclusivamente con el ámbito informal del BNC.

Finalmente y dado que existe la posibilidad de que se produzcan variaciones dentro de un mismo género, tres de las dimensiones definitorias de dicho concepto: fin discursivo, relaciones entre participantes y uso del lenguaje como transacción o relación, fueron objeto de estudio y contraste con el fin de determinar patrones de uso más específicos. Se observa en los textos analizados una fuerte tendencia a asociar el empleo del tropo con actividades físicas inmediatas (tareas de colaboración), el uso de la variedad relacional del lenguaje, así como las relaciones de tipo informal donde los participantes se consideran iguales. Una idea que se repite a lo largo del capítulo es el fuerte vínculo existente entre exageración e informalidad. En general, cuanto más informal era el contexto de uso, mayor la tendencia a exagerar. No en vano, el ámbito informal del BNC registra el mayor número de hipérbolos en nuestro corpus.

Por último, el capítulo octavo examina la dimensión interactiva del tropo. En vez de analizar las figuras retóricas como actos exclusivos por parte del hablante, el objetivo de esta sección radica en demostrar la naturaleza cooperativa del tropo, como acto creado conjuntamente entre hablante y oyente. Éste es un aspecto de la figuralidad que sólo recientemente ha despertado el interés de los investigadores del sentido figurado, pero la escasa literatura existente se ha centrado casi exclusivamente en el estudio de la ironía verbal y la metáfora. Con el fin de examinar el carácter interactivo de la exageración y el papel dinámico que el oyente desempeña en la construcción conjunta y comprensión del tropo, las respuestas y demás contribuciones del oyente a la creación de un marco figurado serán aquí objeto de estudio. El objetivo es determinar cómo reaccionan verbalmente los oyentes a los enunciados exagerados del hablante y qué tipos de respuesta son más comunes. Lógicamente, es necesario adoptar una perspectiva del discurso como actividad

conjunta entre hablante y oyente, descartando así otros paradigmas comunicativos, tales como la perspectiva intencional, que excluyen el papel crucial que desempeña el oyente tanto en la creación como en la interpretación del significado.

Los resultados del análisis revelan que existen básicamente dos clases de respuestas del oyente a la exageración del hablante: evidencia positiva y negativa, que operan tanto al nivel de construcción como de comprensión del tropo. El tipo de evidencia positiva, que dobla el número de respuestas clasificadas como evidencia negativa en nuestro corpus, indica comprensión y aceptación de la hipérbole del hablante. Se trata de respuestas apropiadas al tema tratado a través de las cuales el oyente manifiesta su conformidad con las palabras del hablante. Por el contrario, el tipo de evidencia negativa hace referencia a una falta patente de interés, acuerdo, afiliación o entendimiento entre hablante y oyente por lo que respecta al comentario hiperbólico. En términos generales, se puede decir que estos dos tipos de evidencia responden a dos patrones distintos, casi antagónicos, de audiencia: oyente activo/ cooperativo y pasivo/no cooperativo, respectivamente.

Las categorías de evidencia positiva y negativa se subdividen a su vez en otros tipos de respuesta. Según Clark (1994: 993), dos son las formas principales de evidencia positiva: asentimiento y contribución relevante. El primer tipo, el más común en las conversaciones examinadas, indica comprensión y aceptación del mensaje del hablante pero sin reclamar o constituir un turno en sí mismo. Además, la interacción permite al oyente colaborar en la creación de los mensajes hiperbólicos mismos. De hecho, la segunda forma más común de evidencia positiva encontrada es una contribución relevante, que consiste básicamente en la sucesión de una respuesta relacionada temáticamente y cuya característica definitoria es la relevancia. En particular destaca la continuación de la hipérbole o de cualquier otra forma no literal por parte del oyente, dado que a menudo se producen sucesiones de figuras retóricas. Por otra parte, cuatro son los tipos de respuestas que hemos distinguimos dentro del marco de la evidencia negativa, según la cual la contribución del oyente no se ajusta a la del hablante tal y como se espera. Así la exageración del hablante puede ser rebatida o refutada, ignorada, interpretada erróneamente o desoída. Entre ellas, ignorar la exageración del hablante a través de un cambio de tema de conversación es el patrón más frecuentemente hallado en nuestro corpus. Sin embargo, el análisis manifiesta que el oyente, antes que interpretar la exageración de forma literal, aumenta o disminuye las palabras del hablante hasta ajustarlas a la realidad. La escasez de hipérbolos interpretadas

equivocadamente o no reconocidas por parte del oyente sugiere que expresarse hiperbólicamente, en lugar de literalmente, no supone un gran riesgo para el hablante. La exageración se podría clasificar, por tanto, como una figura de bajo riesgo, aunque el peligro de ser interpretada erróneamente depende también del grado de convencionalidad de la expresión.

El estudio de las respuestas y contribuciones del oyente al acto hiperbólico emergente, junto con la naturaleza compleja de la exageración, dado que no se trata de una categoría léxica o gramatical simple o aislada, la relación entre expresiones hiperbólicas y literales contiguas, la existencia de indicios o marcas en el contexto que nos alertan de la presencia de este tropo en el discurso próximo, etc. sugieren que la exageración no puede, ni debe estudiarse de manera aislada o descontextualizada sino que necesita ser examinada en conversaciones extensas o en la totalidad de las interacciones, y atendiendo a las normas de disposición, secuencia y toma de turnos del análisis conversacional.

Finalmente, examinamos el uso de la exageración como elemento de representación o escenificación en las narraciones, con el fin de determinar por qué la exageración es una característica tan recurrente en este tipo de género. Observamos que en las narraciones se concentran muchos de los fines discursivos atribuidos al tropo: evaluación, énfasis, humor e intensificación del interés. Esto explicaría por qué los hablantes recurren a menudo a la hipérbole a la hora de narrar y cómo ayuda dicha figura a convertir una simple narración de sucesos en una representación. En este sentido, Haiman (1997: 183) correctamente afirma: “Exaggeration is the very essence of performance, as it is of parody”.