

AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Component 1 Analysis of Texts in Context

Section A: Spoken Language of the Media

Sample marking guidelines

Marking guidelines

Overview

The content is designed to engage and entertain the target audiences: BBC3, a mid-range group of 16-34 year-olds (wedding-planning with a twist); BBC1, broad national audience (genealogy of celebrities). Despite the fact that these conversations are being recorded for broadcast, they are typical of spontaneous speech between family and friends. This works to draw in the audience, engaging them through familiarity and humour. The level of informality (e.g. incomplete and elliptical utterances, overlaps and many colloquial features) reflects the fact that participants are well-known to each other and are talking about familiar topics (wedding plans/dreams; family photographs/childhood memories). This is particularly the case in Text A (perhaps as a result of its target audience). Turn-taking appears to be mostly unplanned and turns tend to be short. The conversations are clearly cooperative: participants in Text B contribute more or less equally (both participants ask and answer questions, echo each other's utterances, and provide back channel affirmation), and most of the overlaps in Text A occur where speakers positively reinforce what is being said through affirmation. This is typical of entertainment programmes—the tension existing between Mike and Becky's ideal weddings has been edited for dramatic effect, and the momentary misunderstanding of Barnes' joke (ll.15-16) is resolved in laughter.

Genre

- entertainment programmes designed to engage audience through positive relationships, humour, drama and mock tension
- turn-taking and the relationship between participants (engaging viewers)
- limited number of normal non-fluency features ('spontaneous conversation' for broadcast—perhaps semi-scripted?) e.g. fillers /3:/; hesitation *an. an.*; unintentional repetition *he he*; false start *I had (1) well all times*
- techniques for engaging audience
- the use of deixis (typical of medium) e.g. visual images (seeing the locations and photographs); body language (pointing; eating candyfloss)
- the use of proper nouns e.g. place (*Madison Square Garden, Up Park Camp*) and people (vocatives—*Mike, Becky, Stephen Hill*)
- shared knowledge

Prosodics

- an awareness of similarities re. changes in pace to engage audience
- an awareness of differences e.g. more prominent emphatic stress in Text A reflecting lighter subject matter and personality of speakers: Mike's enthusiasm (thematic nouns e.g. *wrestling, event*; modifiers indicating scale e.g. *big, huge, massive*); Becky's different expectations (predicative adjectives reflecting attitude e.g. *masculine*; adverbs e.g. *totally wrong, better*; verbs e.g. *survive* = humour)
- stretched vowels (Text A) reflecting Mike's enthusiasm
- an awareness of similarities re. rising intonation to draw attention to key thematic words e.g. *^awesome* (Text A, Mike's attitude); *^sweater* (Text B, joke)
- pauses used to create dramatic effect e.g. Text A l.33
- paralinguistic features e.g. laughter (reinforcing co-operative nature of discourse)

Register

- levels of informality
- creation of positive mood to engage audience
- familiar terms of address (Text A)
- interaction features (indirectly engage distant viewing audience): e.g. discourse markers (Text B, *well, right, so*); tag questions (Text B, *didn't you*); comment clause (Text B, *I mean*); affirmation *mm yes/yeah*; phatic tokens (Text A, *cheers*)

Lexis and semantics

- field specific lexis: Text A = wrestling (*strangulation, elbow drop*—humour of Becky's response) and wrestling shows (*fire-breathing, ring girls*); Text B = relations (*father, family, grandfather, great grandfather*)
- proper nouns (shared knowledge): Text A = fairy tale reference (*Cinderella*) and large venues (*Madison Square Garden, Wembley Arena, O₂*); Text B = places (*Up Park Camp, Jamaica, England*), relations (*Frank Hill, Stephen Hill*), and title (*Chairman of the National Heritage Trust*)
- modification (entertain audience): communicate attitudes e.g. *big, huge, good, nice, awesome, disappointed* (Text A), *favourite, good* (Text B); communicate facts *masculine* (Text A), *hot, big* (Text B); term of endearment *little* (Text B)
- adverbs (entertain audience): attitudes (Text A) e.g. *probably, obviously* (comment i.e. disjunct); personal response intensified (Text A) e.g. *totally, quite, really* (degree); engage through precise references (Text B) e.g. *there, here* (deictic—place); *right opposite where we lived* (adverb pre-modifier; noun clause post-modifier)
- informal features: lexis e.g. *stuff, like*; colloquial pronunciation e.g. /kəʊz/ *yeah*, /kaɪndə/, /gʌnəl/; idioms e.g. /ən/ *all sorts, freak out*; elision e.g. *didn't, who's*, /ləʊdzə/
- tense in verb phrases: simple present i.e. related to current contexts (*is, want, remember, think*); simple past (Text B) i.e. remembering events, places, people (*was, had, lived*)
- aspect: progressive i.e. on-going actions (*be demonstrating, 's going to ..., were using, was ... reading*); perfective i.e. events in past with current relevance (*'ve got, 've thought about ..., didn't ... know*)
- creative use of language: creating humour through contrasts e.g. *princessy* (cf. Mike's plans); *hot climate big ↑sweater↑ ... woolly bathrobe* (joke)

Form and structure

- incomplete utterances (typical of informal conversation): *getting ol. married an' stuff* (Text A, humour of interrupted idiom); *all good times, hundred degrees* (Text B)
- elliptical: e.g. *Ø you know what you want?* (omission of dummy auxiliary); *that was taken Ø 1988* (preposition 'in'); *and Ø something for the girls* (S + P); *this Ø a bust* (omitted copula verb—omission of 'be' before noun phrase possibly linked to AAVE)
- absence of micropauses at the end of grammatical unit (Text A): *... ring girls with ca::rds I want ..., ... this is good what I want ...* (communicating Mike's sense of excitement and enthusiasm)
- utterances tend to be short (engaging) e.g. *that's quite nice ..., that **was taken** 1988* (simple), *I only **know** Ø I **was** a outdoor kinda guy* (complex with noun clause in object site); some loosely coordinated compound-complex (typical of informal conversation/oral narrative) e.g. ll. 13-17, ll.27-33 (Text A) and ll. 12-14 (Text B)
- complete adjacency pairs (co-operative): e.g. *you know what you want.../Considering ... I want; how might you.../strangulation ...; what was that/that was taken*
- grammatical mood: mainly declarative; some interrogatives (*you know what you want Becky?, what was that?, who's this?*); polite imperative (Text B, *let me show you*)

Pragmatics

- entertainment value of 'overheard' conversations (apparently close, intimate interactions broadcast for wider audience)
- participants in reality television engage audience in different ways e.g. celebrity interest (John Barnes) or familiar/man-in-the-street (e.g. members of the public)
- shared knowledge: some references known to viewers (e.g. locations, *Cinderella*) others are personal, known only to speakers (e.g. *eighty mango trees in th. in the garden*)
- humour of gender role reversal for bride/groom (Text A)
- humour of presents and 'abandonment' of the young John Barnes (Text B)