

The Influence of Ideology on Aspects of Interpersonal Meaning in a Radio News Bulletin about Youth Crime

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1. Introduction

The overall aim of the research project of which this paper forms just a small part is to investigate the influence of ideology on the language of media texts.¹ I take it as axiomatic there is a dialectical relationship between language and ideology. On the one hand, in any given society both the forms of human language which occur and the uses to which they are put in communication will be influenced by the dominant ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values – in short, the hegemonic ideologies – of that society. On the other, language and language use themselves exert an influence on those ideologies, serving either to perpetuate or transform them. Thus, to take a familiar example, whether a journalist writing the script for a news bulletin chooses to describe someone as a terrorist or a freedom fighter is, ultimately, an ideological choice and whichever term is chosen will have some influence on the consciousness of those who hear the bulletin. So far, then, so axiomatic. However, for anyone interested in studying the influence of ideology on language there are clearly a number of difficulties to be addressed. First and foremost comes the ontological question of concerning the meaning of ‘ideology’ and the nature of the ‘influence’ that it exerts. Secondly there is the epistemological question of how such influence can be identified and described. And thirdly, there is what we might describe as the ‘critical’ question of how to interpret and evaluate such influence. Although the research project as a whole is concerned with all three of these questions as they relate to the influence of ideology on media texts, in this paper particular attention will be given to the second of these in relation to a single and very short media text. This rather restricted focus is partly necessitated by considerations of space but more importantly it reflects my belief that fine-grained analysis of textual data is a necessary precondition for any substantive investigation of the language-ideology nexus.

2. Data, method and theory

The text selected for analysis here is an excerpt from a radio news bulletin

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broadcast by the BBC on its most authoritative national radio station, Radio 4, on Thursday, 23rd August 2007 (see Appendix A). The bulletin itself was broadcast at 8 am on Today, the station's 'flagship' news programme. The lead story in the bulletin concerned a particularly tragic youth crime incident in which an eleven-year-old boy was shot to death by a teenage gang member in Liverpool.² It should be noted here that during 2007 the problem of youth crime had been very high on the political and media agendas in the UK, so much so in fact that the extensive and frequently sensationalistic media coverage given to youth crime showed all the hallmarks of a 'moral panic' (Cohen 1972). Accordingly, this study was intended to look specifically at the influence of ideologies relating to youth and crime on the BBC's radio news broadcasts.

The methodological framework for this investigation is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Although considerable variation exists within this rather diffuse set of approaches to the study of discourse (see Wodak & Meyer (2009) for a useful overview), two key features of CDA are, firstly, its focus on the relationship between language and power and, secondly, its commitment to critiquing and transforming the role of language and language use in the creation and maintenance of inequitable social relations. As such, CDA is a politically engaged form of investigation that seeks to transcend the scholarship-activism divide. The version of CDA that I have drawn on in this study is that of the so-called 'Lancaster School' which has been developed by Norman Fairclough and his colleagues (Fairclough 2001). Reflecting its origins in Critical Linguistics (CL) (see Fowler *et al.* 1979), this version is distinguished by its emphasis on close textual analysis as being the *sine qua non* of ideological critique. In order to conduct such analysis CDA has drawn on a variety of different linguistic theories but without doubt the one which has been most extensively used is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) – sometimes also referred to as Hallidayan linguistics after its principal creator, Michael Halliday.³

From an explicitly functionalist as opposed to the currently more mainstream formalist perspective, SFL regards languages as constituting 'social semiotic' systems or 'meaning potentials' which have evolved to enable human beings to exchange three fundamental types of meaning: ideational meaning (the identification and description of people, things and events); interpersonal meaning (the expression social roles and attitudes); and textual meaning (the coordination of texts both internally and with respect to their contexts of production and

reception). As should be clear even from this very brief description, for the analysis of ideology in texts it is likely that interpersonal meaning will be of particular significance. Regrettably, however, much CDA work to date has tended to focus solely on the analysis of ideational meanings. In contrast, in this paper only interpersonal meaning will be considered.⁴

In SFL theory, language is viewed as being divided into a three hierarchically interrelated strata. Firstly, there is the expression stratum, which is the material surface of language, either as speech or writing. This is the physical 'realisation' of the second stratum, that of the lexicogrammar, which corresponds to the conceptual level of the simple sentence or clause. The lexicogrammatical stratum itself is the realisation of the third stratum, that of the discourse semantics, which corresponds to the patterning of larger-scale textual structures above the level of the clause. These three strata in turn are related to three hierarchically arranged strata of context: the context of situation (the immediate situation in which a particular text is produced or consumed); the context of culture (the wider institutional and societal context of the text); and ideology. This hierarchical model of the language-context relationship can be 'read' in either direction. From a top-down perspective, we may begin with an analysis of a particular ideological formation such as racism and observe how this becomes realised through the various strata to find expression in actual texts. From the opposite direction we may start with a concrete text and work upwards through the various strata to make inferences about the ideology which influenced its production. This paper will attempt to follow this latter trajectory but, reflecting the complexity of the linguistic phenomena which it seeks to analyse, only the impersonal meanings realised in the lexicogrammatical stratum via the system of MOOD will be considered.⁵

3. The significance of MOOD

In SFL theory, the MOOD structure of the clause is seen as the means by which the fundamental distinctions within the contextual register variable of Tenor are realised at the lexicogrammatical level (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2004, Ch.4; Eggins 2004, Ch.6). That is to say, it is through choices of MOOD elements such as Subject and Finite that participants in an interaction encode their understanding (or at least their ostensible understanding) both of their relationships to others and to the social and situational context in which the interaction takes place. For

example, distinctions between the roles of giving and demanding are associated with the structural patterns of declarative and imperative clauses respectively. And distinctions between exchanges of information (statements or questions) or of what Halliday calls 'goods and services' (commands or offers) are related to MOOD differences between major and minor clause types. Such typical associations are described as 'unmarked' whereas atypical associations are termed 'marked'. Instances of markedness in a clause are usually motivated in some way – the text producer having deviated from prototypical usage for particular reasons, such as for politeness. As such, therefore, marked structures are generally worth attending to in analysis.

From the point of view of the present study, in addition to realising the interpersonal relations between interactants, an important aspect of the MOOD system is that it can also be viewed semantically as realising what Halliday calls the 'arguable nub' of the clause: assertions about what is or is not the case or what must or must not be done. Between the polar opposites of *is* and *isn't*, *do* and *don't*, realised via the MOOD system, gradations of meaning are realised through choices of the various MODALITY resources such as modal operators (*e.g. can, may, must*) and Mood adjuncts (*e.g. perhaps, usually, really*). MODALITY is an important resource for interactants with which to express their attitudes and evaluations regarding the subject matter of the text, themselves and each other. There is thus a close complementarity between MOOD and MODALITY but due to limitations of space only MOOD shall be analysed here.

In the next section the results of coding the text for MOOD are presented. Subsequent sections then discuss the findings of this analysis. The aim throughout is to (a) describe the text's interpersonal characteristics and (b) relate these to the ideologies that they may realise. Finally, the paper ends by making a number of general points concerning how the analysis and its findings relate to the overall meaning-making and ideology-conveying resources of the text as a whole.

4. MOOD analysis: coding

In this section, the MOOD structures of all ranking and embedded clauses in the news bulletin text are analysed in terms of the categories of SFL theory. They are coded according to the key presented in Box 1 below. Note that as is also the case with the other systems, some words, groups or phrases may not play a role in the MOOD system and are therefore not coded here.

Box 1 KEY for MOOD analysis

For this analysis the text has been divided into clauses.

Embedded clauses are shown within [[double square brackets]].

Double slashes // indicate clause boundaries within embedded clauses.

Triple slashes /// indicate clause complex boundaries within embedded clauses.

Inserted clauses are shown by << double angle brackets >>.

Where clause constituents are interrupted by other constituents this is shown by > single angle brackets < in the constituent labels.

S = Subject;

F = Finite; **Fn** = negative; **Fma** = modalized (probability, usuality etc);

Fmu = modulated (obligation, inclination etc).

P = Predicator; **Pma** = modalized; **Pmu** = modulated.

F/P = Fused Finite and Predicator.

C = Complement; **Ca** = attributive.

A = Adjunct; **Ac** = circumstantial; **Aj** = conjunctive; **Am** = mood; **Ao** = comment;

Ap = polarity; **At** = continuity; **Av** = vocative.

WH = WH element; **WH/Ac** = fused WH element and Circumstantial Adjunct;

WH/S = fused WH element and Subject.

mn = Minor clause.

The **MOOD** block element of ranking (non-embedded) clauses is shown in **bold** where present.

Edward Stourton (programme co-presenter)

- 1i **It (S) 's (F)** eight o'clock (Ca) on Thursday the twenty-third of August (Ac),
- 1ii the headlines (mn).
- 2 **An eleven-year-old (S) has (F)** been shot (P) dead (Ac) in Liverpool (Ac).
- 3i **Police (S) are (F)** appealing (P) for information (C),
- 3ii saying (P)
- 3iii **this (S) is (F)** no time for silence (Ca).
- 4i **This year's GCSE results (S) are (F)** out (Ca) today (Ac),
- 4ii **the pass rate (S) is (F)** likely (Am) to be (P) around ninety-nine percent (Ca).
- 5i **MEPs (S) have (F)** expressed (P) support (C) for a Europe-wide register of sex-offenders (Ac),
- 5ii and **a new theory (S) has (F)** emerged (P) about the timetable of human evolution (Ac).
- 6 **Today's newsreader (S) is (F)** Alice Arnold (C).

Alice Arnold (newsreader)

- 7i **An eleven-year-old boy (S) has (F)** died (P)
7ii after being shot (P) in Liverpool (Ac).
8i **Rhys Jones (S) was (F)** playing (P) football (C) with two friends (Ac) in a pub car park (Ac) in Croxteth (Ac)
8ii when **he (S) was (F)** attacked (P).
9i **Detectives (S) say (F/P)**
9ii **a boy (S) rode (F/P)** past (Ac) on a BMX bike (Ac)
9iii and **fired (F/P)** three shots (C),
9iv **one of which (S) hit (F/P)** Rhys Jones (C) in the neck (Ac).
10 **The Home Secretary Jacqui Smith (S) has (F)** sent (P) her condolences (C) to his family (Ac).
11 **Our correspondent Caroline Cheetham (S) is (F)** at the scene (Ac).

Caroline Cheetham [On location. An unmodified repeat of the report by her that was broadcast during the programme's 7 am bulletin.]

- 12i **The three boys (S) were (F)** playing (P) football (C) in the car park of the Fir Tree pub (Ac) at about seven o'clock last night (Ac)
12ii when **a teenage boy (S)** [[wearing (P) a hooded top (C)]] rode (F/P) up (Ac) on a BMX bike (Ac)
12iii and **opened (F)** fire (P).
13i **He (S) fired (F/P)** three shots (C),
13ii **one of which (S) hit (F/P)** one of the boys (C) in the head or neck (Ac).
14 **He (S)** later (Ac) **died (F/P)** at Alder Hey Children's Hospital (Ac).
15i **He (S) hasn't (Fn) yet (Am)** been named (P),
15ii but **police (S) say (F/P)**
15iii **he (S) was (F)** a local boy (Ca) from the private housing estate in Croxteth Park (Ac).
16i **The pub and the nearby parade of shops (S) have (F)** been cordoned (P) off (Ac),
16ii as **police (S) continue (F)** searching (P) the area (C).
17 Last night (Ac), **police (S) appealed (F/P)** for [[/// people (S) to examine (P) their consciences (C) // and come (P) forward (Ac) with information (Ac) ///]](C).

Alice Arnold

- 18i **Detectives (S) have (F)** said (P)
18ii that **they (S) are (F)** bewildered (Ca)
18iii as to why (WH/Ac) **the boy (S) was (F)** targeted (P).
19 **Assistant Chief Constable Simon Byrne of Merseyside Police (S) spoke (F/P)**

of his disgust at the attack (C).

Simon Byrne [*On location. An unmodified repeat of comments by him that were broadcast on the programme's 6 am bulletin and again at 7:09.*]

- 20 **It (S>) is (F)** quite awful and quite senseless (Ca) [[that]] (<S)
- 21i **It (S>) 's (F) just (Am)** not (Ap) right (Ca) [[that an eleven-year-old boy (S) should (Fmu) lose (P) his life (C) in these circumstances (Ac)]] (<S)
- 21ii and again (Am) **my appeal (S) really (Am) is (F)** [[// that – anyone [[that (S) knows (F/P) [[who (WH/S) this killer (Ca) is (F)]]]] (Av) – this (S) is not (Fn) a time for silence (Ca), // do (P) the right thing (C) // and turn (P) them (C) in (Ac) //]] (Ca).
- 22 **I (S) particularly (Am) appeal (F/P)** to the criminal fraternity (C).
- 23i **If you (S) know (F/P)** [[who (WH/S) this killer (Ca) is (F)]] (C),
- 23ii work (P) with us (Ac)
- 23iii to catch (P) them (C) quickly (Ac)
- 23iv and take (P) them (C) off (Ac) our streets (C).

Alice Arnold

- 24i **A local councillor, Rose Bailey (S),** << 24ii>> **told (F/P)** us (C)
- 24ii << **who (S) 's (F)** lived (P) in Croxteth (Ac) for twenty-six years (Ac) >> ,
- 24iii that **the area (S) had (F)** been experiencing (P) problems (C) with some of its young people (Ac).

Rose Bailey [*Via telephone. An edited version of remarks made by her during an interview that was broadcast on the programme at 7:10. Deletions from this section made by programme producers shown in square brackets.*]

- 25i **We (S) 've (F)** got (P) the largest private housing estate in Europe (C) with no youth service er input whatsoever (Ac),
- 25ii so **you (S) can (Fma)** imagine (P)
- 25iii how many thousands of children (C) **there (S) are (F)**
[deleted: they're all family homes with three four five bedrooms with no activities whatsoever in place to cater for these young people]
- 25iv and **the only area** [[// where they (S) do (F) congregate (P) // and and cause (P) mayhem (C), if you like (Am), //]] **(S) is (F)** in in and around the shops (Ca)
[deleted: erm].
- 26i **I (S) tried (F)** to get (P) [[CCTV (C) put (P) in (Ac)]] (C)
- 26ii and ironically (Ao) **they (S) just (Am) approved (F/P)** the programme (C).

5. MOOD analysis: discussion

The results of the coding for MOOD are summarised in Table 1 below. In this section the following four MOOD features will be discussed:

- Declarative clauses
- Imperative clauses
- Speech functions
- Subjects

Table 1 MOOD analysis of ranking clauses

Mood class	ES	AA	CC	AA	SB	AA	RB	Total
Full declarative	9	9	12	4	4	3	6	47
Elliptical declarative								0
Tagged declarative								0
Full polar interrogative								0
Elliptical polar interrog.								0
Full WH interrogative								0
Elliptical WH interrog.								0
Imperative					1			1
Exclamative								0
Non-finite	1	1			2			4
Abandoned					1			1
Minor clause	1							1
Total ranking clauses	11	10	12	4	8	3	6	54

- The initials in the column headings are those of the five participants whose voices are heard during this part of the bulletin, listed from left to right in order of speaking.

5.1 Declarative clauses

As Table 1 shows, speakers consistently selected a very limited number of options from the MOOD system. By far the most frequently used clause type was the full declarative. This reliance on full declaratives is characteristic of the non-dialogic nature of the written – though of course in this case, specifically, what I shall be calling ‘written-to-be-read-aloud-by-others’ – mode of formal news bulletin texts. In such texts, from either print or broadcast news, the commodity being exchanged is information and the relationship between speakers and hearers is one in which

there is no possibility of feedback from the audience, at least within the timescale of the text's duration. In combination with other aspects of the text, such MOOD selections contribute to the construal of an authoritative and distant subject position for the text producers as providers of information, on the one hand, and a passive role for the audience as receivers of information, on the other. Note that in the absence of extensive ethnographic work it is not possible to state this conclusion more strongly than this. The reception of information by the audience need not be solely passive or uncritical, as work in media reception and audience studies has frequently demonstrated (e.g. Ang 1996; Moores 1993). However, as Nicholas Garnham has argued on the basis of his study of the Hegelian roots of commodity fetishism, it is entirely possible for an active audience to be actively involved in its own domination (Garnham 2000). The point here is that, on the semiotic level the grammatical choices made by the text producers preferentially *afford* such roles for speakers and audience. And so in the absence of particular factors tending to the contrary it is reasonable to assume that speakers are more active than listeners and that the unidirectional, monologic nature of the communication construes the former as possessing a degree of authority and power with respect to the latter.

However, such a conclusion must be a tentative one here precisely because other factors are not absent. Most importantly, despite the lack of producer-audience dialogicality, it is obvious that the text itself is highly multivocalic in that its 26 sentences are distributed between five speakers. We might view this high degree of multivocality as representing a kind of 'performative' dialogicality which serves the function of producing the kind of the mediated 'quasi-interaction' identified by John Thompson which, as he argues, creates a situation wherein:

Some individuals are engaged primarily in producing symbolic forms for others who are not physically present, while others are involved primarily in receiving symbolic forms produced by others to whom they cannot respond, but with whom they can form bonds of friendship, affection and loyalty. (Thompson 1995: 84-5)

In such situations, the audience are not so much hearers as overhearers of a dialogue performed for them by others. In this case, the dialogue itself is not an actual one, conducted at a particular conjunction of space-time by a group of co-

present participants, but a carefully orchestrated bricolage of utterances created in various places and times and packaged ('recontextualised', in Bernstein's terms (1996)) by the bulletin's producers for consumption by the media audience. It is likely that the interpersonal relations between the participants and those between the participants and the audience will interact in quite complex ways. Interestingly, Rose Bailey's contribution does indeed come from a real (albeit telephone-mediated) conversational exchange: an interview with her that was conducted by John Humphrys, the other of the two presenters on this day's edition of the programme. Parts of this interview were broadcast one hour earlier but it had been recorded at some unspecified time prior to that. However, in Bailey's comments re-broadcast here all six clauses are full declaratives and apart from choosing the pronoun *you* to designate her interlocutor (or possibly, people in general, as might otherwise be realised in more formal registers by *one*) as Subject for one clause, there are no other MOOD elements to indicate that she is engaged in a dialogue.

5.2 Imperative clauses

Against this backdrop of predominantly full declarative clauses, the one use of a ranking imperative clause by Simon Byrne [23ii] may be regarded as salient. The speech event from which his comments were taken was a news conference held by Merseyside Police the previous evening. One of the main practical purposes of that event was to enable the police to appeal to the general public for information. The crux of this appeal, addressed *particularly* to the *criminal fraternity*, is realised here through the imperative clause *work with us* in Byrne's last sentence:

- (1) *If you know who this killer is, work with us to catch them quickly and take them off our streets.* [SB 23ii]

This forceful request, expressed in the form of an unmodalized command, carries a considerable threat to intersubjective solidarity: hearers can (at least mentally) challenge the speaker's authority or simply reject or ignore the request. However, Byrne makes use of two strategies that help mitigate the face-threatening nature of the command.⁶ Firstly, he expresses his command in terms of a request for cooperation in a shared task to be undertaken by both informants and police in pursuit of a common goal relating to *our* streets. Secondly, he frames the request

even more individually as one originating from himself by referring to my appeal and adding an expressive Mood Adjunct, *I particularly appeal*. The combined effect of these strategies is to reduce the interpersonal distance between speakers and hearers. The aim of this, presumably, being to increase the effectiveness of the appeal.

Finally, we may note that Byrne uses two other imperative clauses in this extract, although both of which are non-ranking. These occur in an earlier sentence where they form part of a paratactically linked three-clause complex functioning as an attributive Complement in an Intensive Relational clause:

(2) *this is not a time for silence, do the right thing and turn them in.* [SB 21ii]

Since this complex is, in Hallidayan terms, ‘embedded’ or ‘rankshifted’ (that is, functioning as a constituent of another clause), the semantic role of the clauses within it should, *ceteris paribus*, be viewed as less salient than those of ranking clauses. However, the relationship between the salience of an item and its position in the rank structure of the text is not straightforward. In this case, for a number of reasons it may be argued that the two imperatives retain much of the force of ranking clauses. Firstly, the very fact that they are imperative clauses endows them with considerable prominence when uttered against the backdrop of an otherwise almost exclusively declarative co-text. Secondly, because they are functioning as full clauses rather than, for example, as Postmodifier to a nominal group, they retain much of their independent arguability and semantic force. In addition, the fact that they occur in the informationally prominent clause-final position in a Relational clause, and are preceded by a Vocative directly (albeit vaguely) hailing the audience, increases their salience. And finally, they contribute additional force to the effectiveness of the rhetorical clause triplet structure through the parallelism which they exhibit. For these reasons, I would suggest that we may regard these imperatives as having equal or even higher salience than full ranking clauses.

Whereas, as we have seen, all five speakers use full declarative clauses, the very fact that it is only an external participant, Byrne, who uses an imperative clause is of interest.⁷ That this imperative – the focal point of his ‘appeal’ – is construed by the programme’s producers as important is reflected by the fact that apart from the news about the murder itself it is the only information given by

Stourton about the incident in his opening headlines. Internal participants make no such demands on the audience in this text and, as a comparison with the other news bulletins broadcast during the study period suggests, this appears to be a typical feature of the genre. This is consistent with the ostensible role of internal participants as neutral providers of information to the non-present audience. Ideologically, then, we may regard the apparently greater modal latitude allowed to external participants as reflecting the programme makers' belief that it is legitimate for representatives of organisations such as the police to make appeals in this way but not for the BBC's own personnel. This distinction is generally upheld throughout the BBC's news bulletins and any behaviour which appears to transgress it can itself become news. This can happen, for example, on those rare occasions when a newsreader allows her own subjectivity to obtrude into her performance by laughing at a particular item.

5.3 Speech functions

Speakers' choices from within the MOOD system are fundamentally related to the speech functions in which they are engaged.⁸ Viewed from the point of view of interpersonal meaning, the bulletin must be regarded, as has been done in this chapter, as an 'exchange' (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 106-111). However, there is an unusual difficulty in treating it in this way due to the nature of the mediated quasi-interactive relationship and the atypical speech roles that this gives rise to.

Let us consider Edward Stourton's opening turn. We may regard this turn as simultaneously (a) realising the first initiating move in the exchange; (b) performing the initiating role of 'giving'; and (c) providing the commodity of information. In short, his turn is a form of statement and, as we have seen, this move is realised congruently through declarative clauses, including his final sentence in which he identifies Alice Arnold as newsreader. However, the difficulty that we encounter here lies in trying to account for the subsequent turn by Arnold in terms of the 'clause as exchange' framework. It is possible to regard it as quite unrelated to Stourton's turn, but this is not how the turn-taking is interpreted by regular listeners who know that the identification of the newsreader at the end of the presenter's opening turn is functionally a cue for him or her to begin speaking. Therefore, in terms of the four basic speech functions it seems that we need to regard Stourton's final sentence as simultaneously functioning both as a statement (addressed to the audience) and as a kind of command, that is, a demand for goods

and services (addressed to Arnold). The goods and services being demanded are, of course, semiotic ones: namely the words which constitute Arnold's first turn. Exactly the same pattern is repeated in Arnold's cueing of Cheetham, Byrne and Bailey, albeit with an added degree of virtuality due to the contributions of those three participants having been pre-recorded.

A further noteworthy speech functional feature of the text concerns Byrne's use of imperative clauses noted above. What exactly is the speech function that Byrne is engaged in here? His various appeals to the audience to *do the right thing, work with us and turn them in* all suggest that it is a 'command' since the speech role is that of demanding and the commodity being exchanged is a form of goods and services as indicated by the verb in each case. This contrasts with a possible alternative appeal which would demand information instead, such as *Tell me/us who the killer is!* However, despite this sentence's more direct relation to what it is that Byrne actually wants to know, it is still not a question in the speech functional sense, but again is a demand for action, albeit action of a specifically semiotic kind, namely telling. This illustrates the fact that Halliday's classification of speech functions refers to prototypical (unmarked) cases and that for various reasons, such as politeness, speakers may choose different and hence marked forms of realisation.

Thus in this case we may further ask why Byrne did not realise his appeal using a full WH interrogative by asking *Who is the killer?* or some equivalent question. The answer, I would suggest, is that his choice was motivated by interpersonal considerations relating to the context in which he was speaking. Specifically, asking a direct question would make overly clear the power differential between the police and the public and invite a bald refusal to answer. Whereas, asking the audience to *work with* the police construes a more cooperative and consensual relationship between police and public. Likewise, rather vague exhortations to *do the right thing* and the *expression examine their consciences* (quoted earlier by Cheetham) are interpersonally less direct and hence less face-threatening. They do, however, ground the appeal in explicitly moral terms. This construes it as transcending a mere bureaucratic request to the general public from the state's forces of law and order by appealing to a higher plane of concepts and values – presupposed to be unproblematically understood and shared by the audience – concerning the existence of 'consciences' (and the feasibility of examining them) and the possibility of knowledge about what 'the' 'right thing' is

and how one should ‘do’ it. We might go so far as to say that Byrne is saying, to the (criminal) population of a city with a sizeable Catholic population, ‘This is not just my appeal, or the police’s – it’s God’s’.

5.4 Subjects

The definition of Subject has long been a source of difficulty for grammarians (Seuren 1998: 34-7). Within SFL, Halliday suggests that the role of Subject in the clause can be defined in three ways, depending on the position on the stratificational model of language from which it is viewed (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 119). From below the clause the Subject is the nominal element which is picked up in the Mood tag (e.g. *Alice is a clever girl, isn’t she?*). From within the clause it is the element which combines with the Finite element to form the Mood block. And from above the clause, it is the element which bears what Halliday calls the ‘modal responsibility’ of the clause, in other words, the responsibility for the validity of what is predicated in the clause. This is a somewhat difficult concept to grasp, though less so in the case of proposals (commands and offers) than in propositions, but the important point for the present study, concerned as it is with ideology, is that the key criterion here is validity rather than truth. As Halliday argues, ‘Semantics has nothing to do with truth; it is concerned with consensus about validity, and consensus is negotiated in dialogue.’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 117). We may thus investigate the patterns of Subject usage in this text by asking which entities are being construed as having responsibility for the validity of the propositions.

One obvious pattern concerns speakers’ personal responsibility. At one level this is not a matter of degree but an absolute difference: only Byrne and Bailey assume personal responsibility for the validity of (some of) their statements. Specifically, these are:

<i>my appeal really is</i>	[SB 21ii]
<i>I particularly appeal</i>	[SB 22]
<i>We’ve got</i>	[RB 25i]
<i>I tried to get</i>	[RB 26i]

Such Subject choices indicate that these speakers are here speaking for themselves, even while they are also fulfilling institutional roles (as police officer

or local government representative). In contrast, Stourton, Arnold and Cheetham speak solely impersonally in the third person mode of the omniscient narrator and as such take no responsibility for the validity of the propositions which they utter. This is not to say that programme personnel never use personal Subjects. For example, earlier in the programme, immediately following the broadcast of a different excerpt from Byrne's news conference, John Humphrys began a live two-way exchange with Cheetham as follows:

Humphrys: *Well Caroline Cheetham is our reporter in Croxteth this morning, can you add anything to that erm Caroline?*

Cheetham: *Erm morning morning John er not not an awful lot but I can recount for you exactly what we do know, and that is er as as you heard there from Simon Byrne yesterday evening at around seven seven thirty in the evening three boys were playing football here outside the Fir Tree pub in Croxteth Park. [continues]*

In addition to the two personal Subjects here we could also consider the phrase not an awful lot as being an ellipsed declarative which in full would have been something like *I can not add* an awful lot. Similarly, whereas in the news bulletin we find second person Subjects being used only by Byrne and Bailey, in the above exchange both Humphrys and Cheetham use them. Such usages here suggest that within the programme as a whole it is the conventions of the news bulletin genre which restrict the range of Subject choices for programme personnel. This no doubt relates to the greater 'objectivity' expected of these sections of the programme although, as we have seen, this is not a restriction which extends to non-affiliated external participants.

The pattern of modal responsibility and Subject choices shown by the bulletin relates to Goffman's distinction – based, coincidentally, on his study of the speech of radio presenters – between the roles of Principal (the one whose position is put in the text); Author (the one who puts the words together and is responsible for the wording); and Animator (the one who makes the sounds or the marks on paper) which together comprise the 'production format' of an utterance (Goffman 1981). Although as far as I am aware the connection has not been made by Halliday or his colleagues, this distinction neatly corresponds to the three strata of discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology in the SFL model of language, which

Halliday has glossed as ‘meanings’, ‘wordings’ and ‘soundings’. Evidently, however, and even setting aside poststructuralist reservations about the existence of a unified subject, the relationship between these roles, both between and within the various individuals involved in the production of this news bulletin, is complex. As with all attempts, such as the present study, to connect the fine details of lexicogrammar up through the stratum of discourse semantics to the outermost contextual layer of ideology, it is the lower levels of Goffman’s schema which are the easier to describe because they are the more clearly differentiable. Thus, we have little difficulty in identifying all five speakers with the role of Animator: it is they after all who actually produce the sounds that listeners hear emanating from their radios. Yet even here matters are not entirely straightforward since this is a mass-mediated text which depends for its existence on the whole panoply of institutions related to broadcasting, from the official regulatory bodies through the BBC itself (and the police in the case of Byrne’s contribution) to the technological apparatus of signal production and reception including, these days, the Internet.

At the level of Author, it is difficult without ethnographic data to know precisely who was responsible for which words in this text. At the time of this study, the *Today* programme studio was housed at the BBC Television Centre in west London. Presenters and newsreaders sit together in the studio and both receive their scripts from news journalists working for BBC News, also based at the Television Centre (Cass n.d.). From occasional comments in autobiographies and articles written by Today presenters it appears that they have a limited amount of freedom to edit their scripts as befits their double role as not only news-purveyors but also ‘personalities’ and programme hosts. It is likely that newsreaders have almost no such latitude.

In relation to this question it is helpful to compare the transcript of the bulletin which I made by listening to the broadcast and which is shown in Appendix A with the ‘News Script’ published by the BBC on its news website. The opening section of the published version of the 8 am news bulletin for 23 August 2007 corresponding to the section studied here appeared on the website as shown in Appendix B.⁹ A comparison of the transcript and the published script suggests that in her spoken utterances Alice Arnold did not deviate from the script in any significant way. Stourton’s turn as broadcast, in contrast, displayed the following three very slight differences:

- At the end of his first scripted sentence he adds a minor clause to announce the generic status of the following sentences as *the headlines*.
- He paratactically links the last two headlines together using *and* to produce a clause complex.
- He includes the sentence at the end of his turn in which he identifies the newsreader as Alice Arnold.

The first of these differences is motivated by the need to identify the nature of the sentences he is about to utter (a task accomplished graphically on the website by the bolded title words) while the third appears, on the evidence of other bulletins broadcast during the study period, to be an obligatory element of the genre. As such, neither of them reflects Stourton's own personal intervention. The second change, however, suggests that he himself may have linked the two clause simplexes of the script into a clause complex, the likely motivation for which having been to render it more spoken-like or, from his point of view, easier to say.

While it appears then that the internal participants have little or no freedom to move from being the Animator of the script to the level of Author, we should remember that although the discourse semantics and lexicogrammar may be more or less fixed, participants do have some freedom at the expression stratum in terms of the use of vocal qualities such as accent, intonation and rhythm.

Here again though they are subject to certain limits based on the programme's and more specifically the news bulletin's generic requirements for objectivity and authoritativeness. For example, despite the broadening range of accents to be heard on BBC radio these days it is very unlikely that a *Today* newsreader would be permitted to read his or her script with the kind of pronounced Liverpudlian accent that characterises the speech of Rose Bailey. However, within those limits individual newsreaders and, particularly, presenters can inflect their turns with their own style and personality. This is an important interpersonal resource for the creation of speaker identity and speaker-audience relationships. Therefore it is also one with which listeners may be positioned in alignment with the values and attitudes underlying the programme's presentation of news.

As such, and given that the presenters are neither the Principals nor the Authors of their words, we may note that the expression of interpersonal meanings through vocal qualities raises interesting questions about the realisational

suppositions of the Hallidayan model of language, which assume that, in the case of spoken language, meanings are realised in wordings and wordings in soundings. While this is a perfectly realistic assumption for the spontaneous speech of individuals it may be inadequate to describe texts such as news bulletins, which instantiate a complex written-to-be-read-aloud-by-others mode of communication. Here, although the discourse semantics and lexicogrammar are predetermined, the presenters can express their own (principally, but not exclusively) interpersonal meanings through vocal means. From the point of view of ideological critique, this further dimension to the multivocality of the text is important because such meanings may not always harmonise with those of the Principals. They can thus provide a way for apparently objective news reports to be inflected with more subjective meanings that simply could not be recognised by an examination of the written script alone. In this respect, the use of phonological resources by presenters to inflect their scripted words with their own interpersonal meanings may be viewed, potentially at least, as analogous to the so-called 'dog-whistle' journalism identified by Coffin and O'Halloran in tabloid newspaper reporting (Coffin & O'Halloran 2006).

6. Conclusion

The picture that emerges from this albeit limited survey of the text's MOOD structure is of an authoritative and monologic text, animated by the internal participants, which coexists in some degree of tension with a kind of quasi-dialogicality that derives from the incorporation of certain other external voices. One of those voices, representing the police, addresses demands to the audience. None of this, of course, is particularly surprising: the *Today* programme's bulletins are highly orthodox, indeed paradigmatic, examples of the BBC radio news bulletin genre and 'authoritative' is a word frequently used to describe the programme.

And so, in the light of such an apparently obvious conclusion it may seem hardly necessary to have subjected the text to such a fine-grained clausal analysis. Indeed for some readers it is possible that such seemingly disproportionate analytical effort may well conjure up visions involving sledgehammers and nuts. For practitioners of CDA, given the amount of time required for this kind of analysis and the seemingly self-evident nature of the results, the temptation may be to pass over such mundane investigations and focus directly on those 'usual suspects' in a text that have been previously identified as particularly rewarding

for the study of ideology: nominalisations, passivisation and referentially slippery personal pronouns. All three of these figure prominently in introductory works on CDA and in the various checklists of textual features deemed worthy of attention offered by leading critical linguistics and CDA practitioners (e.g. Fairclough 1989: 110-111; Fowler & Kress 1979: 198-213).¹⁰ However, for a truly multifunctional, textually-oriented, evidence-based form of CDA, simply because a text appears to be cast in a familiar form is not in itself a sufficient reason for omitting from one's analysis the kind of basic taxonomic survey work of the kind being advocated and presented here. This point is closely related to the three axioms which underlie my entire research project: that all texts are ideological (the axiom of ubiquity); that ideology is most successful where it is most unremarkable (the axiom of familiarity); and that commentary is not analysis (the axiom of method) (see Haig 2009: 16-17).

With these axioms in mind, together with Eggins' definition of Tenor (the interpersonal aspect of the context of situation) as 'the social role relationships played by the interactants' (2004: 99), we may reconsider how it should be that news bulletins such as this one are couched almost exclusively in full declarative clauses. What is the link between the roles of the interactants (internal and external news producers on the one hand and audiences on the other) and the text's pattern of MOOD structure? One useful way of beginning to answer this question is to think about how *else* such bulletins might be produced and what the consequences would be of such alternative arrangements in terms of MOOD. This consideration of alternatives is a major aspect of the 'explanatory critique' method of Critical Realism (Bhaskar 1979; Collier 1994) which Fairclough has advocated as a useful framework for CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2001).¹¹ Clearly a news bulletin consisting entirely of interrogatives (*Is it eight o'clock on Thursday the twenty-third of August? Are these the headlines? Has an eleven-year-old been shot dead in Liverpool?*) or exclamatives (*How eight o'clock it is! What headlines these are! How dead an eleven-year old has been shot!*) would sound highly unusual. But why?

We might answer this question by saying that the reason why the text is dominated by the prototypical Subject + Finite MOOD structure of declarative clauses is simply because the fundamental purpose of such texts is to provide information. But to answer the question in such 'actualist' terms (to use Bhaskar's appellation) is to fall into the trap of 'shallow realism' by ignoring the existence of

latent but unexercised powers. The danger with taking such an undialectical view of communication is that our understanding of interactions may thereby be short-circuited in ways that obscure important power relations. While we may readily agree with the idea that news bulletins provide audiences with information, from a Critical Realist point of view the important question we need to consider is what a society needs to be like in order for such texts and practices to be either possible (at the level of the Real) or actual and necessary (at the level of the Empirical). Here we may simply note that, as Eggins remarks:

The proof that we have accepted the social roles is found in our discourse roles, i.e. in the choices we make in Mood and Modality. ... By looking at the grammatical choices speakers make, the role they play in discourse, we have a way of uncovering and studying the social creation and maintenance of hierarchic, socio-cultural roles. (Eggins 2004: 187)

But in addition to this essentially diagnostic orientation to grammatical study we can also view it in more systemic and potentially more transformational terms by considering what choices have not been made but which *could* have been. Specifically here for example, it is at least possible to envisage news bulletins in which a wider range of MOOD structures is drawn on and that such alternative formulations would necessarily reflect and construe different patterns of interactant roles and relations. Whether or not such alternatives might be preferable to the presently dominant pattern of news broadcasting is, of course, another matter entirely. Contemporary developments in mainstream television news towards 'newszak' and tabloidisation do not offer much encouragement (Franklin 1998; Holly 2008; but see also Turner 1999 for a more optimistic prognosis) whereas genuinely alternative media have their own problems such as lack of financial and other resources and governmental restriction of broadcasting rights (Atton 2001; Waltz 2005).

Through the analysis of the MOOD patterns deployed in this text we have seen that only a comparatively narrow range of options from the overall lexicogrammatical resources for interpersonal meaning-making at the level of the clause have been selected.¹² In SFL terms, these reflect the influence of the Register (Context of Situation) variable of Tenor. It is the particular configuration

of these options which define the nature of the text as an *exchange*. In this case, it is (within the brief time span of the bulletin) a highly unidirectional, few-to-many text, composed overwhelmingly of unmodalized statements, in which, and somewhat contradictorily, much of the meaning is located outside the arguable nub of the Mood block component in the form of Circumstantial adjuncts.¹³ For a consideration of how the MOOD and MODALITY resources are linked to the overall generic and registerial characterisation of the text see Haig (2009, Ch. 11). Here, however, two final points should be made.

Firstly, as Halliday, building on the work of Kenneth Pike (e.g. Pike 1982), has observed, the three fundamental types of meaning encoded in language show a tendency to be realised in contrasting and characteristic ways (Halliday 1979; see also Martin 1992: 548). Experiential meanings tend to be particulate: they organise texts segmentally; textual meanings are periodic: they organise the text into wave-like peaks and troughs of information; and interpersonal meanings are prosodic: they are supra-segmental, colouring the tone of entire texts. For this reason, and assuming that Pike's thesis is correct, it is particularly at the supra-clausal level, rather than at clause rank, that we may expect to find interpersonal meanings most powerfully realised. Therefore, in the larger-scale study of which this paper forms just one small part, particular emphasis has been given to analysing the resources for APPRAISAL used in this text.¹⁴

Secondly, when conducting fine-grained analyses of the influence of ideology on interpersonal meaning we must not lose sight of the fact that whenever people express their attitudes in a text, either toning them up or down, they always do so *about* something or other. Thus, although within the clause at the lexicogrammatical level interpersonal meanings mainly converge in the MOOD and MODALITY systems, their impact is also felt in the various lexicogrammatical and discourse semantic systems that realise ideational meaning. Their impact will also be felt in the systems that realise textual meaning. In short, ideology, like language, is multifunctional. Therefore, I would argue that for anything approaching a complete understanding of the influence of ideology on media texts a truly multifunctional analysis is an essential precondition.

NOTES

- 1 Full details of the research project may be found in the author's second doctoral thesis (Haig 2009). This paper constitutes a revised and condensed version of one part of Chapter 2 of that work.
- 2 For an explanation of my reasons for choosing this particular text and a discussion of the social, political and media contexts in which it was produced see Haig (2009).
- 3 The SFL model of language is rich, complex and continually evolving. As such, it is not possible in this paper to provide more than the briefest of outlines. For an authoritative account of the latest version of the model as it has been developed for English see Halliday & Matthiessen (2004); for a thorough yet accessible introduction see Eggins 2004; and for a collection of studies exploring the synergy between CDA and SFL see Young & Harrison (2004).
- 4 For the analysis of all three types of meaning in this news bulletin text see Haig (2009).
- 5 In this paper I follow the Hallidayan convention of showing the names of grammatical systems such as MOOD in small capitals.
- 6 As with the analysis of all utterances, one must exercise caution here in imputing conscious motives for the use of particular strategies. What we can say, however, is that certain strategies generate particular probabilistic patterns of affordances for the interpretations which hearers may make. In this case I think the strategies are such as are likely to afford an interpretation which mitigates the force of Byrne's injunction.
- 7 In my analysis of radio news bulletins I refer to presenters and newsreaders as internal participants and other speakers (here Byrne and Bailey) as external participants.
- 8 The terms used in this section are those of the speech function system network as presented in Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 108).
- 9 In reproducing this script here care has been taken to preserve the layout, formatting and punctuation of the original. The only difference being that hyperlinks at the end of each section labeled 'Return to index of stories...', which obviously had been added post-broadcast specifically for the webpage version, have been omitted.
- 10 For an interesting recent debate on the treatment of nominalisation in CDA see the contributors to *Discourse & Society* (2008) (19) 6.
- 11 For an important discussion of the relationship between Critical Realism and CDA see Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer 2004).
- 12 Similar and complementary patterns have also been found in the use of MODALITY resources in this text (see Haig 2009).
- 13 For a discussion of Circumstantial and other adjunct usage in this text see Haig 2009: 61-64.
- 14 Appraisal Theory is a development of SFL that seeks to systematically describe the textual resources for the realisation of interpersonal meaning operating at the discourse semantic stratum of language. For a useful introduction see Martin & White 2005.

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APPENDIX A

Text of excerpt from the 8 am news bulletin of the BBC Radio 4 Today programme broadcast on 23 August 2007.

Edward Stourton (programme co-presenter)

¹ⁱ It's eight o'clock on Thursday the twenty-third of August, ¹ⁱⁱ the headlines. ² An eleven-year-old has been shot dead in Liverpool. ³ⁱ Police are appealing for information ³ⁱⁱ saying ³ⁱⁱⁱ this is no time for silence. ⁴ⁱ This year's GCSE results are out today, ⁴ⁱⁱ the pass rate is likely to be around ninety-nine percent. ⁵ⁱ MEPs have expressed support for a Europe-wide register of sex-offenders, ⁵ⁱⁱ and a new theory has emerged about the timetable of human evolution. ⁶ Today's newsreader is Alice Arnold.

Alice Arnold (newsreader)

⁷ⁱ An eleven-year-old boy has died ⁷ⁱⁱ after being shot in Liverpool. ⁸ⁱ Rhys Jones was playing football with two friends in a pub car park in Croxteth ⁸ⁱⁱ when he was attacked. ⁹ⁱ Detectives say ⁹ⁱⁱ a boy rode past on a BMX bike ⁹ⁱⁱⁱ and fired three shots ^{9iv} one of which hit Rhys Jones in the neck. ¹⁰ The Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has sent her condolences to his family. ¹¹ Our correspondent Caroline Cheetham is at the scene.

Caroline Cheetham (correspondent) [*On location. An unmodified repeat of the report by her that was broadcast during the programme's 7 am bulletin.*]

¹²ⁱ The three boys were playing football in the car park of the Fir Tree pub at about seven o'clock last night ¹²ⁱⁱ when a teenage boy wearing a hooded top rode up on a BMX bike ¹²ⁱⁱⁱ and opened fire. ¹³ⁱ He fired three shots, ¹³ⁱⁱ one of which hit one of the boys in the head or neck. ¹⁴ He later died at Alder Hey Children's Hospital. ¹⁵ⁱ He hasn't yet been named, ¹⁵ⁱⁱ but police say ¹⁵ⁱⁱⁱ he was a local boy from the private housing estate in Croxteth Park. ¹⁶ⁱ The pub and the nearby parade of shops have been cordoned off, ¹⁶ⁱⁱ as police continue searching the area. ¹⁷ Last night, police appealed for people to examine their consciences, and come forward with information.

Alice Arnold

¹⁸ⁱ Detectives have said ¹⁸ⁱⁱ that they are bewildered ¹⁸ⁱⁱⁱ as to why the boy was targeted.
¹⁹ Assistant Chief Constable Simon Byrne of Merseyside police spoke of his disgust at the attack.

Simon Byrne [*On location. An unmodified repeat of comments by him that were broadcast on the programme's 6 am bulletin and again at 7:09.*]

²⁰ It is quite awful and quite senseless that ²¹ⁱ It's just not right that an eleven-year-old boy should lose his life in these circumstances ²¹ⁱⁱ and again my appeal really is that anyone that knows who this killer is, this is not a time for silence, do the right thing and turn them in.
²² I particularly appeal to the criminal fraternity. ²³ⁱ If you know who this killer is, ²³ⁱⁱ work with us ²³ⁱⁱⁱ to catch them quickly ^{23iv} and take them off our streets.

Alice Arnold

²⁴ⁱ A local councillor, Rose Bailey, – ²⁴ⁱⁱ who's lived in Croxteth for twenty-six years – told us ²⁴ⁱⁱⁱ that the area had been experiencing problems with some of its young people.

Rose Bailey [*Via telephone. An edited version of remarks made by her during an interview that was broadcast on the programme at 7:10. Deletions from this section made by programme producers are shown in square brackets.*]

²⁵ⁱ We've got the largest private housing estate in Europe with no youth service er input whatsoever, ²⁵ⁱⁱ so you can imagine ²⁵ⁱⁱⁱ how many thousands of children there are [*deleted <they're all family homes with three four five bedrooms with no activities whatsoever in place to cater for these young people>*] ^{25iv} and the only area where they do congregate and and cause mayhem if you like is in in and around the shops [*deleted <erm>*] ²⁶ⁱ I tried to get CCTV put in ²⁶ⁱⁱ and ironically they just approved the programme.

An audio recording of this bulletin is available on the Today programme's website at the following address:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/listenagain_20070823.shtml (accessed 10/02/2010)

APPENDIX B

Radio Four 08:00hrs News Script for Thursday 23rd August 2007

THE HEADLINES AT 0800 ON THURSDAY 23RD AUGUST

It's eight o'clock on Thursday the 23rd of August.

An eleven-year-old has been shot dead in Liverpool -- police are appealing for information, saying this is no time for silence.

This year's GCSE results are out today -- the pass rate is likely to be around ninety-nine per cent.

MEPs have expressed support for a Europe-wide register of sex-offenders.

A new theory has emerged about the timetable of human evolution.

SHOOTING

An eleven-year-old boy has died after being shot in Liverpool. Rhys Jones was playing football with two friends in a pub car park in Croxteth when he was attacked. Detectives say a boy rode past on a BMX bike and fired three shots, one of which hit Rhys Jones in the neck. The Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has sent her condolences to his family. Our correspondent, Caroline Cheetham, is at the scene:

CHEETHAM: The three boys were playing football in the carpark of the Fir Tree pub at about seven o'clock last night when a teenage boy wearing a hooded top rode up on a BMX bike and opened fire. He fired three shots, one of which hit one of the boys in the head or neck. He later died at Alder Hey Children's Hospital. He hasn't yet been named, but police say he was a local boy from the private housing estate in Croxteth Park. The pub and the nearby parade of shops have been cordoned off as police continue searching the area. Last night, police appealed for people to be examined [sic] their consciences, and come forward with information.

DETECTIVES

Detectives have said that they're bewildered as to why the boy was targeted. Assistant Chief Constable Simon Byrne of Merseyside Police spoke of his disgust at the attack:

BYRNE ACT:[†] It is quite awful and quite senseless, it's just not right that an eleven year old boy should lose his life in these circumstances. And again my appeal really is that anyone that knows who this killer is, this is not a time for violence [sic]. Do the right thing and turn them in. I particularly appeal to the criminal fraternity -- if you know who this killer is, work with us to catch them quickly and take them off our streets.

COUNCILLOR

A local councillor, Rose Bailey -- who's lived in Croxteth for twenty-six years -- told us that the area had been experiencing problems with some of its young people:

BAILEY ACT: We've got the largest private housing estate in Europe, with no youth service input whatsoever. So you can imagine how many thousands of children there are. The only area where they do congregate and cause mayhem if you like, is in and around the shops. I've tried to get CCTV put in and ironically they've just approved the programme [sic].

[†] **ACT** = The live or recorded sound of an event or interview on location, i.e. as it 'actually' happens.

At the time of this study the Today programme news scripts were only available on the BBC's website for seven days after broadcast and consequently the script for the bulletin studied here is no longer recoverable.