# A Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach to Measuring Participant Power in a Radio News Bulletin about Youth Crime

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## 1. Introduction

Social relations are, *ipso facto*, relations of power. Representations of such relations in media discourse are always, therefore, in some degree at least an index of social power. As such, they have an ineluctably ideological dimension. My research, which is rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics, seeks to linguistically examine and critically evaluate the influence of ideologically significant values and beliefs on the production, distribution and consumption of news and other forms of media discourse. In this paper my focus is specifically on the representation of social actors in media texts. I propose a novel heuristic device for gauging the power with which, grammatically, social actors are invested and demonstrate the device's application with respect to a particular media text.

Before proceeding to the study itself I feel it is worth locating it philosophically by reiterating my claim (Haig 2009, 2011) that there are three key issues that anyone seeking to investigate the influence of ideology on language is obliged to address. First and foremost comes the ontological question 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 overall research project[1] of which this paper reports on just one small part 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 but authoritative media text concerning youth crime. This rather restricted focus on the epistemological question reflects my belief that fine-grained analysis of textual data is a necessary precondition for any substantive investigation of the language-ideology nexus. Such detailed analysis inevitably requires a great deal of space, even for very short texts such as the one under consideration here. As a consequence, in this paper the focus has had to be narrowed even further to an exploration of just one particularly salient aspect of the realisation of ideational

meaning in texts. As will be explained below, ideational meanings are those to do with the representation of actors, practices and ideas. The aspect of ideational meaning to be discussed in this paper is the set of grammatical resources for representing the various entities (including people, things and mental phenomena) with which a text is concerned.

## 2.　Method, Theory and Data

The overarching methodological framework for this study 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'. This is the version that has been developed since the 1980s by Norman Fairclough and his colleagues at Lancaster University in England (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 the leading proponent of this theory, Michael Halliday.[2]

From an explicitly functionalist as opposed to the currently more mainstream formalist perspective, SFL regards languages as constituting 'social semiotic' systems or 'meaning potentials' that have evolved to enable human beings to exchange three fundamental types of meaning: ideational meaning (the representation and identification 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. Accordingly, in an earlier paper (Haig 2010) I presented

a condensed version of my discussion of this topic at clause level in relation to the news bulletin text that I have analysed here. In this paper, as noted above, I extend my analysis of the bulletin by considering one aspect of the ideational meanings which it contains, again at the level of the clause only.[3]

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 finds 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. However, as noted above, in view of the complexity of the linguistic phenomena which it seeks to analyse, only the ideational meanings realised in the lexicogrammatical stratum via the system of TRANSITIVITY will be considered, and within that my focus will be chiefly limited to an analysis of the resources for representing social and other actors.[4]

The text selected for analysis here is an excerpt from a radio news bulletin broadcast by the BBC on its most authoritative national radio station, Radio 4, on Thursday, 23rd August 2007 (see Appendix). 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.[5] 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 research project was intended to look specifically at the influence of ideologies relating to youth and crime on the BBC's radio news broadcasts.

### 3.　The role of TRANSITIVITY in the representation of social actors

Social actors and other entities are represented in texts by means of the TRANSITIVITY system. TRANSITIVITY is a fundamental semantic concept in SFL which has proved to be powerful tool for the analysis of representation in texts.[6] It is a far more comprehensive and complex concept than the traditional grammatical distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. Rather, TRANSITIVITY in SFL refers to the entire system of representational resources made available by a particular language at the level of the clause. More technically, the TRANSITIVITY system is the component of the lexicogrammar which realises the Experiential metafunction (concerned with the representation of experience). This metafunction, together with the Logical metafunction (concerned with the ways in which clauses are linked into sentences and paragraphs), constitutes the Ideational metafunction of language. In short, the Ideational metafunction is the summation of all the linguistic resources through which our experience of reality (including also fictional and mental realities) is represented in language. The components of the TRANSITIVITY system are the *processes* in a text and the types of *participants* and *circumstances* typically associated with them. For example, in the prototypical sentence *John rode his bicycle through the park*, the process is encoded by the verb *rode*, the participants by the nominal groups *John* and *his bicycle* and the circumstance by the prepositional phrase *in the park*.

　　A principal goal of the research project of which this paper forms a part is to provide a detailed description of the radio news bulletin text's Ideational (both Experiential and Logical) metafunctional characteristics and to relate these critically to the ideologies which they help to realise. This paper summarises the findings of one part of the original study that dealt with the topic of participant usage and describes the heuristic device that was developed to assess the power relations indexed grammatically in the text. The next section of this paper presents the results of coding the text for TRANSITIVITY. Subsequent sections then discuss the pattern of participant usage identified in the text and introduce the heuristic device.

## 4. TRANSITIVITY: coding

For the analysis of Participants together with all other aspects of TRANSITIVITY the text has been annotated as shown on pages 7 and 8 in accordance with the key given in Box 1.

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**Box 1  KEY for TRANSITIVITY analysis**

**P** = Process; **Pb** = behavioural; **Pm** = material; **Pme** = mental; **Pv** = verbal;
**Px** = existential.

Relational processes:

**Pca** = circumstantial-attributive; **Pci** = circumstantial-identifying;

**Pia** = intensive-attributive; **Pii** = intensive-identifying;

**Ppa** = possessive-attributive; **Ppi** = possessive-identifying;

**Pcsa** = causative-attributive; **Pcsi** = causative-identifying.


**A** = Actor; **G** = Goal; **B** = Beneficiary; **R** = Range.

**S** = Senser; **Ph** = Phenomenon.

**Sy** = Sayer; **Rv** = Receiver; **Vb** = Verbiage.

**X** = Existent.

**Cr** = Carrier; **At** = Attribute; **T** = Token; **V** = Value;

**At/C** = conflation of Attribute with a circumstantial element;

**V/C** = conflation of Value with a circumstantial element.

**Ag** = Agent.

**C** = Circumstance; **Ca** = accompaniment; **Cc** = cause; **Cl** = location; **Cm** = manner;

**Co** = role; **Ct** = matter; **Cx** = extent.


Where participants and associated verbal elements have been ellipsed from a clause they are shown in {single curly brackets}.[†]

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[†] Regarding the question of filling in elements in this way, I have followed Martin and Rose who concede that it is difficult to know exactly how much to fill in but argue that for the purpose of analysis filling in provides a richer text to work with (2003: 177).

Edward Stourton　(programme co-presenter)

1i　　It (T) 's (Pci) eight o'clock (V/C) on Thursday the twenty-third of August (Cl),

1ii　　the headlines.

2　　An eleven-year-old (G) has been shot (Pm) dead (Cm) in Liverpool (Cl) { by a teenage boy (A)}.

3i　　Police (Sy) are appealing (Pv) for information (Vb),

3ii　　{police (Sy) are} saying (Pv)

3iii　　this (Cr) is (Pia) no time for silence (At).

4i　　This year's GCSE results (Cr) are (Pia) out (At) today (Cl),

4ii　　the pass rate (Cr) is likely to be (Pia) around ninety-nine percent (At).

5i　　MEPs (Sy) have expressed (Pv) support (Vb) for a Europe-wide register of sex-offenders (Ct),

5ii　　and a new theory (A) has emerged (Pm) about the timetable of human evolution (Ct).

6　　Today's newsreader (V) is (Pii) Alice Arnold (T).

Alice Arnold　(newsreader)

7i　　An eleven-year-old boy (A) has died (Pm)

7ii　　after {he (G) was} being shot (Pm) in Liverpool (Cl) {by a teenage boy (A)}.

8i　　Rhys Jones (A) was playing (Pm) football (R) with two friends (Ca) in a pub car park (Cl) in Croxteth (Cl)

8ii　　when he (G) was attacked (Pm) {by a teenage boy (A)}.

9i　　Detectives (Sy) say (Pv)

9ii　　a {teenage} boy (A) rode (Pm) past (Cl) on a BMX bike (Cm)

9iii　　and {the teenage boy (A)} fired (Pm) three shots (R),

9iv　　one of which (A) hit (Pm) Rhys Jones (G) in the neck (Cl).

10　　The Home Secretary Jacqui Smith (A) has sent (Pm) her condolences (G) to his family (B).

11　　Our correspondent Caroline Cheetham (Cr) is (Pca) at the scene (At/Cl).

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 (A) were playing (Pm) football (R) in the car park of the Fir Tree pub (Cl) at about seven o'clock last night (Cl)

12ii　　when a teenage boy [[ {who (A) was} wearing (Pm) a hooded top (G)]] (A) rode up (Pm) on a BMX bike (Cm)

12iii　　and {the teenage boy (A)} opened fire (Pm).

13i　　He (A) fired (Pm) three shots (R),

13ii　　one of which (A) hit (Pm) one of the boys (G) in the head or neck (Cl).

14　　He (A) later (Cl) died (Pm) at Alder Hey Children's Hospital (Cl).

15i　　He (T) hasn't yet been named (Pii) {by police (Ag)},

15ii　　but police (Sy) say (Pv)

15iii　　he (Ca) was (Pia) a local boy (At) from the private housing estate in Croxteth Park (Cl)

16i　　The pub and the nearby parade of shops (G) have been cordoned off (Pm) {by police (A)},

16ii    as police (A) continue searching (Pm) the area (G).

17    Last night (Cl), police (Sy) appealed (Pv) for [[ /// people (S) to examine (Pb) their consciences (Ph), // and {people (A) to} come forward (Pm) with information (Ca) ///]] (Vb)

Alice Arnold

18i    Detectives (Sy) have said (Pv)

18ii    that they (Cr) are (Pia) bewildered (At)

18iii    as to why the boy (G) was targeted (Pm) {by the teenage boy (A)}.

19    Assistant Chief Constable Simon Byrne of Merseyside Police (Sy) spoke (Pv) of his disgust at the attack (Vb).

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 (Cr>) is (Pia) quite awful and quite senseless (At) [[ that ]] (<Cr)

21i    It (Cr>) 's (Pia) just not right (At) [[ that an eleven-year-old boy (A) should lose (Pm) his life (R) in these circumstances (Cm)]] (<Cr)

21ii    and again my appeal (T) really is (Pii) [[ /// that – anyone [[ that (S) knows (Pme) [[ who (T) this killer (V) is (Pii)]] (Ph)]] – this (Cr) is (Pia) not a time for silence (At), // {you (A)} do (Pm) the right thing (R) // and {you (A)} turn (Pm>) them (G) in (<Pm) ///]] (V).

22    I (Sy) particularly appeal (Pv) to the criminal fraternity (Rv).

23i    If you (S) know (Pme) [[ who (T) this killer (V) is (Pii) ]] (Ph),

23ii    {you (A)} work (Pm) with us (Ca)

23iii    to {let us (A)} catch (Pm) them (G) quickly (Cm)

23iv    and {to let us (A)} take (Pm>) them (G) off (<Pm) our streets (Cl).

Alice Arnold

24i    A local councillor, Rose Bailey (Sy), << 24ii>> told (Pv) us (Rv)

24ii    << who (A) 's lived (Pm) in Croxteth (Cl) for twenty-six years (Cx) >>,

24iii    that the area (A) had been experiencing (Pm) problems (R) with some of its young people (Ca).

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 (Cr) 've got (Ppa) the largest private housing estate in Europe (At) with no youth service er input whatsoever (Ca),

25ii    so you (S) can imagine (Pme)

25iii    how many thousands of children (X) there are (Px)
      [deleted: they're all family homes with three four five bedrooms with no activities whatsoever in place to to cater for these young people]

25iv    and the only area [[ /// where they (A) do congregate (Pm) // and and {they (A)} cause (Pm) mayhem (R), if you like, ///]] (T) is (Pci) in in and around the shops (V) [deleted: erm].

26i    I (A) tried to get (Pm) [[CCTV (G) put in (Pm) {by the city council (A)}]] (G)

26ii    and ironically they (A) just approved (Pm) the programme (G).

## 5.　Participant Analysis

The pattern of TRANSITIVITY usage in the text and the ways in which this may either reflect the ideology of the programme makers or afford particular ideological readings for the audience were discussed at length in the larger study from which this paper is derived (Haig 2009). A somewhat condensed account of one part of that investigation, relating to process type usage, has also been published separately (Haig 2011). This paper is intended to review the evidence obtained in the original study for another aspect of the operation of ideology in the realisation of experiential meanings in the text. Specifically, it considers the evidence provided by an analysis of the participants that the text portrays. A key feature of this analysis is the development of what I have termed a 'participant power hierarchy' – a heuristic device for measuring the differential assignment of grammatical power to participants within the TRANSITIVITY system of a text.

### 5.1　Participant power hierarchy

When considering the pattern of participant representation in a text from the perspective of ideology it is useful to have some general sense of the sorts of participants which tend to be construed grammatically as powerful and of those which are construed as less powerful or even powerless. The critical ecolinguist Andrew Goatly has made the interesting suggestion that we may construct a hierarchy of participant power relations in a text based on their various roles in different types of clauses. He employed such a hierarchy to analyse the depiction of nature and natural phenomena in BBC World Service radio news programmes (Goatly 2002). In that study he only considered Material process, but in an earlier presentation of his ideas (Goatly 2000: 288) he suggests the following more encompassing hierarchy, listed in order of decreasing power[7]:

1. Actor in Transitive Material process
2. Actor in Intransitive Material process
3. Sayer in Verbal process
4. Experience in Mental process
5. Experiencer in Mental process
6. Affected in Material process

According to this scheme, Actors are seen as having the most power, above all when they act on some other participant in a transitive clause. The power of Sayers lies in

their ability to send messages and thus have an effect on the consciousness of other sentient participants. Experiences (or Phenomena in the terminology of Halliday and Matthiessen's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (IFG3) and the present study) exert power by virtue of being capable of impinging on the consciousness of other sentient participants, albeit non-volitionally. Experiencers (or Sensers) have the relatively weak ability to respond to outside stimuli. Finally, Affecteds (or Goals) are construed as powerless since they are simply acted on by Actors: in Goatly's phrase, an Affected is merely 'the victim of the power of Actors' (288).

Goatly himself admits that the details of this hierarchy 'may be rather debatable' (288) but by employing it to analyse the news texts in his study he demonstrates very effectively how the anthropocentric bias of mainstream news tends to result in representations of natural phenomena which marginalise them as 'environment' rather than as active participants, except in cases where nature is seen as constituting a threat to human life or commerce. I find Goatly's specific conclusions most persuasive and his study richly suggestive of the more general potential that such an approach to the analysis of participants may have. Accordingly, in my original study I chose to take a similar approach to the analysis of participants. However, Goatly's terminology is slightly different to that used here (and by most Systemic Functional linguists) and omits certain categories such as Receiver and Existent. Therefore, I have amended and expanded his hierarchy to yield a more conventionally-labelled and comprehensive scheme. This is shown in Box 2, with participants again ranked in decreasing order of power, and with sample clauses given to exemplify each category. Like Goatly's scheme, this one begins with Actor in Transitive Material processes as the most powerful kind of participant and descends through other kinds of 'active' participants to those which are progressively more acted upon than acting.

It must be borne in mind that by itself the hierarchy can never provide more than a very rough assessment of participant power in a text. This is because it is based purely on grammatical function rather than semantics.[8] Thus, for example, in the sentence *Mike gave Steve a fatal blow* Steve is still Beneficiary despite not benefiting from the action according to the definition of 'benefit' as 'deriving some enhancement of one's power'. Likewise Actors in Material clauses are not all equally powerful. Some actions may be inherently powerful, as in *Mike shot the gun*, but others seem to signify the absence of power as in *The boy died*. Here even in its intransitive form the Actor in the former clause seems more powerful than that in the latter.

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### Box 2  Participant power hierarchy

1. **Actor in a Transitive Material Process** [100]
   *Steve shot the boy.*
   Actors exercise their power to act materially on another participant, apparently volitionally.

2. **Actor in an Intransitive Material Process** [90]
   *Steve ran away.*
   Actors exercise their power to act materially, apparently volitionally, without affecting other participants.

3. **Sayer in a Verbal Process** [80]
   *Mike told a lie to Steve.*
   Sayers exercise their power to act semiotically (by sending a message), apparently volitionally, which has an effect on the consciousness of the Receiver (providing that one is present and sentient). Sayers in Verbal Processes without a Receiver should be considered less powerful.

4. **Behaver in Behavioural Process** [70]
   *His parents cried for hours.*
   Halliday describes Behavioural processes as being on the 'borderline' between Material and Mental processes because they include both physiological and psychological action. Hence, the Behaver is ranked above Senser here. Behavers exercise their powers to act but the action does not usually impinge on another participant. In some cases, however, a Phenomenon may also be involved, as in *The children sniffed the glue.*

5. **Senser in a Mental Process** [50]
   *Mike heard the police sirens.*
   Sensers exercise their power to respond to an external stimulus but this has no effect on another participant and may be non-volitional.

6. **Beneficiary in a Material Process** [30]
   *Steve shot the boy for Mike.*
   The Beneficiary is the entity for whom the action was performed and who 'benefits' from it in some way, where benefiting may be construed as receiving an enhancement of power. By implication the Beneficiary may have the power to occasion such actions.

7. **Receiver in a Verbal Process** [20]
   *Mike told a lie to Steve.*
   Receivers have the power to respond to verbal signals provided they are sentient. The reception itself however is generally non-volitional.

8. **Phenomenon in a Behavioural Process** [15]
   *The children sniffed the glue.*
   The Phenomenon has the power to impinge on the consciousness of another participant and stimulate it to act materially or behave in some way.

9. **Phenomenon in a Mental Process** [10]
   *Mike heard the police sirens.*
   The Phenomenon has the power to impinge on the consciousness of another participant.

10. **Existent in an Existential clause** [5]
    *There was a boy in the car park.*
    Here the existence of some entity is asserted. No power (beyond simple existence) is grammatically assigned to it, but neither is any action directed towards it.

11. **Goal in a Transitive Material Process** [2]
    *Steve shot the boy.*
    The Goal in a Transitive Material process does not exercise any power but rather is acted upon by another participant. However, it is an autonomous participant which is independent of the process.

12. **Range in a Material Process** [1]
    *The boys were playing football.*
    Unlike Goals, the Range is not independent of the process but tied to it in some way. Thus, although slightly unnatural, we could restate the example sentence as The boys footballed. A less forced example would be They ran a race and *They raced.*

\* Numbers in square brackets are nominal scores for each participant role (see Section 5.3).

## 5.2  Other participants

In addition to the items listed in the hierarchy, two other categories need to be considered: participants in Relational processes and Circumstances. Both of these categories have complex realisations and often only a tangential connection to power relations. Hence it would be difficult to accommodate them in the hierarchy without specifying the power relations of many different subcategories. Due to this complexity, they will be considered here as more context-dependent than the other categories and hence as requiring evaluation on a case-by-case basis.

### 5.2.1  Relational process participants

Since Relational processes are used frequently in the text it would seem necessary to consider the power implications of the various participant roles. However, the very nature of the Relational process is one in which one entity is related (either through classification in the case of Attributive clauses or definition in the case of Identifying clauses) to another entity or a quality. In other words, Relational processes are processes of 'being' rather than 'doing' and as such the question of power is less obvious. The principal participants are Carrier (Cr), Attribute (At), Token (T) and Value (V). Table 1 summarises the main types of Relational processes.[9]

**Table 1  Summary of Relational Processes**

| Type / Mode | Attributive ('At *is an attribute of* Cr') | Identifying ('T *is the identity of* V') |
|---|---|---|
| **Intensive** | *Alice* (Cr) *is clever* (At) | *Barbara* (T) *is the cleverest one* (V) |
| **Circumstantial** | *Chris* (Cr) *is in a meeting* (At/C) | *Tomorrow* (T/C) *is the 7th April* (V/C) |
| **Possessive** | *Donald* (Cr) *has a bicycle* (At) | *The bicycle* (T) *is Donald's* (Cr) |
| **Causative** | *Eric* (Ag) *made his son* (Cr) *become a teacher* (At) | *Frank* (Ag) *made his son* (T) *become the headmaster* (Cr) |

In the case of Intensive Relationals, which we may take as the prototypical Relational process pattern for expressing relations of 'being', there is no inherent power attached to the grammatical role of Carrier or Token. For example, even though cleverness can be a form of power, the power of cleverness attributed to Alice is not *due* to her *role* as Carrier. In Critical Realist terms, though the cleverness is attributed it is attributed as an unexercised power. This contrasts with process types wherein the power of cleverness is represented as exercised, such as in a Material process, *Alice solved the problem*, or even in a Verbal process, *Alice spoke with erudition*. Likewise, in Circumstantial Relationals there is again no inherent power in the roles of Carrier and Token, even if

the circumstantial element is a powerful location such as *Chris is in a <u>Cabinet meeting</u>*. In Possessive Relationals we do find a certain degree of power (the power to possess) but again it is not a power that is exerted or realised. Nevertheless, Carriers and Tokens, by the very fact that they are mentioned in the text, acquire some grammatical power which is arguably greater than that of an Existent but less than that of Behaver. Therefore they will be treated as described in Section 5.2.3 below.

However, there is clearly a power dimension to the role of Agent in a Causative Relational clause. Halliday deals with Agents in terms of ergativity (IFG2: 171), but I shall follow Eggins (2004: 248-9) and Martin *et al.* (1997: 124) in regarding Agent as an additional TRANSITIVITY participant. Thus, in a clause such as *Mike made Steve become a member of the gang,* the Agent, *Mike*, exercises his power, apparently volitionally, to bring about a change in the characteristics of the Carrier, *Steve*, apparently against the latter's will.

## 5.2.2  Circumstances in all process types

As Halliday and Matthiessen observe, 'the line between participants and circumstances is not a very clear one' (IFG3: 277-78). Most circumstances are either adverbs or prepositional phrases. In the latter case they usually contain a nominal group which in many cases could form the Subject in the clause: compare *They played in the car park* and *The car park served as their playground.* This is a feature of the representation of natural phenomena to which Goatly pays particular attention, suggesting that if nature were to be conventionally given a more Actor-like representation in texts such as in the second sentence above then our relationship with the natural world might be more sustainable. I discussed the pattern of Circumstance usage more fully in Haig (2009: 113-14). Here I shall mention just one type of Circumstance, namely Accompaniment, which has a clear power role in the clause. For example, in *John was playing football with two friends*, the two friends are clearly just as active as John. They have not, however, been chosen as Subject of the clause and therefore do not have the same grammatical power. The treatment of such Circumstances will be as described in the following section.

## 5.3  Participant power analysis

In order to grasp the power dimension of participant roles in this text, a nominal 'power rating' score has been assigned to each type of participant in the hierarchy. This is a development of the power hierarchy concept that was not attempted by Goatly but it is one that I think is clearly suggested by his approach. The scores

are shown in square brackets beside the name of each participant in Box 2 above. The scale ranges from 100 for the Actor in a Transitive Material process to 1 for a Range in a Material process. It goes without saying that these figures have no basis in empirical experimentation and must be regarded, like the hierarchy itself, as no more than a heuristic device. A great deal of quantitative and statistical research would be required in order to assign scores which reflected real-world power relationships more closely, particularly if processes were differentiated to such a degree of delicacy that individual verbs and senses could be rated.[10]

The greatest intervals between adjacent participants in the hierarchy occur between Behaver in Behavioural Process [70 points] and Senser in a Mental Process [50 points] and between this and Beneficiary in a Material Process [30 points]. The first of these gaps is intended to reflect the major division between essentially physically active participants and those participants who are not active in the process. The second is intended to indicate the distinction between participants who act and those who are either acted upon or only indirectly related to the process.

The power ratings shown in Box 2 relate to participants in full, non-embedded, active voice clauses. The scores for other occurrences of participants are adjusted as follows:

- Ellipsed participants: half points.
- Participants in embedded clauses: half points.
- Actors in passive clauses: half points.
- Carriers and Tokens in Relational clauses: between 10 and 60 points, depending on the nature of the participant: animate participants scored higher than inanimate ones.
- Agents: equal the points of the active participant in an equivalent non-Causative clause.
- Circumstances (Accompaniment): half the points of the active participant.

These adjustments are applied cumulatively. Thus an ellipsed participant in an embedded clause receives quarter points, an ellipsed actor in an embedded passive clause receives one eighth points and so on.

The results of applying this scoring system to the text are shown in Table 2. While I would emphasise again that this can only be a very imprecise measure of real-world power, as is evident from the table the five highest rated participants (all those over 200 points) were as shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 2  Participant power rating**

| Mood class | ES | AA | CC | AA | SB | AA | RB | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| {now} | 20 | | | | 5 | | | 25 |
| Rhys Jones | 2 | 185 | 142 | 2 | 50 | | | 381 |
| a teenage boy | 25 | 240 | 263 | 50 | 60 | | | 638 |
| police | 120 | 80 | 350 | 170 | 203 | | | 923 |
| GCSEs | 10 | | | | | | | 10 |
| pass rate | 10 | | | | | | | 10 |
| MEPs | 80 | | | | | | | 80 |
| new theory | 90 | | | | | | | 90 |
| Alice Arnold | 5 | | | | | | | 5 |
| football | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| friends | | 25 | 60 | | | | | 85 |
| shots | | 101 | 101 | | | | | 202 |
| Jacqui Smith | | 100 | | | | | | 100 |
| condolences | | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| his family | | 30 | | | | | | 30 |
| Cheetham | | 10 | | | | | | 10 |
| hooded top | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| pub & shops | | | 2 | | | | 10 | 12 |
| the area | | | 2 | | | 100 | 60 | 162 |
| people | | | 45 | | 71 | | | 116 |
| consciences | | | 15 | | | | | 15 |
| information | | | 10 | | | | | 10 |
| {the killing} | | | | | 20 | | | 20 |
| his life | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| appeal | | | | | 10 | | | 10 |
| the right thing | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| criminal frat'y | | | | | 93 | | | 93 |
| Rose Bailey | | | | | | 170 | 100 | 270 |
| {Today} | | | | | | 20 | 50 | 70 |
| problems | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| young people | | | | | | 50 | 73 | 123 |
| youth services | | | | | | | 5 | 5 |
| CCTV | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| {local council} | | | | | | | 125 | 125 |
| **TOTAL** | **362** | **774** | **992** | **222** | **514** | **341** | **427** | **3,632** |

・ Participants shown in brackets are those not explicitly named in the text.
・ Scores with decimal fractions have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

**Table 3. Rating of powerful participants**

| Participant | Rating |
|-------------|--------|
| police | 923 |
| a teenage boy | 638 |
| Rhys Jones | 381 |
| Rose Bailey | 207 |
| shots | 202 |

Note that for the purposes of this analysis the category of *police* includes not only *police* but also *detectives* and Byrne's use of *I* and *us*; the category of a *teenage boy* includes not only Cheetham's use of that expression but all other references to the killer including Byrne's use of *them*; and *Rhys Jones* includes references to *an eleven-year-old (boy)* and also to Cheetham's use of *the three boys* (in which case 30 of the possible 90 points were assigned to Rhys Jones and 60 to the *two friends*).

That the police are represented as the most powerful participants in this text is perhaps hardly surprising given the large number of Verbal processes which have a police-related participant as Sayer. Neither is it likely that listeners to the programme would find it unusual that the police figured prominently in a news bulletin of this nature where, in the immediate aftermath of a murder, it is, after all, the generally accepted function of the police (at the practical level) to investigate the crime, catch the assailant and 'restore' law and order. And certainly here, as throughout this chapter, no claims can be made for the typicality of this text as a BBC radio news bulletin in terms of the power-rating it gives to the police: to make such claims would require extensive comparative content analysis of the sort characteristic of the Glasgow University Media Group's approach to media ideology analysis (Eldridge 1995; Philo 1995) – a task which I hope to undertake as part of my future research on this topic. Nevertheless, there are a number of features of these results which I feel are worthy of note with respect to questions of ideology.

### 5.3.1 Prominence of the police

Firstly, I would suggest that listeners might be surprised to discover just what a high degree of *grammatical* prominence is assigned to the police here. Over one quarter of the participant-power in this text is given to this group. To reiterate:

there is, patently, a difference between representations of grammatical 'power' in text and the actual possession or use of power in the material world. Nevertheless, the very fact that the producers of this text have allotted so much grammatical power to the police is an indication of the newsworthiness (which might equally be termed 'representation-worthiness' were it not such an unwieldy word) that the doings and sayings of the police have in the eyes of the text producers. However, this in turn may be viewed as telling us more about the ideology of the text producers, and of the institutional and socio-political contexts in which they work, than the actual power of the police.

### 5.3.2 Absence of witnesses

Secondly, and conversely, the above point may become clearer if we consider what kinds of participants are *not* included in the text. In particular, there are no references to witnesses, by which I mean ordinary (and, in particular, local) people who saw either the shooting itself or related events such as what happened during the immediate aftermath, or who could provide background information (or 'colour', in journalistic parlance) about the incident or the place where it occurred. In this respect the status of Rose Bailey's contribution is ambiguous. On the one hand she is introduced by Arnold explicitly as 'a local councillor' (i.e. an official) but also as someone who has lived in Croxteth for twenty-six years and hence a local resident. The ambiguity is reflected in her language: ideationally, at least some of her comments seem to be those of an official (e.g. 'I tried to get CCTV put in') but interpersonally, her elderly female Liverpudlian accent conveys, to me at least, a persona firmly rooted in the lifeworld of the local community. For the purpose of this analysis, however, I have classified her contribution as that of an official since it was she, as councillor, rather than any other local resident, who was interviewed. Nevertheless, her rootedness in the lifeworld of the community clearly distinguishes her contribution from that of Simon Byrne and I accordingly classified them as distinct functions in my description of the text's generic structure (see Haig 2009, Chapter 11).

Although Cheetham seems to have been involved in reporting this incident from the previous evening and was present at the scene on this morning from very early on[11] her report makes no mention of witnesses. Of course, witnesses sometimes refuse to speak to reporters and police sometimes prevent reporters from talking to them. However, in this case such reasons cannot account for the

absence of quotations from witnesses or references to them because they featured prominently (though usually anonymously and variously described as 'residents', 'neighbours' and 'drinkers') in the reports of all the national daily newspapers which covered the story on this morning.

A more likely explanation is that it is a generic feature of this kind of news bulletin text that comments from witnesses are simply not generally included. Since the bulletin genre places a high premium on brevity and succinctness, most of the stories in fact consist only of the utterances of the newsreader, who introduces the story, and one correspondent or reporter. This is confirmed by a comparison with other news bulletins broadcast during the week in question, the results of which are shown in Table 4.

As the table shows, during the week in which this bulletin appeared a total of 114 items were featured on the 8 am and 1 pm bulletins. Incidentally, that the Rhys Jones shooting was seen by the text producers as an exceptionally newsworthy event is suggested by the fact that three separate headings (thus counted as three separate items) were used to describe it in the News Script[12] for the 8 am bulletin on Thursday 23rd August: 'Shooting' (covering Cheetham's contribution); 'Detectives' (covering Byrne's contribution); and 'Councillor' (covering Bailey's contribution). No other story during this week was divided into multiple headings in this way.

**Table 4  Speaker composition of Radio 4 news bulletins (20th – 25th August) 2007**

|  | Mon (20th) | | Tues (21st) | | Wed (22nd) | | Thu (23rd) | | Fri (24th) | | Sat (25th) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm | 8 am | 1 pm |
| **Total items** | 12 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 12 | 6 | **13** | 6 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 73 | 41 |
| **N only** | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | **3** | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 24 | 20 |
| **N > R** | 8 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 3 | **4** | 3 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 35 | 20 |
| **N > O** |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | **5** |  | 4 |  |  |  | 10 |  |
| **N > R > O** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **1** |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| **N > W** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |

- **N** = newsreader; **R** = reporter/correspondent; **O** = official; **W** = witness; > = followed by.
- 8 am bulletins last about 10 minutes, 1 pm bulletins last about 5 minutes except on Saturdays when they last about 10 minutes (including two minutes of sports news at the end of the bulletin not counted in this analysis).
- Items counted according to list printed at the head of each BBC News Script unless unavailable (Tuesday 21st both bulletins; Saturday 25th both bulletins) in which case items counted by the author.

Of the 114 items, only one (from the 8 am bulletin on Saturday 25th August) featured an eyewitness' comment. The story in question concerned extensive forest fires that had broken out in Greece and the witness was an English holidaymaker giving an account of what she had seen. That such a story should make use of witness commentary in this way is partly due to the nature of the story itself, which could be described as intrinsically witness-dependant, at least in its early stages. This is because, firstly, the forest fires constituted what, in White's terms, was an 'event story' (White 1997) which occurred in a public setting (as opposed to an 'issues report', an example of which would be the item in this news bulletin about the new theory of evolution); secondly, because the event was highly visual and shocking; and thirdly because it occurred in a remote and dangerous place which reporters could not easily access.[13] We should note, however, that the Rhys Jones shooting too shares at least the first two of these features. Furthermore, there were several other similar stories during the period (particularly concerning Hurricane Dean, which was at that time causing severe problems in the Caribbean) that could have included similar comments from witnesses but did not. In general, these results support the findings of numerous other studies of news sources which have shown that news producers tend to rely on a limited range of officially-sanctioned voices (Ericson et al 1989; Richardson 2006; Sigal 1973). Here, not only are witnesses not allowed to speak for themselves, they are not even afforded the power of Sayer in Verbal process clauses or, indeed, any grammatical power whatsoever. This again, I would suggest, reflects the professional ideology of the text producers.

### 5.3.3  Power differences between police and other participants

The third noteworthy feature of the power rating analysis is that, more remarkable even than the absolute power ranking of the police is the power *gap* between the police and the subsequent categories. If asked to recall what this bulletin was about, I think it likely that listeners would tend to say something like 'It was about that young boy who was shot in Liverpool,' rather than 'It was about the police'.[14] And yet the police are represented (at least according to this particular heuristic scale) as being almost as powerful as Jones and his killer combined. Of course, the prominent ranking of the police could well be attributed to the 'rather debatable' nature of the power classification used in this analysis: were the various types of participant to be scored differently this would naturally produce different results.

However, this classification was not drawn up with the intention of emphasising the power of any particular category of real-world (or fictional) entity and to that extent I would argue that it is ideologically neutral. Of course, at a deeper level it does reflect my ideology concerning what I take to be more or less powerful forms of process, but it is difficult to see how this would favour any particular social group. At a deeper level still though, the ideology behind the hierarchy is one which subscribes to a typically English language- and anthropocentric transitivity-based view of processes rather than, say, an ergativity-based one such as is characteristic of the Algonquin language Blackfoot which, as Goatly argues, seems to afford its speakers more ecologically sustainable forms of consciousness (Goatly 2004).

### 5.3.4 Power of atypical participants

As a fourth noteworthy feature of the rankings, we should recall that the hierarchy used here follows Goatly's own in assigning power to some participants which one would not consider to have any power at all. As the most extreme example of this, we may consider the two references made in the text to the present time, once by Stourton (16) and once by Byrne (17):

(16)   _It_ (T) _'s_ (Pci) _eight o'clock_ (V/C) _on Thursday the twenty-third of August_  [ES 1i]

(17)   _this_ (Cr) _is_ (Pci) _not a time for silence_ (At)  [SB 21ii]

Both the Token _It_ and the Carrier _this_ have been scored as 10 points – the minimum for a Relational process Subject role participant. And yet in what sense can this abstract concept of time, either in its punctual (as in 16) or durative (as in 17) aspect, be said to have any power at all?

The rationale for assigning a power score here is that time itself is a valuable commodity in Western culture (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 8) and therefore has value both of use and exchange. In Volume II of _Captial_ Marx discusses time in relation to the production and circulation of commodities, noting that:

> the more perishable a commodity, the greater are the absolute barriers to its circulation time that its physical properties impose, and the less appropriate it is as an object of capitalist production. Capitalism can only deal in

commodities of this kind in populous places, or to the extent that distances are reduced by the development of means of transport, (Marx 1978 [1885]: 206).

Of course these days, when it comes to that most perishable of commodities, news, the whole world is now 'a populous place'. For Marx here adumbrates what subsequently became one of the great themes of twentieth century cultural change – the annihilation of space through time, or what David Harvey describes as 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1990: 240-59). This is nowhere more the case than with news, for which up-to-dateness is its very lifeblood. The compression of time and space has been largely a result of the development of instant global communication technology, which has rendered being up-to-date a matter of mere seconds. Thus whereas, for example, in 1805 news of the naval victory and Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar was not published in Britain until two weeks later (O'Sullivan et al 2003: 191) the 'Baghdad Blogger' (the pseudonymous Salam Pax) reported the 2003 invasion of Iraq to the world in real time, at least until the city's electricity supply and his Internet connection were destroyed (McCarthy 2003). The use value of time for news is the value it has for journalists with deadlines to meet and rivals to beat. The exchange value is the price attached to 'new' news such as scoops and breaking news.

Time is also an essential commodity in police investigations, where it is a commonplace of forensic science that the first few minutes and hours after a crime has been committed are when decisive evidence is most likely to be found and the likelihood of apprehending perpetrators is greatest (Jackson & Jackson 2007).

More generally, the present time has greater news value than past time or future time because it is more real, more 'immediate'. Hence saying *It was eight o'clock ten minutes ago on Thursday the twenty-third of August* has less value for listeners than stating the present time (except that were a presenter to say such a thing at the beginning of a bulletin it would probably catch their attention on account of its very oddity). Note also that in this case it is the very precision of the time, marked with utmost scientific accuracy by the Greenwich Time Signal 'pips' which immediately precede this and other such bulletins, that announces its power. Indeed, since there is no power in the world which can alter absolute time, whereas the passage of time effects changes on all things, we might regard it as the most powerful of all participants. Clearly within the clause this power may also

be manifest in metaphorical usages of the word time: in the sentence *Time flies like an arrow*, for example, where it is *time* rather than a hitherto undiscovered species of Diptera that is the Subject, *time* is Actor in an intransitive Material process and so would be given 90 points according the scale used here. It should be recognised at this point that such a failure to distinguish between literal and figurative usage is a major weakness of the present rating system. In text genres where metaphor is more extensively used this is likely to be a particular problem.

A related problem concerns inanimate Actors which are ranked highly in the text, such as shots. In this particular case the problem is exacerbated by the semantics of 'shot', which seem to cause difficulty even for lexicographers. For the sense in which it is being used in this text the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2003) defines 'shot' as 'the firing of a gun or cannon', for which the sole non-figurative usage example given is 'Mulder killed him with a single shot'. The problem here lies in the extremely close relation between the action of firing and the item being fired: one cannot fire without firing something (even if it is just blanks) and the dictionary's definition could equally have been 'the shooting of a gun or cannon'. But is it the gun which is fired or the bullet? In the news bulletin text,[15] Arnold and Cheetham use almost identical phrases to describe the incident. Cheetham's sentence is reproduced here as (18):

(18)   *He* (A) *fired* (Pm) *three shots* (R), *one of which* (A) *hit* (Pm) *one of the boys* (G) *in the head or neck* (Cl)  [CC 13]

In the first clause of this clause complex, *shots* are Range and thus score the minimum value of one point. Range seems to me the most appropriate participant role to assign for *shots* here since, according to Halliday's description of Range, the word is one of the class which 'expresses the process itself' and 'enables us to specify further the number or kind of processes that take place' (IFG2: 146, 147). This also accords well with the *ODE* definition cited above. However, in the second clause *one of which* (meaning one of them, i.e. one of the shots) is Actor and so scores the maximum 100 points. In fact, the matter would have been clearer if *bullets* (which grammatically would have been closer to the role of Goal) had been substituted for *shots* in the first clause. The *ODE*, however, does not give a definition of *shot* with the meaning of 'bullet': the closest definitions given are 'a ball of stone or metal used as a missile shot from a large gun or cannon',

which clearly refers to something older and much more substantial; and 'tiny lead pellets used in quantity in a single charge or cartridge in a shotgun', which is too small and relates to a different sort of firearm.[16] For comparison, both the *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (2004) and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) give extensive coverage of 'shot' as a noun but the only definitions relevant to the present case are, respectively: 'a shot is an act of firing a gun' and 'to fire a gun', both of which point to the action only and not the object being propelled from the gun. Nevertheless I would suggest that the sentence as uttered by Cheetham is fully comprehensible to the programme's audience and that therefore *one of which* must carry the sense of 'bullet' here, which can quite unproblematically form the Actor in a Material process in a way that a Range could not.

## 6.　Conclusion

My main objectives in undertaking the larger study of youth crime reporting in BBC radio news (Haig 2009) of which this paper reports on one small part were to assess the potential of a close SFL-based CDA study for demonstrating whether the coverage was ideological and, if so, to consider whether it was such as would tend to perpetuate inequitable social relations in British society. With this aim in mind, in this paper I have presented an analysis and discussion of one aspect of the TRANSITIVITY patterns in the text and sought to link those patterns to the corresponding ideologies which these realise. Specifically, I have proposed the participant power hierarchy – a simple heuristic device for the measurement of participant power – as a useful tool for textual analysis of participants and applied it as a contribution to the investigation of ideology in a short radio news bulletin text. The results of the analysis have demonstrated that the device provides a useful indication of the grammatical power assigned to participants and that this can be related successfully in most cases to the actual degree of social power that those participants have or are represented as having by the text producers.

　　Finally, to conclude my consideration of the participant power hierarchy used in this paper, I would like to draw attention to two problems which would appear to suggest possible further lines of development. Firstly, there is the problem of how to rate the power of participants where the process with which they are related is negated. In the above analysis negation has been ignored and so, for example, in Cheetham's clause *He hasn't yet been named* [CC 15i] the (ellipsed)

police as Agent are assigned 40 points. It would not be unreasonable to argue, against this approach, that not performing an action or making some utterance may represent the absence of power and ought to be scored as zero. Indeed, the assignment of negative scores might be appropriate in such cases. My decision to ignore negation was based on the simplifying assumption that the power hierarchy should apply simply to participant roles *per se* irrespective of the polarity of the process. In the present text, where negation was very rarely used this has had no appreciable impact on the results. For the analysis of texts characterised by higher levels of negation, however, this might not be the case. The second problem relates to the obvious fact that this text is multivocalic and that all but the first speaker are themselves represented in the text (either by self or by others) as grammatical participants. In assessing the relative power-rating of the police in this text, for example, how should the fact that perhaps the most prominent speaker of all was himself a senior representative of the police? Here again, my simplifying assumption was to ignore this issue, for the same reason as given above with respect to negation, but it seems that if we are concerned with providing as complete a measure as possible of the power ascribed to participants in a text then the identity of those whose voices actually *produce* the words that we hear ought somehow to be factored into the calculation. As a first approximation this could be done by, for example, doubling the power rating scores for such participants. It is hoped that further developments of the participant power hierarchy will provide solutions to the abovementioned problems.

## 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 3 of that work. In Sections 1 and 2 it also reincorporates some material from Haig (2011).

2 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, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 3rd ed. (2004). Note that this is referred through in the text as IFG3. 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).

3 For the complete analysis of all three types of meaning in this news bulletin text see Haig (2009).

4 In this paper I follow the Hallidayan convention of showing the names of grammatical systems such as TRANSITIVITY in small capitals.

5 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).

6 For a full account of the TRANSITIVITY system, including a description of the various types of process, see IFG3 (Ch. 5). For a shorter but very lucid introduction see Eggins (2004, Ch. 8).

7 For details of process types see IFG3 (Ch. 5). A useful summary is provided in Eggins (Ch. 8).

8 In saying this we should not forget the fact that SFL grammar is first and foremost a *functional* or, as Halliday calls it a 'semanticky' grammar (IFG3: 31): one oriented to describing and explaining language as a resource for making meaning.

9 The grammar of Relational processes is complex. The presentation here is a considerably simplified version of the account given in IFG3 (210-248). In Table 1, Ag indicates Agent and C indicates Circumstance.

10 In fact the Automatic Discourse Analysis (AAD) method of the late Marxist linguist Michel Pêcheux appears to have been developed along such lines (Pecheux 1995 [1969]) for the analysis of French texts. However, it seems to have been a rather elaborate and cumbersome approach, which may in part have accounted for its lack of uptake. In a recent introduction to this method Wallis states that 'While the AAD and CDA approaches are methodologically irreconcilable, it is important to note that the AAD method has now been abandoned in favour of a more linguistically sophisticated automatic syntactic parser of French,' (Wallis 2007: 266).

11 That this was the case is suggested by comments made by Cheetham elsewhere during this programme concerning the police news conference.

12 At the time of the original study, the News Scripts for the Radio 4 news bulletins were posted on the channel's website for a limited number of days. Subsequently, this service was withdrawn and now the News Scripts are no longer available online. However, the News Script for this bulletin is reproduced in Haig (2009) and Haig (2010).

13 Just because journalists cannot get to the site where an event has occurred does not mean that witness reports must be the only source of information. It is possible, for example, that the woman, having fled from the fires and reached a place of safety, could have been

interviewed by a reporter and that her comments were subsequently excerpted from the interview for use in this bulletin. It would also have been possible for the reporter to compile a report based on the woman's account without using any actual excerpts from her comments. However, using her comments in this way, introduced directly by the newsreader, makes the item more vivid and dramatic and lends it a high degree of verisimilitude and 'human interest' as an example of the so-called 'Brits in trouble abroad' news story genre.

14 From the perspective of ideological critique, the issue of audience recall and retention of broadcast news is a fascinating one which has been widely studied (for example by Findahl & Hoijer 1975; Graber 1984; Gunter 1985; and Wodak 1996: Ch. 4). More recently, the subject has also been investigated in the context of webcasting (Mesbah 2006). This is another aspect of the present study which I intend to explore in future research.

15 The unintentional pun here arises from the fact that both *bullet* and *bulletin* derive from the Latin bulla meaning 'bubble' or 'round object'. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, in the former case, the etymology is via the French *boulette* meaning a 'small ball'; in the latter it is from the Italian *bullettino*, the diminutive of bulletta meaning 'passport', which in turn derives from *bulla* in the sense of 'bull' (i.e. seal) such as was affixed to official documents and which is still used today to refer to a papal edict. Perhaps this etymology was in Dwight Bolinger's mind when he entitled his book on language and power *Language: the loaded weapon*, the paperback version of which features a revolver on its cover.

16 The weapon used in the shooting was, according to evidence presented by the prosecution at the trial of Rhys Jones' killer, Sean Mercer, in October 2008, a Smith and Wesson .433 revolver dating from World War I. This evidence was, however, disputed by an independent forensics expert.

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## APPENDIX

**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 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 5/11/2011)