

Authority and Distance

Things to make your thoughts sound valid



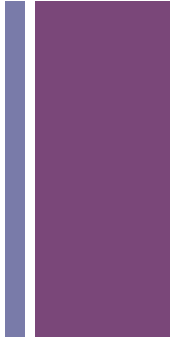
- Why is it necessary to create distance between the author/speaker and the hearer/reader? What effect does this have on the text?
 - Validity
 - Focus on the information
 - Establish social hierarchy
 - Authority and credibility

Relationships-the 411



Authority

- Necessary to exert power-social hierarchy
- Validates your ideas and thoughts-necessary to establish expertise
- Definition-*a person or organization having power or control in a particular, typically political or administrative, sphere.*





Distance



- The need to establish social distance between the speaker and the listener-why?
- Move away from the social group/individual which results in a focus upon the message, as opposed to the individual



Academic lingo



EXAMPLE

- It's so obvious that people were given jobs just because they were male or female. I don't think that is an acceptable approach and is even against the law.
- It appears that in a number of instances jobs were assigned on the basis of gender. Given the current anti-discrimination laws, this raises serious concerns.

+ Why so serious, son?

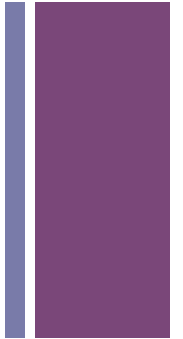
Example

When I look at the situation in emergency wards, with many staff leaving, it's hard not to worry about how many doctors will be available to treat patients in the future.

- Informal or formal?

If we consider the situation in emergency wards, with increasingly low staff retention rates, there are concerns about the capacity of hospitals to maintain adequate doctor to patient ratios

- Informal or formal?



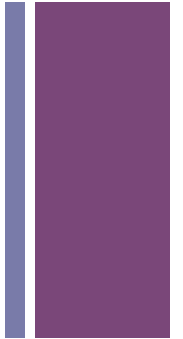


- Maintains the social hierarchy established by the capitalist nature of society-hegemonic intellectualism* (see notes)
- Little to no money = little to no education = little to no comprehension of basic sentence structures and lexis
- Intelligibility of the language-If you can decode the text, you can directly identify the agents responsible for *x* action.
- Maintain objectivity, essential to our understanding of reason and logic
- Compare the clips taken from *Fracture* and *21 Jump Street*. How does this comply with or challenge our understanding of the law and its function in our society.
- http://www.ted.com/playlists/117/words_words_words.html

Still, why use formal language?

+ The law and formal language

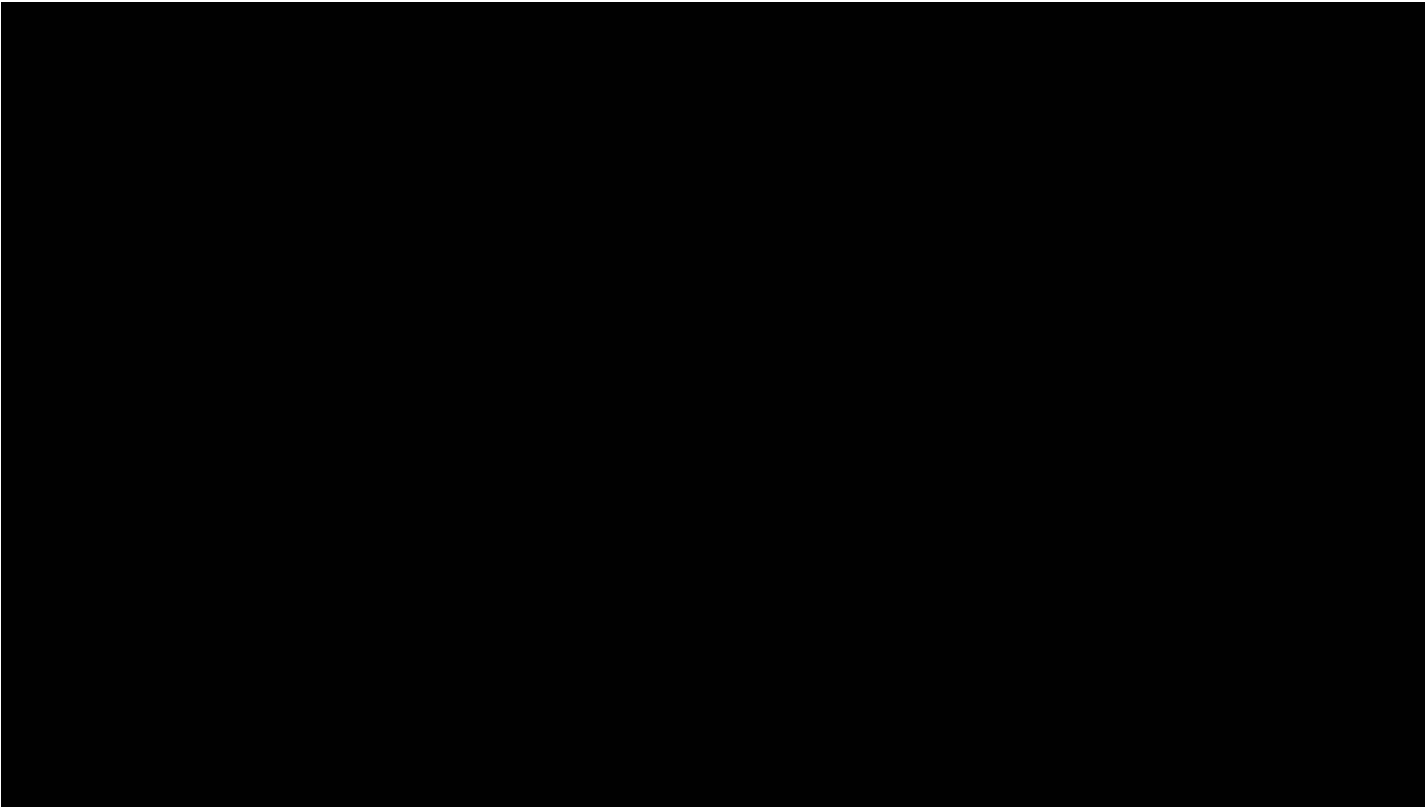
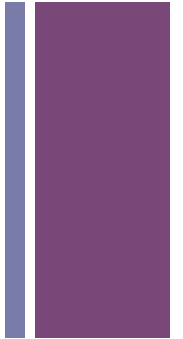
- Fracture scene





The law and formal language (cont.)

- 21 Jump Street scene





Authority as it's established in public domains; obfuscation and doublespeak



The former is consistently used to perform the latter.

Common perpetrators: politicians and human resource managers!

- Obfuscation-the willful hiding of meaning through circular or self reflexive language
- Doublespeak-evasive or ambiguous language designed to obfuscate

EXAMPLE

- a) In a political context the phrase 'robust interrogation' is associated with systematic abuse and torture.
- b) A business 'consolidating positions' really means that the firm is going to cut positions and thus, jobs.

+ Politeness theory



- Considering face
- How does the concept of face needs relate to taboo and how best to deal with that can of worms?



- Face – public self image
- Positive face – attending to someone's face needs by making them feel good about themselves
- Negative face – the desire to not be put upon by other people

Negative and positive face



- Positive face (approval) vs Negative face (independence)
- Face-referring to public image

	Positive or Negative Face
You look nice today	
Excuse me, but I think you're in my seat	
That's a good essay. Well done.	
I couldn't have understood that as easily as you did	
Do you mind if I read your magazine?	

Meeting face needs



How do we negotiate face needs?



- Euphemisms – language used to hide concepts which are uncomfortable to address. Colloquially referred to as ‘polite language’
 - EG ‘passed away’ as opposed to ‘dead’
- Dysphemisms – language used to offend, abuse or express emotions. These work in the opposite way to euphemisms.
 - EG ‘carked it’ or ‘kicked the bucket’ as opposed to ‘dead’

We use both to navigate the constantly changing field of social interaction. Your relationship with the other interlocutor will always dictate your choice to attend to their negative or positive face needs.



Key ideas to take into consideration when managing conversation:

- power-is this person more powerful than you?
- social distance-is this person in an elevated status?
- risk-what is the likelihood of this person being offended?

Flexibility with face needs