

CONTEXT

AND ITS MANY FACES

DOMAIN

This refers to the topic or subject that you are writing or talking about

What would this influence?

It is sometimes referred to as the *field*

SOCIAL PURPOSE

To include and exclude, as a marker of groups

As an instrument of action

To communicate information, ideas, attitudes, prejudices, ideological stance

To maintain social relationships, (e.g. 'phatic' communication, small talk) and to signal power structures

To promote linguistic innovation and for language play

SOCIAL PURPOSE CONT.

To promote social harmony and negotiate taboo

To promote cognitive and conceptual development

To entertain

For ceremony

To persuade

MODE

There are three modes of language

- 1. Spoken**
- 2. Written**
- 3. Signed**

SETTING

The situation where the communication (spoken/written/signed) takes place

If the setting is a television or radio studio, certain conventions need to be followed.

How informal or formal the setting is will affect the language being used.

THE SEMANTIC FIELDS USED

Field-specific lexis is vocabulary associated with a particular field/domain

For example a piece on politics might have the words' left-wing', election, MP's

THE AUDIENCE

The person or people that the speaker/writer/signer is addressing.

Primary audience is the intended audience

Secondary audience is the unintended audience, for example people who eavesdrop on a conversation

MANNER

Relationship is the key factor in determining language

This results in different levels of formality being used

**There may be a difference in status between the speakers-
terms of address**

Convergence and divergence

DETERMINING MANNER

Look at educational, social or economic status, (sometimes clues are given at the beginning of the transcript or text)

Turn-taking – is it cooperative or is one speaker more dominant?

Relationships are not static-look at if the purpose of the discourse changes halfway through making a different speaker the ‘expert’.

Standards agreed on by the wider community influence context.

For example TV/ radio ratings and codes of practice

Established forms of greeting, and forms of address

Politeness

VALUES, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

REGISTER

How informal or formal is the text?

Where does it fit on the continuum?

Look to the subsystems to differentiate between different registers

SUMMARY

Once a writer/speaker understands the context, they can then choose a register that is appropriate

YOUR TURN

Individually, come up with a character. Note their strengths, weaknesses, interests and motivations for conversing.

As a group, rehearse these three situations: a funeral, a party, and a meeting. Remember to stay in character!