

EDUC 172 – Part 1-1

We're ready now to take a look at the bigger picture how language works.

Language is used in a variety of different ways and communication, of course, happens both within and without language. What we are going to look at is primarily the way in which written or print language gets used publicly. These same different ideas applied to oral language as well as to print and but we'll focus a little more on print at first since print is very important to the way that education is conducted today. Our first interest is how to look at different domains of language use, so we're going to talk about first the domains that we would think of as personal social and cultural language use.

In each of these different domains - and domains get used in a variety of different context which is typical of academic language - however, domains in this context mean the different a spaces in kind practices or even discourses that people engage in and we can divide it up into these three parts: the personal where we the experience our personal relationships to language; the relationships that are closely connected to notions about identity. This doesn't have to mean only our connections to a single language though often mother tongue is very important too, but also to the various ways in which we relate to multiple languages and how each of those ways that we relate do find larger aspects of our personality and our presence in public space as well.

In each of the different domains of language, language tends to take different kinds of uses and perspectives, it provides different places for people to make meaning and to up actually be able to communicate intention to realize goals or to acquire knowledge and to think through life more deeply.

So looking at the personal, social, and cultural aspects of language we might begin to take a look and how each of these domains have conventional forms of expression and these typical forms are referred to as genres.

There are many different genres and a of course it's true for oral as well as written forms of expression, and it's also true that we have different genres, say in film, or in dance, or in painting or in any other given form that we choose to look at of expression.

What's key to these forms of expression is that they are conventional - the rules just like the rules grammar are not really a meant to be so much written out as they change and adapt with people's use over time.

Language serves purposes and specific needs of its users and the language shifts and changes as those needs and purposes for using language change.

The fact that we can use language in all kinds of different settings for different purposes makes it a more robust a system for us to communicate, and for us to live our lives through, so it really affects notions of identity. It also affects how we build our immediate family relations and our community relations.

These forms of relations expand from the individual out through the social and into a more sort of past context of the culture. The culture, although lived in the personal present, is the accumulation of all those different conventions and practices worn over time into various a modes or or forms that we can recognize as genres or as rituals or as any other kind of ruled bound practice which again changes over time. Change comes from the social worlds in which we practice our communications and make things happen and goes back into the world in which we understand.

Over time certain practices of language use are used enough so that eventually they become a part of the typical form of the language. So that's a slow process of culture developing over time and changing in the social moment we are living in the now when we have all our current and present needs and desires that we use language to fulfil and so we relate both tto language which is a social phenomenon and language is a cultural phenomenon.

In each of these different domains the personal, social, and cultural, we have specific genres that tend to be typical of those different domains. So we have a one-hand the idea of the genre as typical of the specific kind of use and on the other hand we have this gradually changing force which allows genres to multiply and diversify, at times to hybridize and and maybe have two different genres become one - like the idea of science fiction for example.

Or to change and disappear entirely in some ways, you know, from commonuse.

So what I'd like to do now - and to take a moment for you to you think through in reflect on how these different domains affect the way we use language - is to think about them and some genres related to each of the domains.

So if we were to go from the idea of the personal domain, we can see that we have personal correspondences in writing, as well as, of course, in oral exchanges. But we have personal correspondences, typically one might think of the letter. And letters have particular way that we express ideas within them; they tend to allow a much more personal expression of feelings and ideas then say with a more formal genre, like academic language.

They also have typical ways of typical salutations that are used, so "dear" or "to whom it may concern" or "hello", "hi". They end usually with the note like "sincerely" or "yours sincerely" "best wishes" and those kinds those modes of expression that are typical for correspondences.

And if we want to write a letter we not only have to adapt or use some of those typical ways of expressing ourselves but we also need to differentiate between different kinds of letters.

So genres have multiple layers. The business letter is far more formal, the letter of introduction is far more formal, than would be for example a quick exchange between two friends.

We also have a note-taking which is a central aspect of most students experience in school. Notes that will help memory and students all develop different note-taking skills.

In fact note-taking is one of the key skills which as teachers we should emphasize and teach explicitly to our students. Their ability to take good accurate notes that will help them study and retain important knowledge in the curriculum is essential to their success in school.

And is sometimes it is a skill that is taken for granted by many teachers and also in fact weakening their teaching ability.

Personal diaries are another personal form of writing that many people will engage in. Again to exchange with yourself or to get ideas out on paper so that you don't need to think them over and over again.

Sometimes the way to relate to yourself as a person and learn how that experience feels by writing things out to the diary as say an idealized listening other, "Dear diary" and that kind of thing in which it's taking almost a correspondence-like, you can see correspondence and diaries as being related genres.

And same with journals. Journals are more typically done as a part of say an adventure trip or what have you that you taken to go somewhere.

And this recollects all the memories not in that haphazard form of thinking about the day but then actually informing the journal with ideas what you've gone to go and discover. So if you write a journal about a trip to the capital city then your noting various aspects about architecture and things like that which would step outside of what you might be writing say in a diary in which you're just reflecting on your own personal experiences of the day.

And memoirs is just another way of extending that because memoirs tend to be reflective of times past. They're a more stabilizing cultural genre; they try to present what life in a place was like over a period of time.

So in each of these things we see the genres can move between domains and that they are hybrid or that sometimes they become less well used.

And they change with the different modalities of language. So for example correspondence by email often adapts and adopts different patterns of use in terms of the kind of letter format than does say the regular mail which goes by our post. So those are different kinds of personal genres. There are, of course, many more that I haven't mentioned.

And what I'd like you to do now is to take a few moments and try and come up with as many different kinds of writing, different ways that you use writing to communicate on a very personal level.

That is to express our experience, the inner world in the perceptions that are most private and personal to us.

So we will take a moment now to think through different kinds of genres which suit the personal domain. Why don't you make a list? Try and come up with ten if you can, and we will return and discuss the next stage - social dramas.

The social domain of language use is typified by being fairly immediate, it's something that often serves particular organizational principles for people, in so far as the helps to keep society working smoothly. In this case up this is the social uses language include many different kinds of communicative needs and purposes, one of which course could be signs.

Signs allow us to communicate with people when there isn't a person there to do that form of communication. So street signs or store signs, signs that appear on housing in order to identify them, and give them a number and things like that all serve as ways that we can organize society and allow language to do a lot of the work of organizing. So signs being one particular example.

Now a far more oral part of the social domain would be songs. Songs are usually, some songs can be of course personal as well, and some to keep oneself in a good mood or just to entertain oneself while on your own. But songs are mainly a socials genre in so far as they're there to communicate and share different emotions and expressions.

Overtime, of course, songs might become a part of musical cannon that are sung for generations and in that case they're more typically a part of the cultural genre, the time being essential to that quality of what enters becomes a part of the culture. So another one of course is networking and now in the age of digital technologies, we find that networking is happening all the time.

People are busy communicating either by talking on phones or using text messaging. Text messaging allows them to send a written message to a friend in much the way that they would speak to the friend. And so typically that's also changing the way language gets used often in text messaging with the phone for example the use of language shifts. Many acronyms that is short expressions get used. Typical one would be "LOL" standing for "laughing out loud" meaning I thought your statement or joke was funny.

So language adapts and suits the different media and the different modalities in which it's being used. Also naturally the Internet has provided a vast domain for the use of social networking. There are many different kinds of social networking sites in which people constantly communicate what is going on in their personal world.

In this we see a very interesting blend of the personal and the social domains of language, of language use at least. And so social networking is a large force in what helps the Internet to grow and develop and expand as a place people go to connect and socially bond through language.

Announcements and/or cards are other examples of genres in which people might be receiving a written invite to a meeting, or a wedding, or any other kind of social event that is going on that has this sense of planning in the now.

So cards are also typically a genre. Some cards might have poems, short poems on them that expressed some kind of sincere emotion one wishes to communicate. But is communicating more

through the formal idea of delivering a message rather than say just writing a letter or text messaging them.

So it's typically a more formal way of exchanging shared emotions ideas and things like that.

So now I'd like you to take a few moments and do what you've just done with the personal domain and think of other social genres of language use, typical ways that you might use language to communicate with one or mainly more people.

So you might find ways to communicate with a group of friends or a whole society. So we will think about those ways that you use language in the now to up help yourself to engage in social life.

In the third domain of language use, the cultural domain, we find many different ways in which we use language to help us keep a record a what has gone on in society also to comment and critique that society, or lif, or knowledge or what have you. In these domains, the cultural domains, we tend to see the more formalized genres because they're not changing as much. They tend to be works that have stood the test of time, for example.

So the culture accumulates, it build-ups overtime but it isn't changed in the immediate. It changes rather more gradually. So one typical cultural type is just the form. It is the various kinds forms we might fill out, forms for voting, forms for all sorts of political national purposes if we need a visa or something like that we also have to fill out forms if we need to interact with government bodies and various things like that.

So forms are typically ways that we are highly constrained in our mode of expression. That genre tends to be one where you are filling in blanks and doing things like that.

You're not being asked to respond in depth. You are being asked directly for just the information. That's you know a typical way that forms show up. They have this that they create data in data banks that hold that data for a long time. So the form is predicting the fact that it is really a cultural genre in so far as this is meant to make it easy to use and recall data quite quickly, especially data that has already passed over time. And the same we might say of keeping various kinds of records the records of a building's use or the records of all sorts of different records - there you go can think of it in the moment. But records up are much like forms in so far as they allow us to store information over time. Literature is another typical cultural form in so far as its not as governed by rules.

Literature often tries to bend and change genre conventions when it is being written but over time these become a part the canon or the norm of the way people I use the language and at that point the really do become part the culture in a part of the expression "a people", and therefore those forms tend to also be within this cultural domain.

People would write a novel or a poem with a sense of the poetry or the novel or the prose writing that has occurred overtime. So literature is usually that form which has once again is in relation to

the past in the connection of the present drawing on the forms and particular modes of expression of the past.

Scientific and scholarly genres are also a highly formalized, typically have developed over hundreds years, writing practices and also draw on that past all about for example the scholarly genre and scientific genres are typified by citational practices which base ideas on other expressions of those same ideas that have come earlier and bases its work on this network of knowledge, of knowing, that is built up over time. so that would identify the ways in which typically cultural forms of expression are made manifest.

Let's take now another five minutes and think about more genres and those now in particular that help us to develop our culture, the bodies of knowledge that we have that build up over time, of learning, of reflection on faiths and beliefs, of people over time. and the kinds of different ways that we write in order to bring the past into the present. So take five minutes please. Come up with a few more suggestions for cultural forms of expression, cultural genres.