

# Understanding Writing and Writing Film Reviews

**Dr. Jasti Appa Swami**

Centre for English Language Studies, University of Hyderabad

Hyderabad - 500 046

Email: [jassh@uohyd.ac.in](mailto:jassh@uohyd.ac.in)



Military Engineering Service Foundation Course

Dr. MCRHRD IT, Hyderabad

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# Message

This is 2680293. We are not at home right now. Please leave a message after the beep.

Please leave a message after the beep. This is 2680293. We are not at home right now.

Beep after a leave the please message.

Peep

# What's going on?

**A:** Great sausages, these, aren't they?

**B:** *Yes. The ingredients are guaranteed free of additives and artificial coloring.*

**A:** Had to laugh, though. The bloke that makes them, he was telling me, he doesn't eat them himself. Want a ciggie?

**B:** *No, thanks. Patrons are requested to refrain from smoking while other guests are dining.*





1. The boy is showing his hat.
2. The girl is taking a photo.
3. This is a picture.
4. He has a hat.
5. They are happy.

# Verb

- **Action** – walk, eat, give, think, speak, submit
- **State** – am, is, are, was, were, will be
- **Possession/Ownership** – have, has, had



1. A young woman is photographing her brother.
2. A young man is posing for a photograph.

# The way we use language depends on

- The situation we are in
  - *at a friend's house, in a job interview, in a tutorial*
- who we are talking to
  - friends, potential employer, tutor
- our means of communication
  - conversation face to face, telephone, letter, e-mail, report

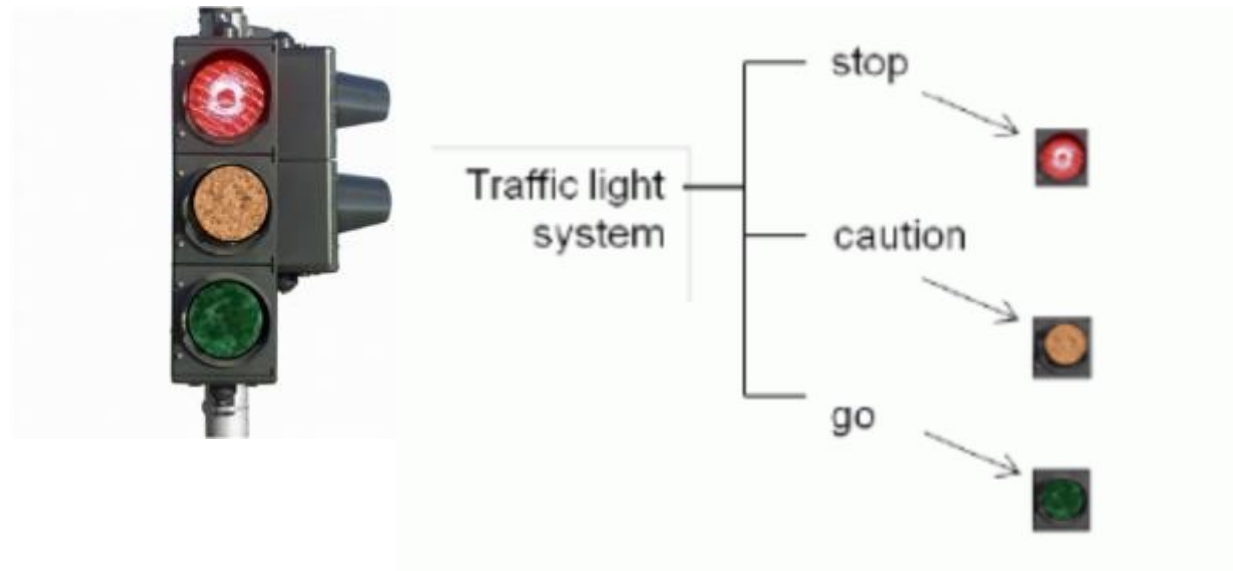


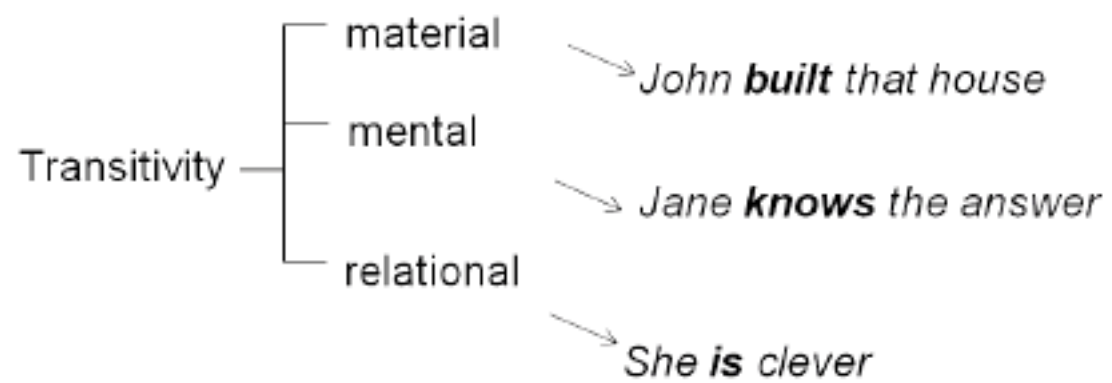
# Some examples

- the amount of everyday language we use
  - *I reckon... / it was decided... / the decision...*
- how and to what degree we express our attitude and opinion
  - *the new treatment is excellent... / the benefits of the treatment are...*
- how informal or formal our language is
  - *Are you selling that great little house? / the property will be sold...*
- to what degree we include abstract and technical language
  - *we treat patients... / the treatment of patients with deep-seated tumors...*

# Choice – Language as social semiotic

- Language is a resource for construing meaning (*Learning How to Mean, 1974*)
- Social actions are realized through semiotic actions





# 3 meanings

- **Experiential meaning** – talking about what's going on
- **Interpersonal meaning** – interacting with and relating to others
- **Textual meaning** – organizing messages to make sense in context



*“I wasn’t born into this party. **I chose it.** I’ve never joined another political party”*

Tony Blair, Special Conference (Labour Party). April 29, 1995.

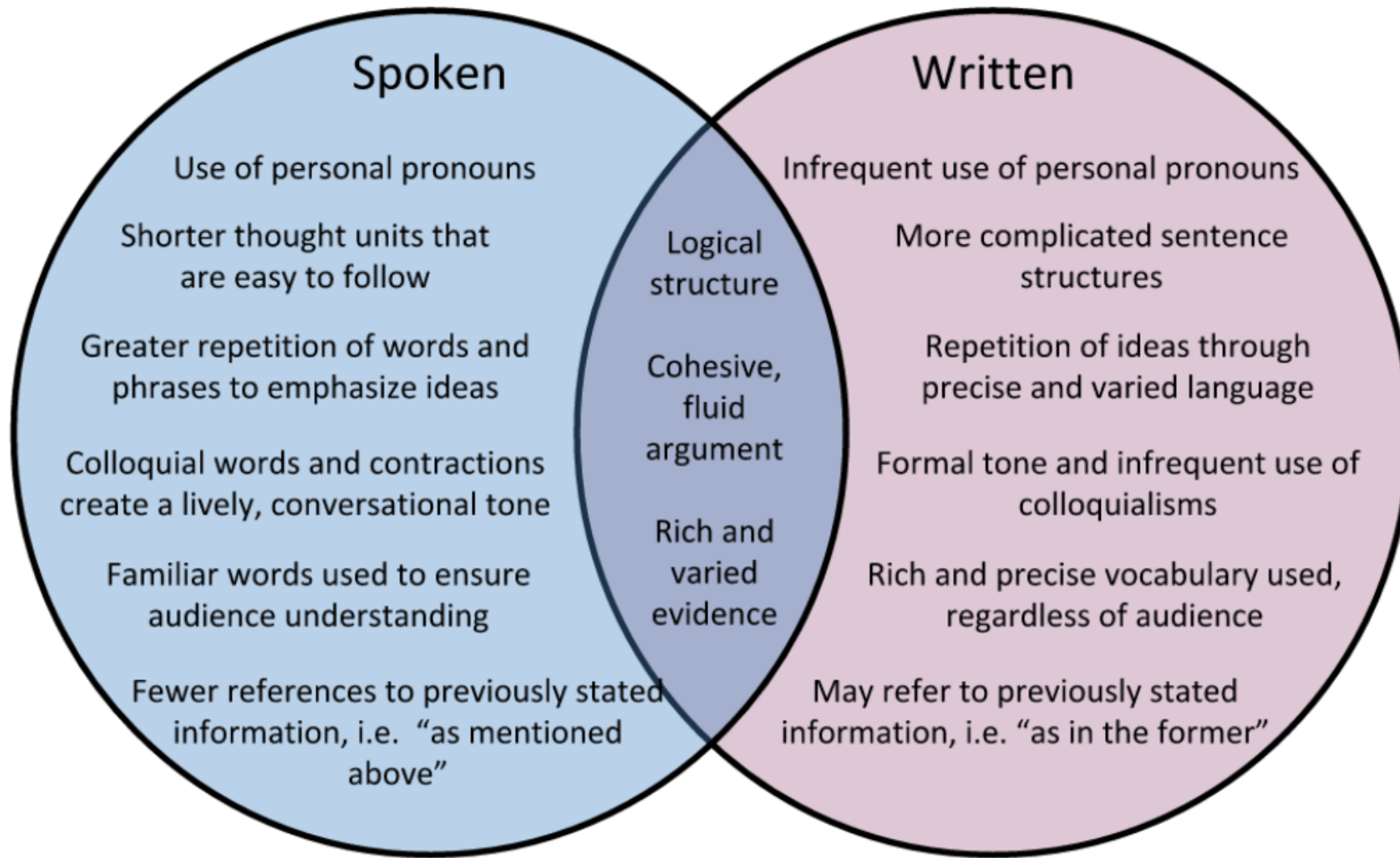


*“Like most people of my generation, I wasn’t born into a political party.  
**I am a liberal by choice, by temperament and by conviction”***

Nick Clegg, Liberal Democrat Party. October 19th, 2007.

Form	Clause	<i>I</i>	<i>chose</i>	<i>(the labour party)</i>	
Function	Experiential meaning	Actor (Agent)	Material Process (active)		Goal (Affected)
	Interpersonal meaning	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
		Declarative Mood			
	Textual meaning	Theme	Rheme		

Form	Clause	<i>I</i>	<i>am</i>		<i>a liberal</i>	<i>by choice</i>
Function	Experiential meaning	Carrier	Relational Process		Attribute	Circumstance Manner
	Interpersonal meaning	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Declarative Mood				
	Textual meaning	Theme	Rheme			





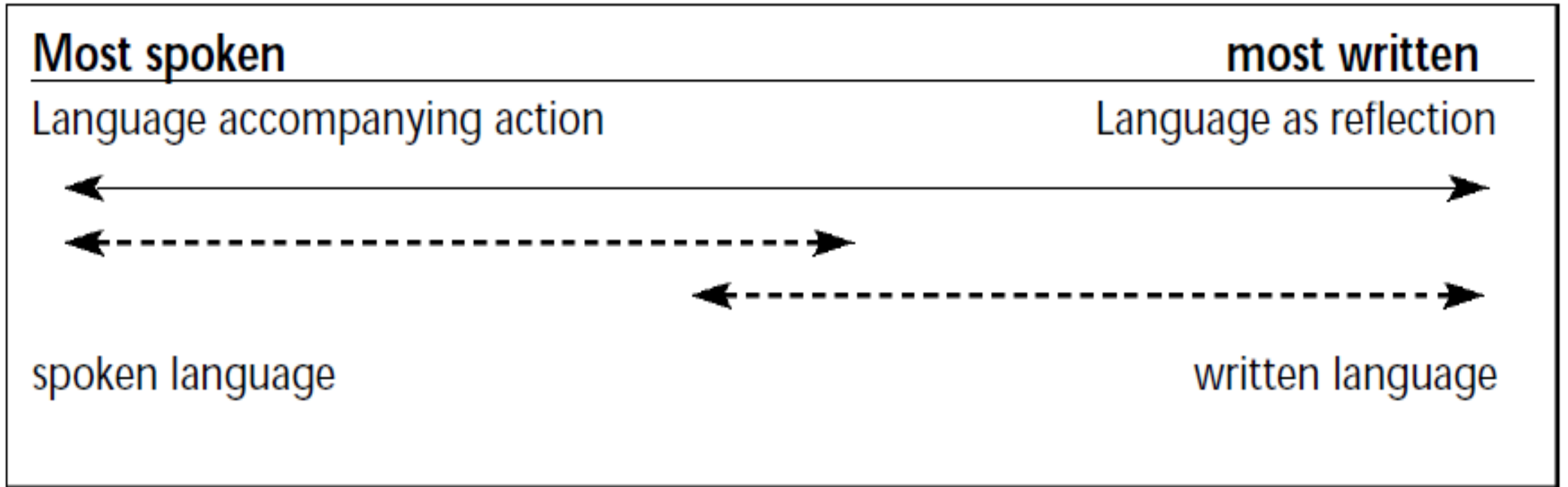
**Text A**

People benefit from modern technology because it has improved our standard of living. Modern technology provides many good jobs and services for society, but it also damages the environment and causes environmental pollution. We know that modern technology damages the environment and causes pollution, so why do we still use it? Because we just can't live without it. Scientists are trying to reduce pollution and control the problems it causes, and if they don't, our environment will be destroyed. Modern technology is surely necessary and important, but how can we use it without causing negative effects?

**Text B**

The social benefits of modern technology include the increased provision of goods, services and employment. While this technology has many negative side-effects on the environment, particularly in terms of pollution, modern society is dependent on the benefits that this technology provides. In recent years, increasing public awareness of the extent of environmental destruction as a result of this technology has spurred scientific investigation into technologies which provide a more sustainable outcome for the environment. In this sense, modern society may continue to sustain itself and the environment through more sophisticated technology.

# Spoken and written language continuum



1. Action only. Students protesting outside Parliament House.
2. What two students said to each other in the heat of the protest.  
**'Hey, Jack, here's a politician coming out now. Let's yell abuse.'**
3. A politician watching the protest and telling the secretary what was happening.  
**'Well, there's a whole bunch of students down there, waving their banners around, looking really peeved, and can you believe it, they're asking for free education.'**
4. A group of students reflecting on the day in the University Bar that evening.  
**"Man, you should have seen Carol when the police arrived. She was screamin' in their faces and shakin' her fists. When they arrested her, she was mad as a cut snake."**
5. A report of the protest in the next day's newspaper.  
**Almost the entire front lawn of Parliament House was filled with angry students protesting against the increase in university fees on Thursday.'**
6. An explanation (time unspecified) of why the protest took place.  
**Student rebellion against the Government's policy to increase student fees has its origins in Australia's social welfare history.**
7. A work on socialist philosophy relating to free education.  
**While the socialist ideology values the concept of free education, contemporary western society appears to reject this ideology.**

House.	education, contemporary western society appears to reject this ideology.
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# Film review as a genre

- Opening
  - Set the stage by introducing the film and providing a brief overview of its genre and director. Summary of the Plot
  - Provide a concise summary of the film's storyline, focusing on the main characters and their objectives.
- Analysis of the Key Elements
  - a. Plot Development
    - Discuss how the plot unfolds, highlighting the twists and turns that keep the audience engaged.
    - Map the plot structure, including the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
  - b. Characterization
    - Analyze the main characters, their motivations, and their relationships.
    - Highlight standout performances and how they contribute to the overall narrative.
  - c. Cinematography and Visual Effects
    - Examine the visual aspects of the film, including the use of camera angles, lighting, and special effects.
    - Comment on the visual style and its impact on the storytelling.
  - d. Sound Design and Music
    - Discuss the role of sound effects and music in enhancing the film's atmosphere and emotional impact.
    - Evaluate the effectiveness of the film's sound design in creating suspense and tension.
- Themes and Messages
  - Identify the central themes explored in the film, such as the nature of reality, dreams, and the power of the mind.
  - Discuss the underlying messages or philosophical ideas conveyed through the narrative.
- Audience Reception
  - Highlight the critical and commercial reception of the film, including awards and accolades.
  - Discuss the film's impact on popular culture and its lasting influence on the science fiction genre.
- Conclusion
  - Summarize the key points discussed in the review.
  - Provide a personal evaluation of the film, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses.
  - Offer a recommendation to the audience, based on their preferences and interests.

# Reflecting on process

**Writing a critique is much like any other kind of “considered” (or purposive) writing (to distinguish it from creative writing)**

- Conceiving
- Collecting
- Constructing
- Correcting

# Applying the process to a critique

## 1. Conceive—thinking about the purpose

- Why are you doing this? (to include in a lit rev, to write a review, for an assignment, to evaluate the work)
- Who is the audience?
- What is your time frame?
- What is the scope and length?

## 2. Collect

- Watch through carefully, making notes as you go along
- Watch critically, noting your reactions as you go along
- Watch expansively, thinking about what else this relates to

# Process--continued

## 3. Construct

- Drawing out the essential points (descriptive summary)
- Providing context (relating to other work in the area)
- Pointing to contribution/inadequacies (critical summary)
- Offering your opinion (positioning its value against the larger body of work)

## 4. Correct

- Come away for a while
- Think about other work you have read in this area
- Look back and edit with a broader perspective



## Where is Kyra?

Unemployed and looking for work, Kyra (Michelle Pfeiffer) lives with her elderly and ailing mother, Ruth (Sizanne Shepherd), in a dark apartment in a rumbled Brooklyn neighborhood. Kyra meets a struggling cabdriver named Doug (Keifer Sutherland) in a nearby bar, and they begin a relationship. But Kyra's situation doesn't improve; when Ruth dies, Kyra is left without an income, and in danger of being evicted from her apartment, she impersonates her late mother and cashes her pension and disability checks. Andrew Dosunmu directs this drama with obvious empathy but little curiosity; working with the extraordinary cinematographer Bradford Young, he frames the action in extended static takes, that mainly keep at a restrained distance from the characters. The script, by Darci Picoult, does little to illuminate thoughts, plans and lives. Though the on-location filming is moody and evocative, the action plays like the bare-bones sketch of a drama that's still waiting to be developed.

*(The New Yorker, April 16, 2018)*

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Content

Context  
and  
critique

**Q & A**