1. Critical and descriptive goals in discourse analysis

Abstract

I view social institutions as containing diverse ‘ideological-discursive formations’ (IDFs) associated with different groups within the institution. There is usually one IDF which is clearly dominant. Each IDF is a sort of ‘speech community’ with its own discourse norms but also, embedded within and symbolised by the latter, its own ‘ideological norms’. Institutional subjects are constructed, in accordance with the norms of an IDF, in subject positions whose ideological underpinnings they may be unaware of. A characteristic of a dominant IDF is the capacity to ‘naturalise’ ideologies, i.e., to win acceptance for them as non-ideological ‘common sense’.

It is argued that the orderliness of interactions depends in part upon such naturalised ideologies. To ‘denaturalise’ them is the objective of a discourse analysis which adopts ‘critical’ goals. I suggest that denaturalisation involves showing how social structures determine properties of discourse, and how discourse in turn determines social structures. This requires a ‘global’ (macro/micro) explanatory framework which contrasts with the non-explanatory or only ‘locally’ explanatory frameworks of ‘descriptive’ work in discourse analysis. I include a critique of features of such work which follow from its limited explanatory goals (its concept of ‘background knowledge’, ‘speaker-goal’ explanatory models, and its neglect of power), and discuss the social conditions under which critical discourse analysis might be an effective practice of intervention, and a significant element in mother-tongue education.
In this section of the paper I shall distinguish in a preliminary way between ‘critical’ and ‘descriptive’ goals in discourse analysis. Data extracts are used to show (i) how the orderliness of interactions depends upon taken-for-granted ‘background knowledge’ (BGK for short), and (ii) how BGK subsumes ‘naturalised’ ideological representations, i.e., ideological representations which come to be seen as non-ideological ‘common sense’. Adopting critical goals means aiming to elucidate such naturalisations, and more generally to make clear social determinations and effects of discourse which are characteristically opaque to participants. These concerns are absent in currently predominant ‘descriptive’ work on discourse. The critical approach has its theoretical underpinnings in views of the relationship between ‘micro’ events (including verbal events) and ‘macro’ structures which see the latter as both the conditions for and the products of the former, and which therefore reject rigid barriers between the study of the ‘micro’ (of which the study of discourse is a part) and the study of the ‘macro’. I shall discuss these theoretical issues at the end of this section of the paper.

When I refer to the ‘orderliness’ of an interaction, I mean the feeling of participants in it (which may be more or less successfully elicited, or inferred from their interactive behaviour) that things are as they should be, i.e., as one would normally expect them to be. This may be a matter of coherence of an interaction, in the sense that individual speaker turns fit meaningfully together, or a matter of the taking of turns at talking in the expected or appropriate way, or the use of the expected markers of deference or politeness, or of the appropriate lexicon. (I am of course using the terms ‘appropriate’ and ‘expected’ here from the perspective of the participant, not analytically.)

Text 1 gives an example of ‘orderliness’ in the particular sense of coherence within and between turns, and its dependence on naturalised ideologies. It is an extract from an interview between two male police officers (B and C), and a woman (A) who has come to the police station to make a complaint of rape.1

Text 1

1. C: you do realise that when we have you medically examined . . . and
2. B: they’ll come up with nothing
3. C: the swabs are taken . . . it’ll show . . . if you’ve had sexual intercourse with three men this afternoon . . .
   it’ll show
4. A: it’ll show each one
5. C: it'll show each one...
B: hmm
6. A: yeah I know
7. C: alright so...
8. A: so it would show (indist.)
9. C: it'll confirm that you've had sex... or
B: hm
C: not with three men alright so we can confirm it's happened... that you've had sex with three men... if it does confirm it... then I would go so far as to say... that you went to that house willingly... there's no struggle... you could have run away quite easily... when you got out of the car... to go to the house... you could have got away quite easily... you're well known... in Reading... to the uniformed... lads for being a nuisance in the streets shouting and bawling... couple of times you've been arrested... for under the Mental Health Act... for shouting and screaming in the street... haven't you...
10. A: when I was ill yeah
11. C: yeah right so what's to stop you... shouting and screaming in the street... when you think you're going to get raped... you're not frightened at all... you walk in there... quite blasé you're not frightened at all...
12. A: I was frightened
13. C: you weren't... you're showing no signs of emotion every now and again you have a little tear...
14. B: (indist.) if you were frightened... and you came at me I think I would dive... I wouldn’t take you on
you frighten me
15. C: (indist.)
16. A: why would I frighten you (indist.) only a little (indist.)
you you just it doesn’t
17. B: matter... you're female and you've probably got a hell of a temper... if you were to go
I haven't got a temper
18. A: (indist.) a hell of a temper
oh I don't know...
19. C:
20. B: I think if things if things were up against a a wall... I think you'd fight and fight very hard...
I imagine that for most readers the most striking instance of ideologically-based coherence in this text is in 17 (you’re female and you’ve probably got a hell of a temper), with the implicit proposition ‘women tend to have bad tempers’ which, with a further implicit proposition (‘people in bad tempers are frightening to others’) and certain principles of inference, allows 16 and 17 to be heard as a coherent question–answer and complaint–rejection pair. There are other, perhaps rather less obvious instances, including the following (I have taken the example in 17 as ‘case’ (1)).

(2) It is taken as given (as mutually assumed background knowledge) that fear or its absence, and perhaps affective states in general, can be ‘read off’ from behavioural ‘symptoms’ or their absence. The orderliness of C’s talk in 9 (from there’s no struggle) and 11, i.e., its coherence as the drawing of a conclusion (you’re not frightened at all) from pieces of evidence (there’s no struggle, A could have got away but didn’t, A has a proven capacity for creating public scenes but did not do so in this case), depends upon this implicit proposition. Similar comments apply to 13.

(3) It is taken as given that persons have, or do not have, capacities for particular types of behaviour irrespective of changes in time, place, or conditions. This is a version of the doctrine of the ‘unified and consistent subject’ (Coward and Ellis 1977: 7). Thus, again in 9 and 11, evidence of A’s capacity for creating a public scene in the past, and when she was suffering from some form of mental illness, is taken, despite 10, as evidence for her capacity to do so in this instance. As in the case of (2), the coherence of C’s line of argument depends upon the taken-as-given proposition.

(4) It is taken as given that if a woman willingly places herself in a situation where sexual intercourse ‘might be expected to occur’ (whatever that means), that is tantamount to being a willing partner, and rules out rape. C’s apparent objective in this extract is to establish that A went willingly to the house where the rape is alleged to have occurred. But this extract is coherently connected with the rest of the interview only on the assumption that what is really at issue is A’s willingness to have sexual intercourse. To make this connection, we need the above implicit proposition.

The four implicit propositions which I have identified represent BGK of a rather particular sort, which is distinct from, say, the assumed BGK that there is some identifiable door which is closed when some speaker asks some addressee to ‘open the door’. I argue below (Section 3.1) that the tendency in the literature to conflate all of the ‘taken-for-granted’ under the rubric of ‘knowledge’ is an unacceptable reduction. For present purposes, I propose to refer to
these four propositions as ‘ideological’, by which I mean that each is a particular representation of some aspect of the world (natural or social; what is, what can be, what ought to be) which might be (and may be) alternatively represented, and where any given representation can be associated with some particular ‘social base’ (I am aware that this is a rather crude gloss on a complex and controversial concept. On ideology, see Althusser (1971) and Therborn (1980)).

These propositions differ in terms of the degree to which they are ‘naturalised’ (Hall 1982: 75). I shall assume a scale of naturalisation, whose ‘most naturalised’ (theoretical) terminal point would be represented by a proposition which was taken as commonsensically given by all members of some community, and seen as vouched for by some generally accepted rationalisation (which referred it, for instance, to ‘human nature’).

Cases (1) and (4) involve only limited naturalisation. The proposition ‘women tend to have bad tempers’ could, one imagines, be taken as given only within increasingly narrow and embattled social circles – one achievement of the women’s movement has been precisely the denaturalisation of many formerly highly naturalised sexist ideologies. Case (4) corresponds to traditional judicial views (in English law) of rape as well as having something of a base outside the law, but it is also under pressure from feminists.

The degree of naturalisation in cases (2) and (3) is by contrast rather high, and they are correspondingly more difficult to recognise as ideological representations rather than ‘just common sense’. Such ideological propositions are both open to lay rationalisation in terms of ‘what everyone knows’ about human behaviour and ‘human nature’, and traceable in social scientific theories of human behaviour and the human subject.

Texts 2–4 illustrate other ways in which orderliness may depend upon ideological BGK. My aim here is merely to indicate some of the range of phenomena involved, so my comments on these texts will be brief and schematic.

Text 2

1. T: Now, let’s just have a look at these things here. Can you tell me, first of all, what’s this?
3. T: Piece of paper, yes. And, hands up, what cutter will cut this?
4. P: The pair of scissors.
5. T: The pair of scissors, yes. Here we are, the pair of scissors. And, as you can see, it’s going to cut the paper. Tell me what’s this?
6. P: Cigarette box.
7. T: Yes. What’s it made from?  

(Sinclair and Coulthard 1975: 96)
The orderliness in this instance is a matter of conformity on the part of both teacher and pupils to a framework of discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations, involving the taking of turns, the control of topic, rights to question and obligations to answer, rights over metacommunicative acts and so forth (see Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and Stubbs (1983: 40–46) for a detailed discussion of these properties of classroom discourse). The implicit ideological propositions identified in text 1 appertain to language in its ‘ideational’ function, whereas the discoursal and pragmatic norms of text 2 appertain to the ‘interpersonal’ function of language (Halliday 1978: 45–46). Moreover, while in text 1 ideologies are formulated in (implicit) propositions, in text 2 ideological representations of social relationships are symbolised in norms of interaction. Michael Halliday’s claim that the linguistic system functions as a ‘metaphor’ for social processes as well as an ‘expression’ of them, which he formulated in the context of a discussion of the symbolisation of social relationships in dialectal and registerial variants (Halliday 1978: 3) also applies here. In these respects, text 3 is similar to text 2:

**Text 3**

1. **X**: oh hello Mrs Norton
2. **Y**: oh hello Susan
3. **X**: yes erm well I’m afraid I’ve got a bit of a problem
4. **Y**: you mean about tomorrow night
5. **X**: yes erm you (I know)
6. **Y**: oh dear
7. **X**: know that that you said
8. **Y**: yeah
9. **X**: er you wanted me tomorrow night
10. **Y**: uhuh yeah
11. **X**: well I just thought erm (clears throat) I’ve got something else on which I just didn’t think about when I arranged it with you you know and er
12. **Y**: (sighs) yes
13. **X**: I’m just wondering if I could possibly back down on tomorrow

(Edmondson 1981: 119–120)

Again, this is a matter of orderliness arising from conformity with interactive norms, though in this case pragmatic norms of politeness and mitigation: **X** uses a range of politeness markers, including a title + surname mode of address (in 1), ‘hedges’ (e.g., *a bit of a* in 3), and indirect speech acts (as in 13). These markers are ‘appropriate’ given the status asymmetry between **X** and
Y (Y is X’s employer, and no doubt older than X), and given the ‘face-threatening’ act which X is engaged in (Brown and Levinson 1978: 81).

The interactive norms exemplified in texts 2 and 3 can be seen in terms of degrees of naturalisation like the implicit propositions of text 1, though in this case it is a matter of the naturalisation of practices which symbolise particular ideological representations of social relationships, i.e., relationships between teachers and pupils, and between babysitters and their employers. The more dominant some particular representation of a social relationship, the greater the degree of naturalisation of its associated practices. I will use the expression ‘ideological practices’ to refer to such practices.

Texts 1–3 are partial exemplifications of the substantial range of BGK which participants may draw upon in interactions. We can very roughly differentiate four dimensions of participants’ ‘knowledge base’, elaborating Winograd (1982: 14) who distinguishes only the first, third and fourth:

- knowledge of language codes,
- knowledge of principles and norms of language use,
- knowledge of situation, and
- knowledge of the world.

I wish to suggest that all four dimensions of the ‘knowledge base’ include ideological elements. I will assume without further discussion that the examples I have given so far illustrate this for all except the first of these dimensions, ‘knowledge of language code’. Text 4 shows that this dimension is no exception. It is a summary by Benson and Hughes (1983: 10–11) of one of the case studies of Aaron Cicourel from his work on the constitution and interpretation of written records which are generated in the juvenile judicial process (Cicourel 1976).

**Text 4**

The probation officer was aware of a number of incidents at school in which Robert was considered to be ‘incorrigible’. The probation file contained mention of 15 incidents at school prior to his court appearance, ranging from ‘smoking’ to ‘continued defiance’. The probation officer’s assessment and recommendation for Robert contained a fairly detailed citation of a number of factors explaining Robert’s ‘complete lack of responsibility toward society’ with the recommendation that he be placed in a school or state hospital. Among the factors mentioned were his mother’s ‘severe depression’, divorced parents, unstable marriage, and his inability to comprehend his environment:
the kind of factors, we should note, assembled in conventional sociological reasoning explaining the causes of delinquency.

Cicourel is concerned to show ‘how “delinquents get that way” as a process managed and negotiated through the socially organised activities that constitute “dealing with crime” ’ (Benson and Hughes 1983: 11). What I want to highlight is the role which the lexicon itself plays in this process. Let us focus on just four items among the many of interest in the text: *incorrigible, defiance, lack of responsibility, delinquency*. These belong to a particular lexicalisation of ‘youth’, or more specifically of young people who do not ‘fit’ in their families, their schools, or their neighbourhoods. The ‘conditions of use’ of this lexicon as we may call them, are focused upon by Cicourel – the unwritten and unspoken conventions for the use of a particular word or expression in connection with particular events or behaviours, which are operative and taken for granted in the production and interpretation of written records. But the lexicon itself, as code, is only one among indefinitely many possible lexicalisations; one can easily create an ‘anti-language’ (Halliday 1978: 164–182) equivalent of this part of the lexicon – *irrepressible* for *incorrigible*, *debunking* for *defiance*, *refusal to be sucked in by society* for *lack of responsibility toward society*, and perhaps *spirit* for *delinquency*. Alternative lexicalisations are generated from divergent ideological positions. And lexicalisations, like the implicit propositions and pragmatic discoursal practices of the earlier texts, may be more or less naturalised: a lexicalisation becomes naturalised to the extent that ‘its’ IDF achieves dominance, and hence the capacity to win acceptance for it as ‘the lexicon’, the neutral code.

It may be helpful for me to sum up what I have said so far before moving to a first formulation of ‘critical’ goals in discourse analysis. I am suggesting (a) that ideologies and ideological practices may become dissociated to a greater or lesser extent from the particular social base, and the particular interests, which generated them – that is, they may become to a greater or lesser extent ‘naturalised’, and hence be seen to be commonsensical and based in the nature of things or people, rather than in the interests of classes or other groupings; (b) that such naturalised ideologies and practices thereby become part of the ‘knowledge base’ which is activated in interaction, and hence the ‘orderliness’ of interaction may depend upon them, and (c) that in this way the orderliness of interactions as ‘local’, ‘micro’ events comes to be dependent upon a higher ‘orderliness’, i.e., an achieved consensus in respect of ideological positions and practices.

This brings me to certain theoretical assumptions which underpin the proposed adoption of critical goals in discourse analysis. Firstly, that verbal
interaction is a mode of social action, and that like other modes of social
action it presupposes a range of what I shall loosely call ‘structures’ – which
are reflected in the ‘knowledge base’ – including social structures, situational
types, language codes, norms of language use. Secondly, and crucially, that
these structures are not only presupposed by, and necessary conditions for,
action, but are also the products of action; or, in a different terminology, actions
reproduce structures. Giddens (1981) develops this view from a sociological
perspective in terms of the notion of ‘duality of structure’.

The significance of the second assumption is that ‘micro’ actions or events,
including verbal interaction, can in no sense be regarded as of merely ‘local’
significance to the situations in which they occur, for any and every action
contributes to the reproduction of ‘macro’ structures. Notice that one dimen-
sion of what I am suggesting is that language codes are reproduced in speech,
a view which is in accordance with one formulation in Saussure’s Cours:
‘Language and speaking are thus interdependent; the former is both the
instrument and the product of the latter’ (1966: 19). My concern here, how-
ever, is with the reproduction of social structures in discourse, a concern
which is evident in Halliday’s more recent work:

By their everyday acts of meaning, people act out the social structure,
affirming their own statuses and roles, and establishing and transmitting
the shared systems of value and of knowledge. (Halliday 1978: 2)

But if this is the case, then it makes little sense to study verbal interactions
as if they were unconnected with social structures: ‘there can be no theoretical
defence for supposing that the personal encounters of day-to-day life can be
conceptually separated from the long-term institutional development of society’
(Giddens 1981: 173). Yet that seems to be precisely how verbal interactions
have in fact been studied for the most part in the currently predominant
‘descriptive’ work on discourse. Thus the adoption of critical goals means,
first and foremost, investigating verbal interactions with an eye to their deter-
mination by, and their effects on, social structures. However, as I have suggested
in discussing the texts, neither determinations nor effects are necessarily
apparent to participants; opacity is the other side of the coin of naturalisation.
The goals of critical discourse analysis are also therefore ‘denaturalising’. I shall elaborate on this preliminary formulation in the following sections.

My use of the term ‘critical’ (and the associated term ‘critique’) is linked on
the one hand to a commitment to a dialectical theory and method ‘which
grasps things . . . essentially in their interconnection, in their concatenation,
their motion, their coming into and passing out of existence’ (Engels 1976:
27), and on the other hand to the view that, in human matters, interconnec-
tions and chains of cause and effect may be distorted out of vision. Hence
‘critique’ is essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things; for a
review of senses of ‘critique’, see Connerton (1976: 11–39). In using the term
‘critical’, I am also signalling a connection (though by no means an identity of
views) between my objectives in this paper and the ‘critical linguistics’ of a
group of linguists and sociologists associated with Roger Fowler (Fowler
et al. 1979, Kress and Hodge 1979).

2 Social institutions and critical analysis

The above sketch of what I mean by ‘critical goals’ in discourse analysis gives
rise to many questions. For instance: how can it be that people are standardly
unaware of how their ways of speaking are socially determined, and of what
social effects they may cumulatively lead to? What conception of the social
subject does such a lack of awareness imply? How does the naturalisation of
ideologies come about? How is it sustained? What determines the degree of
naturalisation in a particular instance? How may this change?

I cannot claim to provide answers to these questions in this paper. What I
suggest, however, is that we can begin to formulate answers to these and other
questions, and to develop a theoretical framework which will facilitate
researching them, by focusing attention upon the ‘social institution’ and upon
discourses which are clearly associable with particular institutions, rather
than on casual conversation, as has been the fashion (see further Section 3.3
below). My reasoning is in essence simply that (a) such questions can only be
broached within a framework which integrates ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ research,
and (b) we are most likely to be able to arrive at such an integration if we focus
upon the institution as a ‘pivot’ between the highest level of social structuring,
that of the ‘social formation’,3 and the most concrete level, that of the particular
social event or action. The argument is rather similar to Fishman’s case for
the ‘domain’ (Fishman 1972): the social institution is an intermediate level
of social structuring, which faces Janus-like ‘upwards’ to the social formation,
and ‘downwards’ to social actions.

Social actions tend very much to cluster in terms of institutions; when
we witness a social event (e.g., a verbal interaction), we normally have no
difficulty identifying it in institutional terms, i.e., as appertaining to the family,
the school, the workplace, church, the courts, some department of govern-
ment, or some other institution. And from a developmental point of view,
institutions are no less salient: the socialisation of the child (in which process
discourse is both medium and target) can be described in terms of the child’s
progressive exposure to institutions of primary socialisation (family, peer group, school, etc.). Given that institutions play such a prominent role, it is not surprising that, despite the concentration on casual conversation in recent discourse analysis referred to above, a significant amount of work is on types of discourse which are institutionally identified, such as classroom discourse (e.g., Sinclair and Coulthard 1975); courtroom discourse (e.g., Atkinson and Drew 1979, O’Barr 1982), or psychotherapeutic discourse (e.g., Labov and Fanshel 1977). However, most of this work suffers from the inadequacies characteristic of descriptive discourse analysis, which I detail in Section 3 of this paper.

One can envisage the relationship between the three levels of social phenomena I have indicated – the social formation, the social institution, and social action – as one of determination from ‘top’ to ‘bottom’: social institutions are determined by the social formation, and social action is determined by social institutions. While I would accept that this direction of determination is the fundamental one, this formulation is inadequate in that it is mechanistic (or undialectical): that is, it does not allow that determination may also be ‘upwards’. Let us take education as an example. I would want to argue that features of the school as an institution (e.g., the ways in which schools define relationship between teachers and pupils) are ultimately determined at the level of the social formation (e.g., by such factors as the relationship between the schools and the economic system and between the schools and the state), and that the actions and events that take place in the schools are in turn determined by institutional factors. However, I would also wish to insist that the mode of determination is not mechanical determination, and that changes may occur at the level of concrete action which may reshape the institution itself, and changes may occur in the institution which may contribute to the transformation of the social formation. Thus the process of determination works dialectically.

A social institution is (among other things) an apparatus of verbal interaction, or an ‘order of discourse’. (I suggest later in this section that this property only appears to belong to the institution itself.) In this perspective, we may regard an institution as a sort of ‘speech community’, with its own particular repertoire of speech events, describable in terms of the sorts of ‘components’ which ethnographic work on speaking has differentiated – settings, participants (their identities and relationships), goals, topics, and so forth (Hymes 1972). Each institution has its own set of speech events, its own differentiated settings and scenes, its cast of participants, and its own norms for their combination – for which members of the cast may participate in which speech events, playing which parts, in which settings, in the pursuit of which topics or goals, for
which institutionally recognised purposes. It is, I suggest, necessary to see the institution as simultaneously facilitating and constraining the social action (here, specifically, verbal interaction) of its members: it provides them with a frame for action, without which they could not act, but it thereby constrains them to act within that frame. Moreover, every such institutional frame includes formulations and symbolisations of a particular set of ideological representations: particular ways of talking are based upon particular ‘ways of seeing’ (see further below in this section).

I shall use the terms ‘subject’, ‘client’, and ‘(member of) public’ for the parties to verbal interaction, rather than the more familiar term ‘participant’. I use ‘subject’ for ‘members’ of an institution – those who have institutional roles and identities acquired in a defined acquisition period and maintained as long-term attributes. The ‘client’ is an outsider rather than a member, who nevertheless takes part in certain institutional interactions in accordance with norms laid down by the institution, but without a defined acquisition period or long-term maintenance of attributes (though attribute-maintenance is no doubt a matter of degree). Examples would be a patient in a medical examination, or a lay witness in a court hearing. Finally, some institutions have a ‘public’ to whom messages are addressed, whose members are sometimes assumed to interpret these messages according to norms laid down by the institution, but who do not interact with institutional subjects directly. The primary concept is ‘subject’: ‘client’ and ‘public’ might be defined as special and relatively peripheral types of subject.

We may usefully distinguish various facets of the subject (either ‘institutional’ or ‘social’), and talk of ‘economic’, ‘political’, ‘ideological’ and ‘discoursal’ subjects. What I have been suggesting above can be summed up by saying that institutions construct their ideological and discoursal
constraints upon them as a condition for qualifying them to act as subjects. For instance, to become a teacher, one must master the discursive and ideological norms which the school attaches to that subject position – one must learn to talk like a teacher and ‘see things’ (i.e., things such as learning and teaching) like a teacher. (Though, as I shall show in Section 1.4, these are not mechanically deterministic processes.) And, as I have suggested above, these ways of talking and ways of seeing are inseparably intertwined in that the latter constitute a part of the taken-for-granted ‘knowledge base’ upon which the orderliness of the former depends. This means that in the process of acquiring the ways of talking which are normatively associated with a subject position, one necessarily acquires also its ways of seeing, or ideological norms. And just as one is typically unaware of one’s ways of talking unless for some reason they are subjected to conscious scrutiny, so also is one typically unaware of what ways of seeing, what ideological representations, underlie one’s talk. This is a crucial assumption which I return to below.

However, social institutions are not as monolithic as the account so far will have suggested: as ideological and discursive orders, they are pluralistic rather than monistic, i.e., they provide alternative sets of discoursal and ideological norms. More accurately, they are pluralistic to an extent which varies in time and place, and from one institution to another in a given social formation, in accordance with factors including the balance of power between social classes at the level of the social formation, and the degree to which institutions in the social formation are integrated or, conversely, autonomous. The significance of the first of these factors is that pluralism is likely to flourish when non-dominant classes are relatively powerful; the significance of the second is that a relatively autonomous institution may be relatively pluralistic even when non-dominant classes are relatively powerless.

I shall say that, as regards the ideological facet of pluralism, a given institution may house two or more distinguishable ‘ideological formations’ (Althusser 1971), i.e., distinct ideological positions which will tend to be associated with different forces within the institution. This diversity of ideological formations is a consequence of, and a condition for, struggles between different forces within the institution: that is, conflict between forces results in ideological barriers between them, and ideological struggle is part of that conflict. These institutional struggles are connected to class struggle, though the relationship is not necessarily a direct or transparent one; and ideological and discoursal control of institutions is itself a stake in the struggle between classes (see below on ‘ideological and discoursal power’).

I propose to use for talking about institutional pluralism Pêcheux’s term ‘discursive formation’ as well as Althusser’s ‘ideological formation’. Pêcheux
defines a discursive formation as ‘that which in a given ideological formation, i.e., from a particular position in a given conjuncture determined by the state of the class struggle, determines “what can and should be said”’ (Pêcheux 1982: 111). I shall refer to ‘ideological-discursive formations’ (IDFs for short), in accordance with what I have said above about the inseparability of ‘ways of talking’ and ‘ways of seeing’. In so doing, I shall make the simplifying assumption, which further work may well challenge, that there is a one-to-one relationship between ideological formations and discursive formations.

I have referred above to the social institution itself as a sort of speech community and (to extend the image) ideological community; and I have claimed that institutions construct subjects ideologically and discursively. Institutions do indeed give the appearance of having these properties – but only in cases where one IDF is unambiguously dominant (see below). I suggest that these properties are properly attributed to the IDF, not the social institution: it is the IDF that positions subjects in relation to its own sets of speech events, participants, settings, topics, goals and, simultaneously, ideological representations.

As I have just indicated, IDFs are ordered in dominance: it is generally possible to identify a ‘dominant’ IDF and one or more ‘dominated’ IDFs in a social institution. The struggle between forces within the institution which I have referred to above can be seen as centring upon maintaining a dominant IDF in dominance (from the perspective of those in power) or undermining a dominant IDF in order to replace it. It is when the dominance of an IDF is unchallenged to all intents and purposes (i.e., when whatever challenges there are do not constitute any threat), that the norms of the IDF will become most naturalised, and most opaque (see Section 1), and may come to be seen as the norms of the institution itself. The interests of the dominant class at the level of the social formation require the maintenance in dominance in each social institution of an IDF compatible with their continued power. But this is never given – it must be constantly fought for, and is constantly at risk through a shift in relations of power between forces at the level of the social formation and in the institutions. I shall refer to the capacity to maintain an IDF in dominance (or, at the level of the social formation, a network of IDFs) as ‘ideological/discoursal power’, which exists alongside economic and political power, and can normally be expected to be held in conjunction with them. I shall use ‘power’ in this sense in contrast with ‘status’: the latter relates to the relationship between subjects in interactions, and their status is registered in terms of (symmetrical or asymmetrical) interactional rights and obligations, which are manifested in a range of linguistic, pragmatic and discoursal features. The
group which has ideological and discoursal power in an institution may or may not be clearly status-marked.

We are now in a position to develop what has been said so far about the naturalisation of ideologies, and what I described at the end of Section 1 as ‘the other side of the coin of naturalisation’, their opacity to participants in interactions; since the case for a discourse analysis with critical goals (which it is the primary objection of this paper to argue) rests upon the assumption that the naturalisation and opacity of ideologies is a significant property of discourse, it is important to be as clear as possible about these effects and their origins.

Naturalisation gives to particular ideological representations the status of common sense, and thereby makes them opaque, i.e., no longer visible as ideologies. These effects can be explained given (a) the process of subject-construction referred to above, and (b) the notion of a dominant IDF. I have argued that in the construction of the subject, the acquisition of normative ‘ways of talking’ associated with a given subject position must simultaneously be the acquisition of the associated ‘ways of seeing’ (ideological norms); that is, since any set of discursive norms entails a certain knowledge base, and since any knowledge base includes an ideological component, in acquiring the discursive norms one simultaneously acquires the associated ideological norms.

If, moreover, the process of acquisition takes place under conditions of the clear dominance of a given IDF in an institution, such that other IDF’s are unlikely to be evident (at least to the outsider or novice), there is no basis internal to the institution for the relativisation of the norms of the given IDF. In such cases, these norms will tend to be perceived first as norms of the institution itself, and second as merely skills or techniques which must be mastered in order for the status of competent institutional subjects to be achieved. These are the origins of naturalisation and opacity.

If it is also the case (as it typically is) that those who undergo the process of subjection are unaware of the functioning of the institution concerned in the social formation as a whole, then the institution will tend to be seen in isolation and there will be no basis external to the institution, either, for the relativisation and rationalisation of the norms of the given IDF.

Subjects, then, are typically unaware of the ideological dimensions of the subject positions they occupy. This means of course that they are in no reasonable sense ‘committed’ to them, and it underlines the point that ideologies are not to be equated with views or beliefs. It is quite possible for a social subject to occupy institutional subject positions which are ideologically incompatible, or to occupy a subject position incompatible with his or her overt political or social beliefs and affiliations, without being aware of any contradiction.\(^6\)
3 Critical and descriptive goals

I am using the term ‘descriptive’ primarily to characterise approaches to discourse analysis whose goals are either non-explanatory, or explanatory within ‘local’ limits, in contrast to the ‘global’ explanatory goals of critical discourse analysis outlined above. Where goals are non-explanatory, the objective is to describe without explaining; if for instance a speaker in some interaction uses consistently indirect forms of request, one points this out without looking for causes. Where goals are explanatory but ‘local’, causes are looked for in the immediate situation (e.g., in the ‘goals’ of the speaker – see below), but not beyond it: that is, not at the higher levels of the social institution and the social formation, which would figure in critical explanation. Moreover, although ‘locally’ explanatory descriptive work may seek to identify at least local determinants of features of particular discourses, descriptive work generally has been little concerned with the effects of discourse. And it has certainly not concerned itself with effects which go beyond the immediate situation. For critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, the question of how discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro structures is at the heart of the explanatory endeavour.

Descriptive work in discourse analysis tends to share other characteristics which can be seen as following from its at best limited explanatory goals. These include a reliance upon the concept of ‘background knowledge’, adoption of a ‘goal-driven’ local explanatory model, and neglect of power in discourse and, to an extent, status; all of these are discussed below. I shall refer for convenience to ‘a descriptive approach’ which has these characteristics in addition to descriptive goals in the above sense, but this is to be understood as a generalised characterisation of a tendency within discourse analysis and not as a characterisation of the work of any particular discourse analyst. Thus I would regard all of the following as basically descriptive in approach, diverse though they are in other respects: Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Labov and Fanshel (1977), Atkinson and Drew (1979), Brown and Yule (1983), Stubbs (1983). But this does not mean that I am attributing to each of them all the descriptive (or, indeed, none of the critical) characteristics.

3.1 Background knowledge

My primary contention in this sub-section is that the undifferentiated concept of BGK which has such wide currency in descriptive discourse analysis places discourse analysis in the position of (‘uncritically’) reproducing certain ideological effects.
The concept of BGK reduces diverse aspects of the ‘backgrounded material’ which is drawn upon in interaction – beliefs, values, ideologies, as well as knowledge properly so called – to ‘knowledge’. ‘Knowledge’ implies facts to be known, facts coded in propositions which are straightforwardly and transparently related to them. But ‘ideology’, as I have argued above, involves the representation of ‘the world’ from the perspective of a particular interest, so that the relationship between proposition and fact is not transparent, but mediated by representational activity. So ideology cannot be reduced to ‘knowledge’ without distortion.8

I suggested in Section 2 that where an IDF has undisputed dominance in an institution, its norms tend to be seen as highly naturalised, and as norms of the institution itself. In such instances, a particular ideological representation of some reality may come to appear as merely a transparent reflection of some ‘reality’ which is given in the same way to all. In this way, ideology creates ‘reality’ as an effect (see Hall 1982: 75). The undifferentiated concept of BGK mirrors, complements and reproduces this ideological effect: it treats such ‘realities’ as objects of knowledge, like any other reality.

It also contributes to the reproduction of another ideological effect, the ‘autonomous subject’ effect. The autonomous subject effect is a particular manifestation of the general tendency towards opacity which I have taken to be inherent to ideology: ideology produces subjects which appear not to have been ‘subъected’ or produced, but to be ‘free, homogeneous and responsible for (their) actions’ (Coward and Ellis 1977: 77). That is, metaphorically speaking, ideology endeavours to cover its own traces. The autonomous subject effect is at the bottom of theories of the ‘individual’ of the sort I referred to in Section 2.

Seeing all background material as ‘knowledge’ is tantamount to attributing it to each participating person in each interaction as a set of attributes of that person (‘what that person knows’). Interactions can then be seen as the coming-together of so many constituted, autonomous persons, ‘of their own free will’, whose ‘knowledge bases’ are mobilised in managing and making sense of discourse. This conception is cognitive and psychological at the expense of being as sociological; the sociological is reduced to the cognitive through the ‘competence’ metaphor, so that social factors do not themselves figure, only the ‘social competence’ of persons. The ‘competent’ subject of cognitive conceptions of interaction is the autonomous subject of ideology.

I am not of course suggesting that descriptive discourse analysts are consciously conspiring to give social scientific credence to ideological effects. The point is rather that unless the analyst differentiates ideology from knowledge, i.e., unless s/he is aware of the ideological dimensions of discourse, the chances are that s/he will be unconsciously implicated in the reproduction of
ideologies, much as the lay subject is. To put the point more positively and more contentiously, the concept of ideology is essential for a scientific understanding of discourse, as opposed to a mode of understanding which emulates that of the partially unsighted discourse subject. But the concept of ideology is incompatible with the limited explanatory goals of the descriptive approach, for it necessarily requires reference outside the immediate situation to the social institution and the social formation in that ideologies are by definition representations generated by social forces at these levels.

3.2 Goals

‘Goal-driven’ explanatory models of interaction tend, I suggest, to exaggerate the extent to which actions are under the conscious control of subjects. In referring to goal-driven models, I mainly have in mind ‘speaker goal’ models which set out to explain the strategies adopted by speakers, and the particular linguistic, pragmatic and discoursal choices made, in terms of speakers’ goals (e.g., Winograd 1982: 13–20, Leech 1983: 35–44). But I shall also comment on what one might call an ‘activity-goal’ model, which claims that features of the ‘activity type’ are explicable by reference to its ‘goal’, i.e., ‘the function or functions that members of the society see the activity as having’ (Levinson 1979: 369). I include activity-goals because Levinson also suggests that there might be a connection between them and speaker-goals: in essence, the former determine the latter. Atkinson and Drew (1979) attribute analogous explanatory value to activity-goals.

My objection to the ‘activity-goal’ model is that it regards properties of a particular type of interaction as determined by the perceived social functions of that type of interaction (its ‘goal’), thus representing the relationship between discourse and its determinants as transparent to those taking part. The properties which Levinson sees as so determined broadly correspond to what I have called ‘ideological practices’ (see Section 1), i.e., discoursal practices which vary between IDFs, and which are explicable immediately in terms of the ideological facets of IDFs and indirectly in terms of the social determinants of these ideologies. An example of ideological practices is the unequal distribution of discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations in classroom discourse, illustrated in text 2. A distinction needs to be made between the ideologies which underlie such practices, and rationalisations of such practices which institutional subjects may generate; rationalisations may radically distort the ideological bases of such practices. Yet the activity type model portrays such rationalisations – the function(s) which these practices are seen (Levinson’s term) as having – as determinants of these practices.
The objection to ‘speaker-goal’ models is similar: they imply that what speakers do in interaction is under their conscious control, and are at odds with the claim that naturalisation and opacity of determinants and effects are basic features of discourse. I have no doubt that this will be a contentious view of speaker-goal models; it will be objected that I am using ‘goal’ in its ordinary language sense of ‘conscious objectives’ (‘goal 1’) rather than in the technical sense (‘goal 2’) of ‘a state which regulates the behaviour of an individual’ (Leech 1983: 40), which misrepresents speaker-goal models. However, I would argue that such an objection underestimates the power of a metaphor: goal 2 includes goal 1; there is no obvious reason why one should accept this conflation of conscious goals and unconscious ‘goals’; but given this conflation, it is inevitable that the sense of goal 1 will predominate, and hence that interactions will be essentially seen as the pursuit of conscious goals. Such a view is in harmony with the local explanatory goals of the descriptive approach, for it seems to offer an explanation without needing to refer to institutions or the social formation.

3.3 Power and status

Either the descriptive approach offers pseudo-explanations of norms of interaction such as that of the activity-goal model, or it regards norms of interaction as requiring descriptions but not explanation. I shall be suggesting here that in either case, given that the capacity to maintain an IDF in dominance is the most salient effect of power in discourse, the absence of a serious concern with explaining norms results in a neglect of power; that, furthermore, there has been such an emphasis on cooperative conversation between equals that even matters of status have been relatively neglected (see Section 2 for ‘power’ and ‘status’).

The descriptive approach has virtually elevated cooperative conversation between equals into an archetype of verbal interaction in general. As a result, even where attention has been given to ‘unequal encounters’ (the term is used in the Lancaster work referred to in note 1 for interactions with status asymmetries), the asymmetrical distribution of discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations according to status (see below) has not been the focal concern. The archetype has developed under influences which prominently include two which I shall comment upon: the ‘Cooperative Principle’ of Grice (1975), and ethnomethodological work on turn-taking.

I think it is clear that Grice primarily had in mind, when formulating the ‘Cooperative Principle’ and the maxims in the 1975 paper, interaction between persons capable of contributing (more or less) equally; this is the implication of his focus on ‘the exchange of information’ (my emphasis, see
But for persons to be able to contribute equally, they must have equal status. Having equal status will presumably mean having equal discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations – for instance, the same turn-taking rights and the same obligations to avoid silences and interruptions, the same rights to utter ‘obligating’ illocutionary acts (such as requests and questions), and the same obligations to respond to them. I take it that having equal status also means having equal control over the determination of the concepts presupposed by Grice’s maxims: over what for interactional purposes counts as ‘truth’, ‘relevance’, adequate information, etc. (see Pratt 1981: 13).

Of course, there do occur interactions which at least approximate to these conditions, but they are by no means typical of interactions in general. Grice himself pointed out that the maxims were stated as if the purpose which ‘talk is adapted to serve and primarily employed to serve’ were ‘a maximally effective exchange of information’, and noted that ‘the scheme needs to be generalized to allow for such general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others’ (1975: 47). This proviso seems to have been often overlooked.

The impact of ethnomethodological work on turn-taking on the archetype must surely involve an influential paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1978), which proposes a simple but powerful set of rules to account for properties of conversational turn-taking, where ‘conversation’ is again very much cooperative interaction between equals. These rules tend to be taken as generally relevant for turn-taking, even though they are explicitly formulated for conversation. The paper itself argues that the ‘exchange system’ for conversation which it characterises ‘should be considered the basic form of speech-exchange system, with other systems . . . representing a variety of transformations on conversation’s turn-taking system’ (Sacks et al. 1978: 47). Levinson has suggested an analogous primacy for Grice’s maxims, which we might view as ‘specifications of some basic unmarked communicative context, deviations from which however common are seen as special or marked’ (1979: 376). Any such assignment of primacy or ‘unmarked’ status to conversation strengthens the archetype I have referred to.

The neglect of ‘unequal encounters’ and questions of status which has resulted from the appeal of the archetype is not unconnected with the neglect of power I referred to above. For if one focuses upon ‘unequal encounters’, or the comparison of ‘equal’ and ‘unequal’ interactions, the variability and relativity of norms of interaction is likely to be highlighted, giving rise to questions about their origins and rationales which may in turn lead to questions about ideological and discursive power; whereas if one concentrates heavily upon data where the distribution of rights and obligations is more or less symmetrical, there seems to be nothing to explain. Though from a critical
perspective, of course, there is: the possibility of, and constraints upon, cooperative conversation between equals, which are themselves effects of power.

Such conversation does not occur freely irrespective of institution, subjects, settings, and so forth. A reasonable hypothesis perhaps is that the most favourable conditions for its occurrence would be in an institution whose dominant IDF represented (certain) subjects as diversely contributing to a cooperative venture of equals; and that those with power would be most likely to endeavour to maintain such an IDF in dominance where the conditions existed for them (or required of them) to maintain their power through actively involving the ‘powerless’ in the organisation and control of the institution. In contemporary Britain, academic communities approximate rather closely to these conditions.

From the critical perspective, a statement of the conditions under which interactions of a particular type may occur is a necessary element of an account of such interactions, and I have suggested that such a statement cannot be made without reference to the distribution and exercise of power in the institution and, ultimately, in the social formation. Given the limited explanatory goals of the descriptive approach, however, the concept of power lies outside its scope.

3.4 Conclusion: research objectives

I have suggested that from the at best ‘locally’ explanatory goals of the descriptive approach there follow certain other characteristics – its conception of BGK and its ‘complicity’ in certain ideological effects, its interest in goal-driven models and its image of subjects in conscious control of interactions, the absence of serious explanatory work on norms and the neglect of power and status.

I referred in Section 3.1 to the ‘cognitive’ conception of interaction which is implicit in the concept of BGK. Interest in cognitive theories of language and discourse is on the increase, at least in part because of their ‘computer-friendliness’; Winograd (1982) presents a ‘computational paradigm’ as a new synthesis of the work of linguists, psychologists, students of artificial intelligence and others, around a computer-friendly cognitive theory of language. Winograd’s proposals have much in common with what I have called the ‘descriptive approach’, including a speaker-goal model, and local goals. I suspect that the current computational explosion might make this an increasingly attractive direction for discourse analysis, which will no doubt produce significant advances in certain directions, much as transformational-generative grammar did, and at much the same cost in terms of the desocialisation of language and discourse.
Any such development must, however, come to terms with what I would see as a major problem for non-critical discourse analysis, that of what I shall call the *rationality* of its research programme. I take a ‘rational’ research programme to be one which makes possible a systematic development in knowledge and understanding of the relevant domain, in this case discourse. Given the in principle infinite amount of possible data, a principled basis for sampling is necessary for such a programme. No such principled basis is possible so long as discourse analysts treat their samples as *objets trouvés* (Haberland and Mey 1977: 8), i.e., so long as bits of discourse are analysed with little or no attention to their places in their institutional matrices.

A principled basis for sampling requires minimally (a) a sociological account of the institution under study, its relationship to other institutions in the social formation, and relationship between forces within it; (b) an account of the ‘order of discourse’ of the institution, of its IDFs and the dominance relationships among them, with links between (a) and (b); (c) an ethnographic account of each IDF. Given this information, one could identify for collection and analysis interactions which are representative of the range of IDFs and speech events, interactional ‘cruxes’ which are particularly significant in terms of tensions between IDFs or between subjects, and so forth. In this way a systematic understanding of the functioning of discourse in institutions and institutional change could become a feasible target.

The same is true for ‘comparative’ research on discourse across institutions. The descriptive approach to such research may show interesting similarities or differences in discourse structure and organisation, as does work in the Birmingham discourse analysis model (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975: 115–18, Coulthard and Montgomery 1981). But such comparison requires a principled basis for selecting cases, given which it can contribute to the investigation of substantive social issues such as: the degree to which social institutions are integrated or autonomous in a given social formation, and centralising or decentralising tendencies; or the positions of social institutions on a hierarchy of relative importance to the function of the social formation, and how this relates to influences from one institution to another on various levels, including the ideological and discoursal. The work of Foucault (1979) is a suggestive starting point for such research.

4 Concluding remarks: resistance

The following piece of data is, like text 1, an extract from a police interview, though in this case the interviewee is a youth suspected of involvement in an incident during which a bus window was broken. *A* is the youth, *B* is the police interviewer, and the conventions are the same as for text 1.
Text 5

1. B: so why did you get the other fellows to come up with
2. A: some went up first
3. B: you as well
4. A: I’m not getting on a bus with a bus load of coons me sitting there jack
   the lad d’you know what I mean . . .
5. B: why’s that
6. A: get laid into what do you mean why’s that . . .
7. B: well they weren’t attacking any other white people on the bus were
   they
8. A: no . . . that’s coz there was no other skinhead on the bus that’s why
   . . . if there was a skinhead on the bus that was it they would lay into
   him
9. B: so there’s a feud is there
10. A: yeah . . .
11. B: between skinheads and blacks
13. B: so when you went on the upstairs on the bus because let’s face it if
    there was none of them downstairs was there
14. A: no
15. B: so why did you go upstairs
16. A: like I say there was no room downstairs anyway I don’t sit on the
    bottom of the bus that’s where all the grannies sit . . . I can’t sit down
    there

In contrast to the orderliness of the texts discussed in Section 1.1 of this
paper, text 5 manifests a certain ‘disorderliness’, in the sense that the inter-
viewee is in a number of respects not constraining his contributions to the
interaction in accordance with institutional norms for the subject position he
is in. This is a case where we have a ‘client’ rather than an institutional subject;
as I indicated earlier, clients can normally be expected to comply with institu-
tional norms. The client here is non-compliant in the following ways:

(a) A interrupts B (2,5)
(b) A challenges B’s questions rather than answering them (3,5)
(c) A questions B (5)
(d) A questions B’s sincerity. In 9 and 11, A signals prosodically as well as
    non-vocally that B is already in possession of information he purports to
    be asking for (and therefore not to have).
A maintains a different ‘orientation’ (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975: 130–32) from B’s. This is marked by his use of the lexis of his peer group rather than that of police interviews (coon, jack the lad, grannies).

One might add that there are indications that A gets B to adapt to his orientation, whereas one would expect the reverse, i.e., one would expect the client to adapt to the orientation of the subject (and of the institution). For instance, in 6 B anaphorically refers to (a bus load of) coons, rather than using a different lexicalisation as one might expect him to if he were ‘asserting’ his orientation (and as he does in 10, with blacks).

Text 5 will no doubt correct any impression that may have been given in this paper that norms are necessarily faithfully mirrored in practices (see note 4). One factor determining how likely it is that a client will comply with the norms which an institution attaches to a subject position is the particular configuration of processes of subjection in other institutions which have contributed to the social formation of that client. In this instance one might wish to look into the subject positions associated with the client’s peer-group, i.e., the relevant ‘youth culture’. One dimension of institutional subject construction which I have not referred to in the paper so far is that the institution also constructs the subject’s stance towards ‘outsiders’, including subjects in other institutions. In this case, it could be that the client is constructed into an oppositional stance towards the police and perhaps other public authorities.

The critique of institutional discourse, as part of the critique of social institutions and the social formation, does not take place in glorious academic isolation from the practices of institutional subjects, clients and publics. On the contrary, it is continuous with such practices, and it is only in so far as such practices include significant elements of resistance to dominant IDFs – be it through clients rejecting subject positions as in text 5, or, analogously, readers rejecting the ‘preferred reader’ positions which writers ‘write into’ their texts – or through challenges to the dominance of an IDF from other IDFs, that the critique of institutional discourse can develop into a ‘material force’ with the capacity to contribute to the transformation of institutions and social formations.

Given the existence of such conditions across social institutions, which may occur in a period when the struggle between social forces at the level of the social formation is sharp, it may be possible to introduce forms of critical discourse analysis in the schools, as part of the development of ‘language awareness’, in the teaching of the mother tongue. The desirability in principle of such a development follows from what I have claimed above: if speakers are standardly operating in discourse under unknown determinants and with
unknown effects, it is a proper objective for schools to increase discursal con-
sciousness. However, I have stressed the conditions for such a development,
because it would be naïve to think that its desirability in principle would be sufficient for it to be achieved. On the contrary, it is likely to be fiercely resisted.

Notes

1. The transcription conventions are: turns are numbered, excluding ‘back
channels’; beginnings of overlaps are marked with square brackets; pauses are marked with dots for a ‘short’ pause and a dash for a ‘long’ pause; material in round brackets was indistinct. For texts 2 and 3 I retain the conventions used in their sources, which are indicated. Text 1 was part of the data used in a presentation to the Language Study Group of the British Sociological Association (Lancaster Conference, June 1982) by myself and colleagues Christopher Candlin, Michael Makosch, Susan Spencer, Jennifer Thomas. It is taken from the television series Police as is text 5.

2. Italicised syllables carry primary stress; intonation is selectively marked;
utterance segments which overlap are enclosed within one pair of square
brackets; short pauses are marked ‘ˆ’.

3. I use the term ‘social formation’ to designate a particular society at a particular
time and stage of development (e.g., Britain in 1984). The term ‘society’ is used too loosely and variously to serve the purpose.

4. The relationship between norms and action is not as simple as this suggests.
Sometimes, which norms are the appropriate ones is itself a matter for negotiation; then there may be alternative sets of norms available (see below); and, as I show in section 4, norms may be rejected.

5. I have in mind throughout class societies, and more specifically capitalist
social formations such as the one I am most familiar with: that of modern
Britain.

6. Nor are ideologies to be equated with ‘propaganda’ or ‘bias’; the latter are associated with particular communicative intentions (such as ‘persuading’), the former are not.

7. The concept of BGK has a wide currency across a number of disciplines. The following, for instance, are representative of pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociology: Giddens (1976), Levinson (1983), Brown and Yule (1983).

8. I assume for present purposes that ‘knowledge’ and ‘ideology’ are clearly separable, which presupposes a much more categorical distinction between science and ideology than may be sustainable.

9. I use the term ‘goal’ here with respect to parties in discourse, whereas my use of the term earlier has been with respect to analytical goals. I don’t believe there should be any confusion.
10. This text and some of my comments on it derive from a part of the presentation referred to in note 1 which was jointly produced by Michael Makosch, Susan Spencer and myself. I am grateful to all the colleagues referred to in note 1 for providing the stimuli which led to the writing of this paper. I am grateful to my wife Vonny for showing me how to be more coherent; remaining incoherence is my own responsibility.