

## Discourse and power

Two major aspects of the **power/language** relationship: **power in discourse**, and **power behind discourse**. This relationship can be exemplified as:

**Power**, whether it be '**in**' or '**behind**' discourse, is never definitively held by any one person, or social grouping, because power can be won and exercised only in and through social struggles in which it may also be lost.

In 'face-to-face' discourse participants are unequal. An extract from a visit to a premature baby unit by a doctor (D) and a group of medical students (s), as part of the students' training programme highlights the power relations with the analytical tools:

- A **spaced dot** - indicates a short pause,
- a **dash** a longer pause,
- **extended square**( ) brackets overlap , and
- **parentheses** [ ]talk which was not distinguishable enough to transcribe.

One immediately striking feature, marked by the square brackets, is the number of times the doctor interrupts the student - in (3), (9), (11), (13), and (19). (There are no square brackets in (13), because there is no actual overlap.) the doctor does not interrupt simply because he wants to do all the talking, as people sometimes do. he interrupts in order to control the contributions of the student - to stop him beginning the examination before washing his hands, to stop him repeating information or giving obvious and irrelevant information, to ensure the student gives the key information expected.

**In what other ways does the doctor exercise control over the student's contributions?**

- **Firstly**, in the opening turn, where the nature of what is going to go on in the interaction is announced to the students - including the nature of their own contributions.
- **Secondly**, in the way in which the student is explicitly told when to start talking and examining, at the end of turn (1) (off you go) and again in (7).
- **Thirdly**, in the equally explicit instructions to the student as to how he should sequence his actions, in (3).

**Fourthly**, in the way in which the student's contributions are evaluated in (5) (very good) and (7) (that's right); positive and encouraging as they are, these are still techniques of control which would be regarded as presumptuous or arrogant if they were addressed to an equal or someone more powerful.

Fifthly the student is 'put on the spot' in the series of questions of turns (13), (15), (17) and (19). The questions constitute a strategically ordered sequence which leads the student through the routine he has failed to master. Also, the student's obligation to answer is underscored in each case by a pause (marked by a spaced dot) - brief silences in which all eyes are on him, and which it is definitely his responsibility to end!

- (13) and (15) are negative questions- did we not, might we not. Using negative questions is sometimes (depending on intonation and other factors) like saying "I assume that X is the case, but you seem to be suggesting it isn't; surely it is?". In this case, the student ought to know that X is the case, so asking him questions of this elaborate sort is a way of making him look silly.

The power relationship is more baldly expressed in (17), where the reduced question forms (reduced, that is, from now what do we do? what is the next most important thing?) sound to me abrupt and curt. **Finally**, in (19) the doctor uses a declarative sentence rather than an interrogative sentence, with a question tag: don't we. The effect is rather like that of the negative questions.

**Power in discourse is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants.**

There are three types of constraints - **constraints on**:

- **contents**, on what is said or done;
- **relations**, the social relations people enter into in discourse;
- **subjects**, or the 'subject positions' people can occupy.

'Relations' and 'subjects' are very closely connected, and all three overlap and co-occur in practice, but it is helpful to be able to distinguish them. In terms of contents, the student is required to conduct an examination according to a learned routine, operating (relations) in a professional relationship to his audience and a subordinate relationship to the doctor, and occupying (subjects) the subject positions of (aspirant) doctor as well as student. These constraints imply particular linguistic forms.

Constraints are either shown directly or indirectly. All the directive speech acts (orders and questions) in the example come from the doctor: it appears that the doctor has the right to give orders and ask questions, whereas the students have only the obligation to comply and answer, in accordance with the subordinate relation of student to doctor. Yet **the doctor is not directly controlling the student** in this respect. Rather, the constraints derive from **the conventions of the discourse type** which is being drawn upon.

In an indirect sense, the doctor is in control, for it is the prerogative of powerful participants to determine which discourse type(s) may be legitimately drawn upon. Thus in addition to directly constraining contributions, powerful participants can indirectly constrain them by selecting the discourse type.

More powerful participants may be able to treat conventions in a more cavalier way, as well as to allow or disallow varying degrees of latitude to less powerful participants.

## Power in cross-cultural encounters

Power is reflected in the interactions of unequal encounters where the **non-powerful people have cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from those of the powerful people**. Encounters such as a job interview in which a ‘gatekeeper’ who generally belongs to the societally dominant cultural grouping controls an encounter which determines whether someone gets a job, or gets access to some other valued objective.

Discourse types and orders of discourse vary across cultures. But in such gatekeeping encounters, white middle-class gatekeepers are likely to constrain the discourse types which can be drawn upon to those of the dominant cultural grouping.



If an interviewee gives what is felt to be a poor or weak or irrelevant answer to a question, this is likely to be put down to her lack of the necessary knowledge or experience, her uncooperativeness, and so forth; the possibility of miscommunication because of differences in discoursal conventions rarely suggests itself.

People may thus be denied jobs and other valuable social 'goods' through misconceptions based upon cultural insensitivity and dominance. The possibilities for miscommunication are ample. For instance, the following extract is from a simulated job interview for a post in a library with a member of an American cultural minority (C2):

in a library with a member of an American cultural minority (C2):

Interviewer: What about the library interests you most?

C2: what about the library in terms of the books? Or the whole building?

Interviewer: point that you'd like to ...

C2: Oh, the children's books, because I have a child, and the children ... you know there's so many you know books for them to read you know, and little things that would interest them would interest me too.

C2's English in terms of grammar and vocabulary is native-like, which in itself is likely to lead the interviewer to dismiss any thoughts of culturally based miscommunication even if those thoughts occurred. But that is a possibility.

C2 has failed to interpret the interviewer's question in the obvious way'. But 'the obvious way' is the way within a specific culture of 'the interview'. Differences result in more regular and more systematic and they based upon not only cultural differences in discourse but also upon more overt differences in skin colour and lifestyle. Power in discourse between members of different cultural groupings is in this perspective an element in the domination of, particularly, black and Asian minorities by the white majority, and of institutionalized racism.

## Hidden power

In the discourse in which power is hidden, participants are separated in place and time. This is true of **written language** generally, but the growth area for this sort of discourse has been the **mass media - television, radio, film** as well as **newspapers**. Mass-media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving hidden relations of power.

- **The most obvious difference** between face-to-face discourse and media discourse is the ‘**one-sidedness**’ of the latter. In face-to-face interaction, participants alternate between being the producers and the interpreters of text, but in media discourse, as well as generally in writing, there is a sharp divide between producers and interpreters.

There is another important difference. In face-to-face discourse, producers design their contributions for the particular people they are interacting with - they adapt the language they use, and keep adapting throughout an encounter in the light of various sorts of 'feedback' they get from coparticipants. But media discourse is designed for mass audiences, and there is no way that producers can even know who is in the audience, what media producers do is address an ideal subject.

- But what is the nature of the power relations in media discourse?
- We can say that producers exercise power over consumers.
- Who precisely are these 'producers'?

# Quarry load- shedding problem

**UNSHEETED** lorries from Middlebarrow Quarry were still causing problems by shedding stones on their journey through Warton village, members of the parish council heard at their September meeting.

The council's observations have been sent to the quarry management and members are hoping to see an improvement.

- A number of questions arise here!
- Who is actually exercising power in this little article? Perhaps it is the journalist who wrote the piece. But it is well-known that journalists work under editorial control. So perhaps it is the editor, or rather the newspaper itself, as a sort of institutional collective.
- But is the presentation of the Local council meeting only the newspaper's, or is not the newspaper perhaps transmitting someone else's representation? And if so, does that not give a certain amount of power to that 'someone else'?

It is less clear but nevertheless highly significant in terms of whose perspective is adopted in reports.

In the British media, the balance of sources and perspectives and ideologies overwhelmingly in favor of existing power-holders. We can see media power relations as relations of a mediated (sort between power-holders and the mass of the population. the media operate as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class. The mediated power of existing power-holders is also a hidden power because it is implicit in the practices of the media rather than being explicit.

### **Causality nominalization**

- Nominalization occurs when a writer expresses an idea by using the noun form, rather than the verb form, of one of these versatile words. Such constructions often involve using a verb in the passive voice.
- For example, “interference” is a nominalization of “interfere,” “decision” is a nominalization of “decide,” and “argument” is a nominalization of “argue.



- One effect of this grammatical form is that crucial aspects of the process are left unspecified: in particular, we don't know who or what is shedding loads or causing loads to be shed - causality is unspecified.

The first paragraph of the report makes things clearer, but not much.

Causality is attributed to unsheeted lorries from Middlebarrow Quarry. This itself contains unspecified causality again, for unsheeted implies the failure of a process to happen - someone did not put sheets over the loads, when (one assumes) they ought to have done.

- The power being exercised here is the power to **disguise power**, i.e. to disguise the power of quarry owners and to behave with impunity. It is a form of the power to constrain content, to favour certain interpretations and 'wordings' of events while excluding others.

Power is also sometimes hidden in face-to-face discourse. For instance, there is obviously a close connection between requests and power, in that the right to request someone to do something often derives from having power. But there are many grammatically different forms available for making requests. Some are direct and mark the power relationship explicitly, while others are indirect.

- **Power behind discourse**
- The idea of ‘power behind discourse’ is that the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power. In this section, we focus on **standardization**,
- **Standardization:** the process whereby a particular social dialect comes to be elevated into what is often called a standard or even ‘**national**’ language. We will focus upon standard British English.

## Standard language

- Standardization is of direct economic importance in improving communication: most people involved in economic activity come to understand the standard, even if they don't always use it productively.
- It is also of great political and cultural importance in the establishment of nationhood.
- The social dialect which developed into standard English was the East Midland dialect associated with the merchant class in London at the end of the medieval period.
- This underlines that the feudal **merchants** became the first capitalists, and the rise of **standard** English is linked to the growing power of the merchants.

The beginnings of standard English were very modest in comparison with its pre-eminence now: the emergent standard form was used in very few places for very few purposes by very few people.

Standardization initially affected written language, and has only gradually extended to various aspects of speech - grammar, vocabulary and even pronunciation. Its growth as a long process of colonization, whereby it gradually 'took over' major social institutions, pushing out Latin and French, vastly extending the purposes it was used for and its formal resources as a result, and coming to be accepted by more and more people.

By coming to be associated with the most salient and powerful institutions - literature, Government and administration, law, religion, and education.

- Standard English **developed** not only at the expense of **Latin** and **French**, but also at the expense of other, '**non-standard**' social dialects (and the expense of the other languages of Britain - Welsh and Gaelic, and especially since the Second World War many others, including a number of Asian languages).
- Standard English was regarded as *correct* English, and other social dialects were stigmatized not only in terms of correctness but also in terms which indirectly reflected on the **lifestyles, morality** and so forth of their speakers.
- The establishment of the dominance of **standard** English and the subordination of other social dialects was part and parcel of the establishment of the dominance of the **capitalist** class and the **subordination** of the **working** class.

Standard English is an asset because its use is a passport to good jobs and positions of influence and power in national and local communities. This applies naturally enough to standard English as a written form, but also to standard spoken English including the use of forms of Received Pronunciation (RP) – Received Pronunciation (RP) – the type of pronunciation which most politicians, television and radio reporters, university teachers, senior industrial managers, senior civil servants use.

The dominance of the standard language, but that does not mean that they always use it, or indeed accept it in the full sense of the term.

In fact it meets stiff resistance from speakers of other social dialects, as well as from speakers of other languages in modern multilingual Britain.

# The discourse type

the concept of power in medical discourse. there are two aspects of power at play:

**Power in discourse:** This refers to the way that the medical profession wields power over patients through the use of language and conventions. For example, doctors may use technical language that patients don't understand, or they may control the conversation by asking all the questions.

**Power behind discourse:** This refers to the underlying social and ideological forces that shape the conventions of medical discourse. The author argues that these forces are ultimately wielded by those in power within the medical profession, such as doctors and other medical staff.

the way conventions are shaped by those in power is related to the dominant ideologies of medicine. In other words, the way that doctors and patients are positioned in relation to each other in medical discourse reflects the power that the medical profession has over patients.

The important points in the highlighted text are:

Medical discourse is shaped by conventions, and these conventions can be seen as an effect of power.

These conventions position medical professionals as having authority over patients.

This is not unique to medicine, but rather a general tendency seen in many public institutions where professionals interact with the public.



The third and final aspect of 'power behind discourse' that Fairclough wants to look at is not to do with the constitution of orders of discourse and their component discourse types, but with access to them.

**The question is, who has access to which discourses, and who has the power to impose and enforce constraints on access?**

The myth of free speech, that anyone is 'free' to say what they like, is an amazingly powerful one, given the actuality of a plethora of constraints on access to various sorts of speech, and writing.

These are part and parcel of more general constraints on social practice - on access to the more exclusive social institutions, their practices, and especially the most powerful subject positions constituted" in their practices.

And in terms of discourse in particular, on access to the discourse types, and discursial

positions of power. In a sense, these 'cultural goods' are analogous to other socially valued 'goods' of a more tangible nature \_ accumulated wealth, good jobs, good housing, and so forth.

Both sorts of goods' are unequally distributed, so that members as the dominant bloc (the capitalist class, the 'middle class', the professions) have substantially more of them than members of the working class - they are richer in cultural capital

Religious rituals such as church services will serve to illustrate constraints on access. You can only officiate at a church service if you are a priest, which is itself a constraint on access.

Religion is not really that much different in this respect from medicine, or education, or law. Medical examinations, or lessons, or litigation, may not be as ritualized as a religious service, but nevertheless there are strict constraints on who can do them, and strict constraints on who can acquire the qualifications required to do them.

In principle (as well as in law and in the rules of the professions), anyone is free to obtain such qualifications. But in practice, the people who do obtain them come mainly from the dominant bloc. For most people, the only involvement with medicine, education or the law is in the capacity of 'client' - patient, pupil or student, legal client - and 'clients' are not really 'insiders' in an institution.

Another less institutionally specific example of unequally distributed cultural capital is access to the various reading and writing abilities that can be summed up with the word literacy which is highly valued in our society, and a great deal of socially important and prestigious practice takes place in 'the written word'.

Access to a high level of literacy is a precondition for a variety of socially valued 'goods', including most rewarding and well-paid jobs. Yet it is evident that access to literacy is unequally distributed - indeed, an estimated one million adults in Britain lack 'basic literacy skills', as defined by UNESCO, and the overwhelming majority of these are working-class people.

Among the more obvious and visible effects of constraints on access is the way in which having access to prestigious sorts of discourse and powerful subject positions enhances publicly acknowledged status and authority. One reason for this is that becoming a doctor or a teacher or a lawyer is generally regarded as a purely individual achievement which merits the 'rewards' of status and authority, with social constraints on who can achieve these positions being correspondingly glossed over.

As support for this view, people often refer to the fact that training in these professions involves spending years acquiring special knowledge and skills. Thus professional knowledge and skills act as emblems of personal achievement, mystifying social constraints on access - as well as being membership cards for those who achieve access, and a means of excluding outsiders.

The discourses of these professions, including specialist vocabularies or jargons, serve all these functions.

Conversely, exclusion of people from particular types of discourse and subject positions lowers their publicly acknowledged status,

In the example of cultural minority groupings in interviews, in terms of Power in cross-cultural encounters, there is a great deal more homogeneity with it cultural groupings than there really is. In fact, many white working-class British people from the dominant cultural grouping are as unfamiliar with the conventions of interviewing as members of black or Asian communities.

The educational system has the major immediate responsibility for differentials in access. In the words of Michel Foucault, 'any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry'.

And what is striking is the extent to which, despite the claims of education to differentiate only on the grounds of merit, differentiation follows social class lines:

the higher one goes in the educational system, the greater the predominance of people from capitalist, 'middle-class', and professional backgrounds. The educational system reproduces without dramatic change the existing social division of labour, and the existing system of class relations.

## **Constraints on access: 'formality'**

### **'Formality' :**

- one pervasive and familiar aspect of constraints on access to discourse.
- A common property in many societies of practices and discourses of high social prestige and restricted access. It is a contributory factor in keeping access restricted, for it makes demands on participants above and beyond those of most discourse, and the ability to meet those demands is itself unevenly distributed.
- It can also serve to generate awe among those who are excluded by it and daunted by it.
- best regarded as a property of social situations which has peculiar effects upon language forms. As a property of social situations, it manifests in an accentuated form the three types of constraint upon practice which I have associated with the exercise of power:



## **constraints on contents, subjects, and relations.**

**In terms of contents**, discourse in a formal situation is subject to exceptional constraints on topic on relevance, and in terms of more or less fixed interactive routines.

### **In terms of :**

- **subjects**, the social identities of those qualified to occupy subject positions in the discourses of formal situations are defined more rigorously than is usual,
- **public positions or statuses**, as in the constraints referred to above on who may officiate at a religious service.
- **relations**, formal situations are characterized by an exceptional orientation to and marking of position, status, and 'face'; power and social distance are overt, and consequently there is a strong tendency towards politeness.

Politeness is based upon recognition of differences of power, degrees of social distance, and so forth, and oriented to reproducing them without change.

- ✓ The peculiar effects of formality on language forms follow from these accentuated constraints. We find levels of structuring of language above and beyond what is required in non-formal discourse.
- ✓ This extra structuring can affect any level of language. For example, the allocation of turns at talking to participants may be regulated by a formula (e.g. participants must speak in order of rank), whereas in conversation people work it out as they go along .
- ✓ There may be requirements to do with the rhythm or tempo or loudness of talk - people may have to talk at a particular speed, for instance; or to do with the grammar of sentences - highly complex structures may be favoured.

- ✓ There is likely to be a general requirement for **consistency** of language forms, which will mean for that the vocabulary must be selected from a restricted set throughout.
- ✓ There is also a heightened **self-consciousness** which results in care about using 'correct' grammar and vocabulary, including a whole set of vocabulary which is reserved for more formal occasions, and is often itself referred to as 'formal'.

Formal situations could be regarded as adding an extra constraint to the three with the exercise of power - a constraint on language form - as well as heightening the three. This means that discourse, and practice generally, in formal situations are difficult and demanding; they depend on special knowledge and skill which has to be learnt.

Many people do not acquire even the necessary knowledge and skill to occupy peripheral positions in formal situations, and consequently find formal situations per se daunting and frightening - or ridiculous.

A formidable axis is set up between social position and knowledge; since those in prestigious social positions do learn to operate formally, an easy conclusion for those who don't is 'I can't because I'm not clever enough' rather than 'I can't because I'm working class'. Thus formality both restricts access and generates .

### **Social Struggle in Discourse**

Power is not permanently fixed in or behind discourse. It can be struggled for by the participants. People who hold power have to at certain moments continually reassert it due to the probability of the loss of it. Whether the speaker is speaking at the level of situation, or in terms of a social, institution or generally the whole society, power at all these levels are exercised, won, or lost in the course of struggle. Struggles for power can be explicit. See the extract below:

- (1) H: Why didn't you go straight down Queen Street?
- (2) Y: I'm not walking down there with a load of coons from St Hilda's coming out of school.
- (3) H: Why's that?
- (4) Y: Well that's obvious, isn't it? I don't want to get belted.
- (5) H: Well there isn't usually any bother in Queen Street, is there?
- (6) Y: No. None of us white kids usually go down there, do we? What about that bust-up in the Odeon carpark at Christmas?
- (7) H: That was nearly a year ago, and I'm not convinced you lot were as innocent as you made out. So when you got to the square, why did you wait around for quarter of an hour instead of going straight home?
- (8) Y: I thought my mate might come down that way after work. Anyway, we always go down the square after school.

In the above discourse, certain degrees of power of the head master have been exercised over the youth's contribution. It is also reflected in the degree to which both stick to the discorsal rights and obligation. It is not imaginable however that the youth can ask questions to which there are answers from the headmaster.

In the above discourse, there are different ways that the youth use to exercise more control over the discourse than anyone might have expected. The youth exceeds his discorsal rights and that he does not fulfil his 'discorsal obligation'. This can be shown as follows:

- a. The youth challenges his headmaster on two occasions in turns (2) and (4) using implied answers after the challenge.
- b. In turn 6, Y asks a question which h answers: as I said above, you would expect neither Y to ask nor H to answer questions.

the answers which y does give to h 's questions go beyond what is directly relevant in turns 6 and 8.

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d. Y shows no sign of adapting his style of talk to the relatively formal setting; he appears to treat the interview to an extent as if it were a conversation, and to treat the headmaster as if the headmaster is his classmate. This is most evident in y 's vocabulary (belted, kids, bust-up) and especially in his use of the racist word coons. The word coon must not be used in a older-younger or teacher- student talk.

## Power in H's talk

- Most of the questions were asked by him indicating a level of sticking to the conventional rights and obligations due to his institutional power which makes it possible and normal. H is achieving ground to be able to pursue a longer-term strategy.
- Perhaps this is how we should interpret h 's failure to immediately challenge or dissociate himself from the racist coons-, by letting it pass, he appears to be accepting it.

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Fairclough distinguishes three levels of social organization: situational, institutional, and societal. The talk in the example is at the situational level in which power struggle occurs. But it might be taken to reflect the struggle at the institutional level, too (the power struggle between the youth and the social authority).

Fairclough suggests, even in class level. This has consequences in terms of the distinction between ‘power in discourse’ and ‘power behind discourse’.

Covert power practices in discourse are more preferred than overt ones. Covert power practices can be shown in the use of grammatical example of T/V pronouns found in many languages. Two forms of the second-person pronouns whose counterpart in English are only single one (you).

Both T/V have specific reference. In French, 'tu' and 'vous' are now used to address superiors and either (depending on the class of the of the speakers) could be used reciprocally between social equals. Recently, a shift has been made in the system based on 'solidarity' rather than power .

Tu= with friends, relations, co-worker

vous= social distance.

There is tension between solidarity-based and power based systems. Social superior we may have a close relation with like (parents) or subordinate who is distant (soldier, if you are an officer) may require the use of vous and tu respectively on the grounds of power. But tu and vous can respectively be used on the ground of solidarity.

There has been a shift towards the solidarity-based system. In Japanese, management techniques now eliminate surface inequalities between managers and workers. It is influential.

Does this shift from power-based system to solidarity system means that power inequality decline? It could be right if it is assumed that a mechanical connection between relationships and their discursal expression.

Though, power inequality might not be taken to decline in the sense of wealth distribution. It is more evident in the increase in poverty in 1980, inequalities in access to health facilities, education, housing, inequalities in employment prospects, ...etc.

The ability to determine the extent at which that power relationships to be played down as a tactic within the strategy for the continued possession and exercise of power is one of the dimensions of power. The Japanese example above is a one source strategy of such kind, specifically, using hidden power strategy for manipulative reasons.

Fairclough suggests that the decline of overt power relationships should be interpreted as an advantage on the part of power-holders to dominate powerless people (working-class people). Nonetheless, this does not mean the power-holders quit their power practices, but they are forced into practicing it in a less direct way in their production of it in the discourses.

Discourse is inseparable from this complex situation of power struggle. The struggle of power can help more understand discourse and even the struggle in discourse itself.

Shifting patterns of salience are a barometer of the development of social struggle and a part of that process. For example, counselling is a salient discourse type which has colonized workplaces, schools, and so forth. This is superficially indicative of an unwonted sensitivity to individual needs and problems. But it seems in some cases at least to have been turned into a means to greater institutional control of people through exposing aspects of their 'private' lives to unprecedented institutional probing. Sensitivity to individuals is an advantage by power-holders to the strength of the (relatively) unpowerful; the containment of counselling is their counter-offensive.

Access to prestigious discourse types and their powerful subject positions is another arena of social struggle. One thinks for instance of the struggles of the working class through the trade unions and the Labour Party around the turn of the century for access to political arenas including Parliament, and by implication to the discourses of politics in the 'public' domain. The struggles of women and black people as well as working-class people to break into the professions, and more recently the higher ranks of the professions. Struggles over access merge with struggles around standardization. The important part of standardization is the establishment of the standard language as the form used in a range of 'public' institutions.

In the context of the increasing relative power of the working class in Britain after the Second World War, certain concessions have had to be made to nonstandard dialects in some institutions in broadcasting and some of the professions, for example, certain forms of relatively prestigious nonstandard speech are tolerated. Again, cultural minorities have demanded rights for their own languages in various institutional spheres, including education, and these have again resulted in certain limited concessions.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Fairclough argued, on the one hand, that power is exercised and enacted in discourse and, on the other hand, that there are relations of power behind discourse.

That is; in terms of 'power in discourse', discourse is the site of power struggles, and, in terms of 'power behind discourse', it is the stake in power struggles - for control over orders of discourse is a powerful mechanism for sustaining power.

Fairclough distinguished between three types of constraint (which powerful participants in discourse can exercise over the contributions of non-powerful participants):

They are : constraints on **contents**, **relations**, and **subjects**.



<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Structural effects</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Knowledge and beliefs</b>
<b>Relations</b>	<b>Social relationships</b>
<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Social identities</b>

*Fig. 3.1* Constraints on discourse and structural effects

These constraints can be either in relatively immediate and concrete terms as a matter of power in discourse, or we can think of them in a relatively 'structural' and long-term way as a matter of power behind discourse - a matter of the conventions of discourse types constraining participants' contributions in' these three ways. In the second of these ways, we can see that such constraints on discourse may have long-term structural effects of a more general sort.

**Fairclough argued that discourse is part of social practice and contributes to the reproduction of social structures.** If there are systematic constraints on the contents of discourse and on the social relationships enacted in it and the social identities enacting them. These can be expected to have long-term effects on the knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities of an institution or society.

In any society there will be mechanisms for achieving coordination and commonality of practice in respect of knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities.

**The three main types of mechanism.**

**First**, there may be practices and discourse types which are universally followed and necessarily accepted because no alternative seems conceivable, which have built into them coordinated knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities.

**Secondly**, coordination can be imposed in the exercise of power, in a hidden fashion, as the 'power behind discourse' which is called the mechanism *inculcation*.

**Thirdly**, coordination can be arrived at through a process of rational communication and debate, which is called the mechanism *communication*.

All three mechanisms exist in contemporary society, but it is the struggle between communication and inculcation that is most salient.

Inculcation is the mechanism of power-holders who wish to preserve their power, while communication is the mechanism of emancipation and the struggle against domination.

Correspondingly, a long-term focus of the struggle over discourse is the issue whether constraints on contents, relations and subjects are to be imposed through inculcation (and it is their imposition through inculcation that is the main concern of CLS) or coordinated through communication.