Please fill out this task, and bring to Day 2 of our workshops (i.e. on Thursday February 5th). These questions are useful for you to be thinking about now, even if you don’t have the answer to all them at this stage.

Name: Annabelle Lukin
Discipline: Linguistics
Your topic (make one up if you don’t yet have one):

The relationship of the presentation of speech and thought in Mansfield’s ‘Bliss’ to the thematic concerns of the story

**QUESTION 1**
What is your ‘object of study’? Is it something discrete, or something which has fuzzy or permeable boundaries? Is it physical, biological, social, psychological or semiotic? Or some mix of these (e.g. ‘psycho-social’, ‘bio-semiotic’)

My object of study (OOS) is the representation of speech and thought (mind) in verbal art (literature), with Mansfield’s ‘Bliss’ as a case study. It is definitely not something discrete. One of the categories of speech and thought presentation is widely known as ‘free indirect discourse’ (FID), where there is a blurring of boundaries between the character and the narrator. FID is widely discussed and debated, with a lack of consensus in the literature on how it is defined, and how it is best observed. It is, in my view, a wholly linguistic construct – this makes it an abstract ‘thing’ or feature of a text, with variable manifestations. It is semiotic in nature (which makes it also a psycho-social phenomena).

**QUESTION 2**
What kind of history does your object of study have? If it is physical, when and how was it first discovered? By whom? If it is non-physical, when and how was it first conceptualized? By whom?

Speech and thought presentation in literature has been discussed since the 1880s. It started to get named in French, German and English scholarship in the early part of the 20th century. There are a number of key scholars to read in the linguistic study of speech and thought. Increasingly there is an interest in this field from cognitive science (viz ‘cognitive stylistics’).

**QUESTION 3**
Is your object of study a ‘whole’ or a part of something? Is it a thing, a relation, a process?

Speech and thought presentation is sometimes discretely rendered by a writer. At other times, it is covert, and its boundaries difficult to delimit. Its identification requires a linguist to see simultaneous meaning making systems at work. So there’s quite a bit of...
linguistic theory and description required to start making sense of the options in speech and thought presentation in literature. The patterns in a given text need to be seen in relation to the context of construction, since literature and modes of narration appear to change over time.

QUESTION 4
Is your object of study visible to the naked eye? If you need technology to observe it, what kind of technology? Is your technology mechanical or theoretical? Or both?

The OOS is not available to the naked eye. The technology you need to study speech and thought is theoretical and descriptive. So you need some ways of seeing constituent patterns in discourse, as well as relations between units in discourse.

You need technology to help you tag your analysis, especially if you need to establish quantitative patterns of the use of different forms in a piece of literary writing. Also, the absence of patterns can also be revealing, which means you need some way of delimiting the possible semantic options in the presentation of speech and thought.

QUESTION 5
What kinds of theories help you articulate your object of study? Within your discipline, is the nature of your object of study contested? What other discipline, apart from your own most helps you understand your object of study?

I have used linguistic theory, including a modern, functional description of English grammar, to help me elucidate the patterns. I have also found it very useful to read work by literary critics on Mansfield, and on the history of styles in narrative fiction.

I have also read quite a lot of work in cognitive stylistics – cognitive science applied to the study of literature. I find myself in profound disagreement with this scholarship.

I have also read some neuroscience, about the emergence of self in the brain and in evolution (e.g. Damasio, 2012).

QUESTION 6
Can you take a picture of your object of study? Can you give an abstract visual representation of it? If you can, put a picture or diagram of it here. What are the limitations of this visualisation of your object of study?

Here’s one from some key linguists in the field, representing options in speech presentations. This model has been critique by various cognitive stylisticians (e.g. Palmer, 2004).
QUESTION 7
How is your object of study defined? Where did you get your definition? Is it contested? How do you observe it?

I have made use of the work by key linguists in this field, to show how much is described of this phenomena, and what the key problems are in arriving at a determinate definition of the categories of speech and thought presentation, especially those that are indirect.

QUESTION 8
What kind of data do you need to explore or examine your object of study? How will you collect this data? Does it need to be analysed? If your data is part of something bigger, how will you observe your object of study discretely, without losing its relations to the other things or processes of which it is part?

My data is a short story by one of the great short story writers in English of the 20th century. Because the story is quite old, I was able to copy it from the web, so that I had a digital version to analyse. No ethics was required. As it is a relatively short short story, I have been able to analyse the entire work. However, the story is part of the emergence of the modernist style of literature, so I have needed to read other writers, and other stories by this writer, to try to locate it in its cultural context of construction. This has been extremely interesting.

QUESTION 9
Is there something you need to do to your object of study to be able to study it? If so, what kind of process do you have to apply? How does this process make your object of study amenable to systematic analysis or observation?

My OOS is a feature of a ‘text’. It is important in the analysis of any text to understand that its construction depends on choices made on many scales. Any text analysis requires a robust sense of the nature of text, and of language. Here’s one of the ways I understand the nature of text, based on Halliday’s linguistic theory.
QUESTION 10
Is your data natural or experimental? What limitations are there on your data by being either natural or experimental?

My data is naturally produced linguistics data. Given my object of study, there is no alternative in the data required for this study.

QUESTION 11
Is there anything you are counting or measuring? If you are counting, what kinds of things are you counting? If you are measuring, what is the unit of measurement, and where did it come from?

I have produced a measure of the use of direct speech and thought in ‘Bliss’. This is possible because direct speech and thought is (mostly) clearly delimited. The measure is by clause (as defined by Halliday, e.g. in Halliday and Matthiessen 2014).

Table 1: Use of direct speech and thought in 'Bliss'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Numbers (by clause)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct speech</td>
<td>210/737</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct thought</td>
<td>46/737 (Bertha only)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct speech/thought</td>
<td>2/737 (Bertha only)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things I’m counting:

I have a total count of the number of clauses in the text (737).

Things I’m measuring:

I am measuring, on the basis of proportion of clauses in the text, how much direct speech and thought is recruited by Mansfield in this story, and how much belongs to each character in the story.

QUESTION 12
How much data do you need? If you are not sure, how will you decide?

Because I am only studying one particular story, then I have all the data I need.

QUESTION 13
Why are you interested in this topic?

Literature is very interesting to me, because it is an aesthetic use of language. I want to understand more about language used for aesthetic purposes. Mansfield is a celebrated writer, though not nearly as well known as she should be. This is another reason why I am studying her writing. I am also collaborating with an Argentinian scholar. We are looking at translations of this story into Spanish and Portuguese.

REFERENCES


Macquarie University, Masters by Research Year 2 Workshops © Annabelle Lukin, Department of Linguistics