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Title

Obama, Rudd and a grammar for rhetoric in the National English Curriculum

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Abstract

Element 1 of the National Curriculum for English calls for a “coherent, dynamic, and evolving body of knowledge” about English (National Curriculum Board, 2008:1). But just what kinds of knowledge about language will enable the profession to create such a body of knowledge? And how do teachers help students to apply this to interpretation of the complex multimodal texts of senior study? What is the place of grammar in this? In this paper, we explore the possibilities of systemic functional grammar for deepening students’ understanding of an increasingly powerful genre in English and in the community – the public speech. Two recent examples include Kevin Rudd’s *Apology* and Barack Obama’s *Victory* speeches. Both served in somewhat different ways to galvanize people to new hope in their elected leaders and to new ways of imagining 21st century government. Both work through a rhetoric of alignment – grounding argument in narrative and abstraction and using evaluative language to position readers and listeners ethically and emotionally. The texts represent a powerful site for analysing the power of rhetoric at different levels. In this paper, we draw on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to outline how text-level resources, such as genre, tenor and mode, can be integrated with lower-level resources, such as appraisal, to generate “particular emotional, intellectual and philosophical effects” in speeches. We argue that teachers and their students need access to a multi-level metalanguage if they are to compare and contrast texts and undertake close language study, especially in senior English. Our conclusions explore the implications of our framework for deepening students’ understandings about the complex interplay of language choices in some early 21st rhetoric.

Keywords

National Curriculum, systemic functional linguistics, genre, tenor, mode, public speech, power of rhetoric

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Introduction

New kinds of knowledge for a new kind of discipline

Grammar is central to the agenda in the national curriculum. The document to guide writers and advisers has not only mandated that students will “understand how standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms” but that this body of knowledge will recognize the common language of Australians as “dynamic and evolving” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 5). ‘Dynamic’ and ‘evolving’ are not epithets many would associate with the word, ‘grammar, however, even if it is vital to knowledge about English. For older teachers, the word conjures memories of stultifying lessons in parsing and analysis, red pen on a composition and keen awareness of the gap between the ideal and the real in actual communication. For younger teachers, it suggests arcane, often unfamiliar, knowledge about rules of agreement or structure that they reach for in moments of student difficulty with a sentence. Just how do teachers bring together the study of both regularized and creative uses of so-called Standard English?

Whatever their experiences with grammar, available research suggests that teachers – especially beginning teachers – are anxious about gaps in their knowledge about grammar and phonics (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005; Louden et al., 2005). This confirms earlier findings by one of the authors based on a survey of 128 NSW teachers, the vast majority of who claimed that they lacked necessary knowledge about language needed to do the things they believed important in literacy teaching (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001). Anxiety about grammar is not confined to Australia. Other studies of teachers’ knowledge of language in the United Kingdom, for example, agree. One notable survey concluded that “we still have far few teachers of English with an adequate grounding in the linguistics of English” (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 613). A recent study of pre-service teachers in Australia confirms this finding, revealing that this group’s knowledge about language is fragmented and lacks depth (Harper & Rennie, 2009). How can we re-frame the teaching of grammar so that teachers develop a “deep knowledge” about language and are better able to “build conversations about how meanings are constructed by particular grammar and word choices, in particular contexts and for particular audiences”? (Harper & Rennie, 2009, p. 32).

Matters of meaning, knowledge and context are co-articulated in interesting ways in the 'Shape Paper' for English. In the first place, it announces that the curriculum will have a futures orientation, embodying "a view of our nation as culturally and linguistically diverse, democratic, evolving, with a history of accomplishments, and struggles, and a commitments to equity and openness" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 4). In the second place, it is going to require all teachers to "develop students' understanding about how the English language works" and to give them a coherent and cumulative experience of such learning across the school years (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore, grammatical descriptions will not be limited to those commonly associated with traditional grammar. The systematic knowledge base will now incorporate text, sentence and word level descriptions of texts (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 7).

In this paper, we draw on tools from functional grammar to analyse two texts that call for a dynamic, evolving and coherent body of knowledge about language: Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generations of Indigenous Australia and Barack Obama's speech to the American people on his election as President of the US. Rudd's inaugural speech as the new Prime Minister of the Australian Labor Party in early 2008 was a landmark moment for relations with Indigenous Australians because it offered a formal public apology for past wrongs inflicted on Australia's first peoples, overturning an earlier decision not to apologize by the conservative leader of the Liberal Party, John Howard. It provides a worthwhile focus for analysis of the rhetorical power of language to unify often sharply divided social groups through a reasoned and empathic rhetoric. The victory speech by Barack Obama was also socially inclusive in its solidarity with previously marginalized social groups and its call for "a new spirit of sacrifice" amongst all Americans to address the economic, military and social problems currently faced by the nation. But an emphasis on social inclusion and a new discourse of hope in political rhetoric does not exhaust the commonalities in the speeches. Both leaders wrote these speeches themselves, despite having highly qualified speech writers; they designed their speeches for a national and international 'overhearing' audience, widely conveyed through various written, spoken and electronic modes (radio, TV, newspapers, YouTube); as masterful orators, they drew on rhetorical strategies, re-connecting with Roman and Greek traditions of politics as oratory; and, finally, they used oratory to inaugurate social change early in their respective governments. There is much aesthetic and critical value in examining these two recent powerful political speeches, alongside more classical speeches such as that of Martin Luther King and Winston Churchill.

In fact, the two speeches embody qualities called for in the national curriculum. They make new kinds of sense for contemporary citizens of Australia and the United States (ie are 'coherent'); they are part of an 'evolving' tradition of political rhetoric; and they are 'dynamic' in the ways they galvanize 'people power' behind an ethic of social inclusion, political justice and participatory democracy. In short, they make creative use of the power of Standard English and are worthy sites for grammatical analysis. The importance of rhetoric in English has been

noted by many theorists of curriculum (see for example Green (2009) and Sawyer (2009)). The task is to fashion a set of resources that not only capture the complex achievement of these texts but also allow students to see deeply into the language choices by which they work their rhetorical magic.

In this paper we draw on resources from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to make the structure and nature of two powerful speeches visible at various levels of language. Technical terms within SFL are indicated in bold. The first part of our analysis focuses on high level descriptions from genre and register, which have been used to characterize the purpose and situation of texts. We use the category of **genre** to describe the distinctive beginning, middle and end structure of texts as this contributes to the overarching rhetorical purpose(s) of each speech. These two texts are not prototypical arguments of the kind often rehearsed in school literacy programs with a thesis backed up by arguments and then a re-iteration of the thesis. Perhaps because they intend to bring together diverse social groups and classes in acts of reconciliation (Rudd) and victory (Obama), they are grounded in history and work through appeal not just to abstract ideals but to the lived experience of particular people. Any understanding of speech genres needs to take account of the interweaving of abstract ideals and lived realities (as these can be rendered in language). Our analysis focuses on phases that do both sorts of work and therefore addresses the reality of genre mixing. It also addresses the issue of multivalence – the fact that texts make different kinds of meaning. SFL is a metalanguage founded on this idea – that texts are not only influenced by the genre(s) in which they are produced. They are also shaped by the **fields** of activity in which they occur, the **tenors** of social relations they enact and the **modes** of communication in which they are forged. In our analysis here, we consider only tenor and mode within register. Within **tenor**, we focus on the complex addressivity of the speeches. We ask: Who speaks? To whom? With what authority? Whose voices are inserted into the text? How? With what kinds of value? Within **mode**, we focus on the matters of text organization. We ask: How is information distributed in the speeches? What is foregrounded? What backgrounded? How are the messages joined and inter-related? The categories of genre, tenor and mode are explained in more detail below.

In addition to higher level resources, which enable students to describe, the generic phases, the addressivity and the organizational features of the text, we need to work at lower levels – down at sentence and word level. In these texts this means focussing on particular patterns, say of pronouns, of speech act verbs and of evaluative words that work together to position the audience in particular ways. Such choices are often referred to under the general heading of **appraisal**. In this paper we highlight only some of the appraisal choices that predominate and co-pattern linguistically in particular phases. Our analyses are intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive. The final section of the paper draws out of our analyses some insights for teaching of grammar in senior years.

Grammatical resources for rhetorical contexts

Successful speechmakers use a wide range of rhetorical strategies, which owe much to the oratory of the early Romans and Greeks (see Higgins (2008) for a very interesting overview). To be successful, speechmakers need to know when (and when not) to use these strategies, matching their choices with the purposes of each stage of their speech and with other linguistic and paralinguistic resources used. For example, great speechmakers such as Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King used the rhetorical rule of three brilliantly, strategically combining it with structural features (such as pairing) and other linguistic features (such as signposting the conditions of the speech act through adverbial phrases, using the definite article in emphatic ways and using rhythm to move the speech towards its climax). Like these others, Rudd's Apology combines the rule of three with each of these structural and linguistic features and this is evident in the three sentences of his opening.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We will return to a closer examination of how Rudd's language choices work here to achieve a politically crucial purpose, but for the moment, we want to put the argument that simply listing and identifying these rhetorical strategies in any text is not sufficient to a proper examination of what has been loosely called by many teachers and students 'style'. What is needed is an integrated account of how these choices work together to create meaning. We cannot construct an account of text meaning solely by lexis. As Hasan (1988) has argued, we need to explore how one wording "picks out" (p. 62) or "matters" another (p. 62). Meaning is never either here or there but in the relation of here to there. With the tools of SFL we have a systematic means of exploring co-occurring language choices that 'matter one another' in distinctive ways, offering a much less impressionistic means of examining 'style'. In relation to these speeches, they allow us to observe how language choices cooperate to achieve distinctive rhetorical purposes. In addition to this, we need to consider the unfolding of meaning in a text – what is often called logogenesis. For example, Rudd exploits the power of end-weight to give emphasis to the final 'sorry' in the extract above. But the resounding importance of the apology grows cumulatively throughout the speech, encompassing the whole of Australia and its future generations. If we are to understand the relational and cumulative power of language in this and other speeches, we need an adequate grammar.

We turn now to a more systematic introduction to the macro and micro categories of SFL and how we are using these to probe the linguistic power of the two speeches. The category of **genre** is familiar to many English teachers, though used in various ways. For us, a genre is a

type of text shaped towards identifiable social/rhetorical purpose(s). In literacy education, the term is used to describe the distinctive pattern of stages (or, more delicately, phases) in a text. Narrative and argument are different macro genres of the culture that function differently and this is reflected in their different structures. While narratives typically deal with problems in human experience and how individuals attempt to resolve these over time, arguments make a case for one or more viewpoints, providing empirical support for or challenges to these viewpoints. In this paper we focus on the phased structure of the two speeches, examining how the orators shape each phase to the rhetorical purposes of the speech as a whole. We provide some discussion on the way each text mixes genres of narrative and argument at certain points to strengthen the rhetorical credibility of their 'pitch'.

Genre may be useful in describing the overall structure of a text – its part-whole structure. But we need a different tool for analysing the relationship a text sets up with its intended listeners/readers. Here the term **tenor** refers to the way texts enact particular speech roles and allocates complementary roles for interlocutors. It is a useful term for describing, for example, the way a text builds solidarity with or exerts particular rhetorical power over interlocutors. This way of characterizing tenor offers a more nuanced understanding than the term "audience" which is often more complex than many realize. The audience addressed by Rudd was itself complex. He was speaking as the Prime Minister on behalf of his newly elected government to the members of the recently ousted Opposition and via the media to all Australians, including most especially the Indigenous Australians to whom the apology was directed. Any description of tenor that is going to be worthwhile to English needs to take account of this complex addressivity, to include descriptions of the speech act proper (the apology), changes in pronoun and the framing power of particular speech act verbs. But it also needs to take account of lower level evaluative choices for vocabulary – words that inscribe affect and judgement and intensify these in distinctive ways. These interpersonal meanings contribute to the overarching purpose and are all relevant to the language of rhetoric.

Within SFL, the category of **mode** focuses on the channel of communication and its influence on textual meanings. While it has often been used in literacy education to distinguish between spoken and written language, in more recent years, with increased interest in multimodality, definitions of mode have expanded to take account of wider range of channels of communication.

Mode deals with the channelling of communication, and thus with the texture of information flow as we move from one modality of communication to another (speech, writing, phone, SMS messages, e-mail, chat rooms, web pages, letters, radio, CD, television, film, video, DVD, etc.). One important variable is the amount of work language is doing in relation to what is going on. In some contexts language may have a small role to play since attendant modalities are heavily mediating what is going on (e.g. image, music, spatial design, action). In other contexts, language may be by and large what is going on, sometimes to the point where its abstract phasing is considerably removed from sensuous experience we might expect to touch, feel, hear or see. (Martin & Rose, 2008, pp. 14-15)

Although the speeches we are analysing were delivered in full multimodal richness via television, radio and even YouTube, in our paper we consider only the linguistic dimensions of mode. In this sense, and we acknowledge this as a limitation for present purposes, the texts are treated as monomodal. It is the work language is doing to shape audience responses and to fulfil the rhetorical demands of the situation that we focus on here. Other papers we have written focus on multimodality and the need for richer metalanguages of description in multiliteracies education (see, for example, Love (2005) and Macken-Horarik and Adoniou, (2008)).

In sum, taken together, the functional tools of **generic structure**, and generic phases, **tenor** and **mode** provide ways in to top-level analysis of rhetoric, whether it is that of powerful political speeches or everyday and literary texts. We hope to illustrate how a functionally oriented form of educational linguistics provides a much needed reconceptualization of rhetoric, one that allows the English student as analyst to explore how Standard English works to generate new meanings for whole societies. The particular focus here is on resources that give students access to new understandings about how texts work holistically and how language choices at lower levels contribute to this. We now take a closer look at the two speeches.

We would like to begin with Rudd's speech, essentially because chronologically, it was delivered first. Given its length, we can only focus on sections of key phases, indicating how Rudd's register choices achieve distinctive political purposes within these phases while building memorable meanings cumulatively across the whole speech.

Rudd's 'Apology' speech

Rudd's Apology speech represented a pivotal moment in Australian history, a deeply symbolic opportunity to crystallize public attitude towards Aboriginal Australians, galvanise social change and establish a strong identity for his new government. In its wider cultural context, it was thus motivated by a richly complex set of purposes and this shaped the structure of the genre itself. The speech in its entirety can be retrieved from the Sydney Morning Herald 13 February, 2008 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/02/13/1202760379056.html>>. We have provided sections of this speech in the appendix, in the form of two distinctive generic phases, one an argument and one a narrative and we have numbered the sentences for ease of reference.

Generic structure of the speech

The speech is a substantial one, running to 3,895 words. It contains not just the central motion to be voted on, but an extensive set of arguments, both in support of that motion and

in rebuttal of imagined objections. We identified ten broad, functionally distinct phases, varying in length and purpose, but contributing to the meanings of the speech as a whole.

1. Phase 1: Motion. Position Statement: "I move ... The healing of the nation"
2. Phase 2: Broad justification for timing. Elaboration of motion: "For the future ... build a new future for our nation"
3. Phase 3: Nanna Nungala Fejo's story. Argument 1: Biographical Recount as first rebuttal against an imagined opposing Argument "Some have asked ... she had forgiven him"
4. Phase 4: Acknowledgement of other documented facts. Argument 2: second rebuttal against an imagined opposing argument "Nanna Fejo's story is just one story ... unworthy of an apology today"
5. Phase 5: Addressing the intergenerational argument. Argument 3: third rebuttal against an imagined opposing argument "Then we come to the argument ... fully lawful"
6. Phase 6: Appeal to Australian sense of fairness. Argument 4: "There is a further reason for an apology ... time to put right this most outrageous of wrongs"
7. Phase 7: Recommendation: "It is for these reasons ... it is time to move forward together"
8. Phase 8: The apology itself, as the illocutionary core of the recommendation/motion: "To the stolen generations New beginning for Australia"
9. Phase 9: Addressing the challenges of the future: "And it is to such a new beginning ... to fashion the nation's future"
10. Phase 10: Rousing conclusion: "Mr. Speaker ... I commend the motion to the House".

We identified each of these ten phases through an iterative process. First, we established the rhetorical staging of the text and the specific functions of each phase. Then we examined closely the language choices that realised those functions, distinguishing them from adjacent phases. Third, we identified significant differences between phases in the co-patterning of various language choices, particularly those that construed particular forms of addressivity, tenor, and those, which contributed to the flow of information in the phase, mode. Identifying units of analysis is crucial to grammatical analysis, as Crystal (1987) has acknowledged. We return to this in our conclusions.

Rudd's opening (Phase 1)

The purpose of the opening phase as a motion, ostensibly for debate, is immediately obvious as Prime Minister Rudd starts with the illocutionary force of "I move ..." (see appendix A line 1). In traditional Argument structure, what follows in the rest of this phase is the Position Statement, variously known as the Argument or Thesis. Rudd's language is quite distinctive and can be examined in terms of relations enacted (tenor), and text organization strategies, mode.

The tenor of phase 1

Taking **tenor** first, we can examine the language resources Rudd draws on to enact particular speech roles, set up highly nuanced relationships and build solidarity with his listeners. Following the opening line, he immediately launches into an unambiguous apology, clearly phrased and immediately understandable by three-year-olds in the outback and educated urbanites in Sydney alike. Rudd takes considerable care to address both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians groups and their respective communities as inclusively as possible. How does he manage the complex tenor demands of this address?

An apology is an illocutionary speech act that enacts the process it names. Accordingly, Rudd selects verbs like “reflect”, “honour” and “request” in the first phase and thus performs the role to which he has committed his government. Verbs like “move” and “apologise” are interpersonally potent because they join rhetorical with actual power of the sort carried in a Prime Minister’s role. These verbs are in the present tense, effecting a process that is taking place now, in the moment of speaking. Rudd’s choice of highly charged **saying verbs** with strong illocutionary force, used in the **present tense** thus perfectly fits, or ‘realizes’ his immediate purpose of moving a motion for an unambiguous apology as an urgent verbal action in this opening phase.

The authoritativeness of Rudd’s role in his relationship with his presumed audience is further evident in his choice of **declarative mood** i.e. selecting statements, rather than questions or commands, as he unflinchingly represents and acknowledges the pain of the stolen children generation. These statements are completely unqualified and unambiguous, with no **modalization** e.g. the use of **modal auxiliaries** such as “might” or **modal adjuncts** such as “probably” that could reduce the impact of his assertions, as he addresses the non-indigenous community or the veracity of his apology, as he addresses the indigenous community. Such patterns of language choices tend to be so obvious that we rarely think about their effects. Yet we can draw our students’ attention to why, when you are moving a motion of such power and making an apology of such consequence, you choose an **unmodulated declarative** to state your purpose with authority, choosing “We say sorry”, rather than “We’d probably like to say sorry”! The unmodulated and unequivocal declarative of Rudd’s apology could be contrasted with the highly modalized nature of the speech by the leader of the Opposition, Brendan Nelson, that followed this. Nelson’s caution in acknowledging a national wrong was linguistically marked by hedging, passive voice and an overweening focus on the intentions of those who did the removing and the ‘improving’. It attracted loud jeers and turned backs from many of those watching and listening right around Australia, most especially those whom he was compromising in his modalized and hedged acknowledgement of wrong. Getting the tenor right in this situation was crucial to the context and to the enactment of the apology.

Another significant pattern of language choices associated with tenor is **pronoun** choice, indicating most saliently who is speaking and on whose behalf. While it is Rudd as Prime Minister who moves the motion, using the **first person singular** pronoun “I”, all the active participants in sentences after this first line are realised in the **first person plural** “we”. So it is “we” who are honouring, reflecting, apologising. The “we” is explicitly associated with the Parliament of Australia towards the end of this phase (see sentence 11), but is also implicitly associated with “the nation” earlier in the phase. Given the vastness of the overhearing audience, there is no doubt that the watching nation is included in this first person plural pronoun. Interestingly, as the whole speech progresses, Rudd’s patterning of speech role gradually shifts from choice of personal pronoun (I) to inclusive/plural (we) and finally to the more formal ablative, let us, reflecting in language his intention to reconcile disparate communities towards future action. The co-patterning of personal pronoun selections with illocutionary verbs in this opening phase simultaneously construes and enacts a new tenor and a new era for relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia.

Along with these choices for interaction, Rudd invites his listeners to share in his feelings and judgements in order to share his actions i.e. the act of apologizing. How does he align diverse groups of Australians in this phase? Within SFL, a system of analysis known as **appraisal** is available for examining how judgments and feelings are coded either explicitly or implicitly in patterns of lexical choices. Appraisal has been described as an “approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships” (White, 2005). These resources are used for negotiating social relationships, for “telling our listeners or readers how we feel about things and people, in a word, what our attitudes are” (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 22). Three types of attitude have been identified: **Affect** to do with expressing and construing emotion; **Judgement**, to do with evaluating the ethics of behaviour; and **Appreciation**, to do with valuing the worth of things. This system for Attitude is accompanied by two other systems, one called **Engagement**, concerned with the attribution of attitude to particular sources (ie who is doing the feeling, judging or appreciating) and the other called **Graduation**, concerned primarily with the degree of intensification of evaluation. Appraisal has been used in studying the work of secondary English, for example in examining how readers of narrative are addressed as particular emotional and ethical subjects (Macken-Horarik, 2003) and how online interactants variously negotiate their judgements, feelings and appreciations of various aspects of literary text (Love, 2006, 2008). It has also been used to identify how good English students graduate resources to adjust the **force** of their attitudes by turning up and down of volume of evaluative language; and to adjust their **focus** by blurring or sharpening distinctions (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000). A more detailed analysis of the evaluative power of Rudd’s speech is beyond our purview, but we offer some indication of how this system may help students identify what is often loosely described as ‘reader positioning’.

Rudd's feelings and judgements are often explicitly inscribed in his choice of highly emotive yet abstract nouns such as "pain", "suffering", "degradation"; highly judgemental adjectives, positive for those associated with the Aboriginal peoples e.g. "proud" and negative for those associated with the colonizers e.g. "blemished"; and strongly negative verbs such as "inflicted", the perpetrators typically being past generations of white Australians. Such appraisals are not graduated, but operate at full amplification, with a force appropriate to a sincere apology. In terms of Engagement, Rudd is both expressing his own feelings about these shameful events in Australia's past, and acknowledging the feelings of members of the stolen generations in an act of imaginative projection. In combination with these choices, Rudd's use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' construes the overhearing audience as implicated in these judgements of past actions. The effect is to bind all Australians to the apology.

The evaluative burden of this phase is carried not just by individual words but also by combinations of often long noun groups, verb groups and prepositional phrases. In fact, these choices cohere into two basic oppositions between the ethical worlds of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (Macken-Horarik, 2003) for a discussion of the importance of oppositions to narrative appraisal. Appraisal choices for the history of Aboriginal cultures are positively loaded "oldest continuing cultures in human history" and "a proud people". These are counterposed to negatively loaded oppositions for European dispossessors, with their "blemished" history – laws and practices that "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians". Through these grammatical choices Rudd takes for granted the ethical position of his listeners, fellow Australians deeply implicated in the mistreatment of the stolen generations.

In summary, Rudd's act of apologizing is achieved most tellingly in his interpersonal language choices in this opening phase, realising as they do the intensity of his feeling, the acknowledgement of the feelings of the stolen generation, the unequivocal judgements of past policies and the extent to which the overhearing audience is implicated in these feelings and judgements. Our analysis reveals only a little of Rudd's management of the complex demands of tenor in this momentous apology. A more detailed account of the interpersonal resources he deploys here would take us beyond the scope of this paper. Rudd's interpersonal work is accompanied by equally strong organisational work. He has textured the flow of information to have maximum impact as a speech written to be spoken, one delivered to a wide listenership through diverse channels. We will examine these highly patterned ways that information is organised in this opening phase as we examine Mode below.

The mode of phase 1

There is no doubt that Kevin Rudd thought long and hard about the structure of this speech before he delivered it, or that it was written down prior to delivery. In the inevitable process of re-organising words, phrases and clauses as he redrafted, he may have thought about how to say "We say sorry" in ways that would have most impact in the oral mode, whether this be in

the face-to-face context of the Parliament or in the various form of electronic media reporting on this. He may even have been conscious of the fact that this speech would be transcribed back into writing for historical scrutiny or indeed for language analysis by high school students!

So when Rudd says sorry in this opening phase (sentences 6-10 in Phase 1, Appendix), he does so in a highly marked way that draws attention to the recipients and the matter of this apology. Rather than structuring the sentence in the more prosaic **Subject, Verb, Object** sequence, he often fronts **circumstantial meanings** at the beginning of each sentence, thereby drawing particular attention to these. The primary resource for signposting information in a clause or sentence is **Theme**. Theme choices indicate the jumping off point for a message and in English is realized through first position. The unmarked or typical constituent to choose as Theme is the Subject of the clause. When we want to draw special attention to a starting point, we choose something other than the Subject as Theme – typically a prepositional phrase or even a dependent clause. When Rudd chooses non-Subject Themes, he gives these items special prominence. But which items does he mark out for special prominence? Overwhelmingly in this phase he signposts wordings to do with the suffering of the Aboriginal people: “To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities ...” and “And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture ...”

Frontloading, or thematizing, the sentences with these prepositional phrases not only foregrounds them, experientially, but also creates an almost musical prosody which climaxes in the anticipated “We say sorry” at the end of the sentence. What comes last in a sentence is often called the New. If Theme carries speaker-oriented prominence in this case, how Rudd frames his message, the New carries listener-oriented significance. If we want someone to remember what we say, we put it at the end. In this case, Rudd says, “we say sorry” at the end of each sentence three times. This thrice repeated marked structure, sometimes called a tricolon, creates a poetic form of emphasis, which is both aesthetically pleasing and memorable. The tricolon operates not only in the consecutive repeated sentences, but also in consecutive repeated phrases embedded within each of those sentences (as in “pain, suffering and hurt”; “these stolen generations, their descendants and their families left behind”). At times this is replaced by an embedded pairing, as in “families and communities; “the indignity and degradation”, a strategy which avoids listener boredom by varying the poetic rhythm. This poetic rhythm is complexified further by use of other strategies, such as repeating the **epithet** (adjective) within the pairing “a *proud* people and a *proud* culture” and/or repeating the non-essential definite article “*the* mothers and *the* fathers”, “*the* brothers and *the* sisters”. Taken together, choices for Theme and for New and the rhythmic repetition of wordings, create a memorable rhetoric, a prosody of meanings, which powerfully binds listeners to the speaker.

There is another value here for text organization. Such mnemonic and poetic devices are important in a long speech, to simultaneously reduce the cognitive load on listeners and aid their memory by making salient important elements of the spoken message. They thus work together. The co-patterned choices are summarised in the Table 1 below.

Tenor	Mode
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbs with strong illocutionary force, used in the present tense; • Inclusive personal pronouns construe intimate relationship with listeners; • Shift from personal pronouns (I) to inclusive pronouns (we) and finally to the ablative form (let us); • Strongly emotive appraisal choices which create oppositions: positive for Aboriginal people and culture, negative for colonizers and dispossession; • Unmodalised declarative <i>mood</i> generates authoritative relationship with presumed listeners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontloading, or thematizing, to signpost Aboriginal suffering; • Resolute News to emphasize apology; • Strategically repeated structures across and within sentences • Repeating of epithets and/or non-essential in/definite article.

Table 1: Grammatical resources for tenor and mode of Phase 1 of Rudd's speech

With such a framework, students can begin to appreciate just how powerfully such language choices work together to shape national sentiment at a key moment in Kevin Rudd's new government. An understanding of both tenor and mode requires a more detailed grammatical knowledge from teachers and students but the benefits in terms of deeper understanding should not be ignored in a national curriculum that now intends cumulative development of knowledge about language from kindergarten to year 12.

While this opening achieves its impact as an unequivocal apology, an act of 'stooping', it would have been counterproductive for Rudd to continue in this vein in a long speech. He had other persuasive purposes to achieve and other ways of addressing his various audiences. Subsequent phases of his speech draw on different patterns of linguistic choices to achieve their discrete purposes in the construction of the argument i.e. the support of the motion. This can be illustrated by contrasting the purposes and tenor and mode choices of this opening phase with those of Phase 3.

Rudd's narrative (Phase 3)

In Phase 3, Rudd's purpose shifts distinctively from unambiguously outlining his general position, to presenting his first Argument in favour of this position. This argument is constructed as a rebuttal against an imagined opposing Argument "Some have asked, Why apologize?" and takes the form of a biographical recount. This is Rudd's recounting of the life story of Nanna Nungala Fejo and as a particular type of narrative, grounds the apology in the felt experience of one Indigenous Australian. It is through the problems and resolutions of her long life that outsiders to her community are given a chance to acknowledge similarities and differences to their own experiences. This occurs in phase 3 by 'getting inside' the mind, heart and body of the ones to whom Rudd is apologizing.

As a narrative phase in a persuasive text, Nana's story was always going to be told through a distinctive perspective and in a different voice. These choices draw on clusters of very different language resources to those Rudd used in explicating his own position. These too can be examined systematically, through a functional lens, by using the tools of tenor and mode.

The tenor of Rudd's phase 3

The shift to narrative co-occurs with a shift into different patterns of interpersonal language, most saliently via informal address. This is one person's story told to Rudd by Nanna, and he suggests initially in his choice of verbs that he is merely her mouthpiece. This rhetorical decision is most evident in the opening four sentences of his recount (see sentences 5-9 of phase 3 in Appendix), when he uses the verb "remembers", with Nanna as the active participant, to indicate that he is simply reporting what she recalls. Remembering is a **mental process** that typically projects (and frames) the phenomenon that is remembered. This remembered world in these four sentences is one of positive experiences, involving specific participants e.g. "her family", engaged in community building activity e.g. "dancing", in a particular life-world, e.g. "outside Tenant Creek" and "in the late 1920's". The disruptions to the equanimity of this recalled early childhood world are small, and realized in colloquial terms ("getting into strife"), which capture experiences common to both black and white children, but also suggest a culture comfortable with in its own order. Rudd strategically deploys such colloquial lexis at other key phases throughout his speech, for example, the fourth Argumentative phase (phase 6), where he draws on colloquialisms such as "fair go for all" and "pretty basic Aussie belief" to create a sense of common humanity within a national context.

After these opening sentences of phase 3, however, Rudd reverts to direct reporting of the action in Nanna's life, dropping the projecting verb and presuming that the listener now understands that the rest is Nanna's projection. In this way, both Rudd and his listeners experience an increased alignment with Nanna's world. This world is appraised positively as an idyllic early childhood, full of activities such as "camp fire dancing" and marked by the

“love and the warmth and the kinship of those days”. The disruption to her world is signalled by the marked use of a **contrastive conjunction** “But” which inaugurates an opposing world of separation from loved ones. Here the appraisal choices shift dramatically and they co-occur with a change from **active to passive voice**. Nanna and her family are no longer agents of their own actions but instead are acted upon, “were herded and piled”, “were handed over”, “were told”, “were sent”, “was allowed”, “had been broken up”. The appraisal choices ensure we see things as they experience them and the voice ensure that we understand they have become the objects or goals of other people’s actions or decisions, both linguistically, in the use of the passive voice) and in real life. Rudd’s use of passive voice in his account enables him simultaneously to represent the horror and grief experienced by Nanna’s family and to avoid naming the perpetrators of these actions, a move that would have had negative political ramifications and would disrupt the social inclusiveness he is trying to create in this speech.

In terms of tenor, Rudd assumes an intimate relationship with one person, Nanna, largely through his use of **mental process verbs** and **third person singular pronoun**, “she”. This contrasts with phase one, where he assumes a more inclusive relationship with his listeners, through inclusive personal pronouns, “we” and strong judgement. From within this relationship in Phase 3, he describes the events of Nanna’s life, filtered as they are through more of an emotional lens. In appraisal terms, his wordings construe the **Affect** of the stolen generation, in both explicit “had been ripped away” and implicit “run and hide” attitudinal lexis. Predictably, the volume or force of these feelings is amplified in an attempt to help non-Indigenous Australians, especially the doubters, to identify and stand with Indigenous people. This phase instructs and moves us to stand with Nanna and her kin through an evocation of the anguish of the separation from mother (Macken-Horarik, 2003).

Rudd’s authoritative role, both as recounter of, and empathiser with Nanna’s story is further evident in his choice of **declarative mood**, especially in the descriptions of the white man’s action. Significantly, when he does use **modal verbs** such as “could” or **modal adjuncts** such as “never”, it is to construe what the Aboriginal families *could not* do, thus reinforcing the sense of their powerlessness. There is one exception to the use of declarative, and that is in sentence 18 where Rudd uses **interrogative mood** “But which church would care for them?”. With this, he invites fellow Australians to imaginatively consider their response. This is the beginning of the section of recount that ends with Rudd’s explicitly judgemental evaluation “It was as crude as that”, and he wants his audience to pay particular attention to this exposition of the effects of the government policy.

The mode of Rudd’s phase 3

Rudd uses other organizational means of structuring his sentences to draw attention to what he wants the listener to attend to most. In phase 3, we see little of the marked frontloading, or thematizing, of suffering as in phase 1. Most of the sentences here are structured in the more typical Subject, Verb, Object pattern. In this way, the ordering in the clause, the syntax,

mirrors the ordering of experience. However, when he does place circumstances of time “But then”, “A few years later”, “After she left the mission”, “Now” at the beginning of a sentence, this draws attention to the progression of time, an important organizational feature of well-structured stories. While not as poetic as the pairing and tricolon structures used in phase one, such temporal markers, acting as **Theme** in the clause, signpost the phase in a way appropriate to sequencing of narrative. The subsequent **News** deals primarily with Nana’s experience “dancing around the campfire at night” and “the coming of the welfare men”. It is possible to summarize patterns of text organization as follows: time is where Rudd jumps off from in the clause; lived experience is where he asks us to land.

The co-patterning of language resources in Phase three, as summarized in Table 2 below are clearly very different to those selected in Phase one. It is important in a long speech not to overuse particular rhetorical strategies and to fit the strategies to the purposes of a particular phase of the speech as this contributes to the rhetorical whole. Rudd does this masterfully. The purpose of this phase is to argue a case via a narrative about a powerfully iconic individual rather than survey the abstract and historical issues as occurs in Phase one. The **tenor** simultaneously evokes an intimate relationship with the protagonist of a narrative, alongside a more detached narrator relationship with a listening audience; and the **mode** accords with the telling of a chronologically organized oral narrative.

Tenor	Mode
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third person pronouns construe narrator relationship with listeners • Evoked emotion in lexical choices associated with recounting events • Inscribed judgement associated with evaluating the impact of events • Mostly declarative mood with marked use of interrogative • Modal auxiliaries (eg “could not”) and modal adjuncts (eg “never”) construe incapacity of Aboriginal families. • Colloquial language builds universality of normal family experience • Members of the Aboriginal community are ‘acted-upon’, as ‘Goal’ in passive constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematising of time, marking temporal sequence in a narrative. • Otherwise short sentences with more congruent S^V^O sequence which realize a more colloquial mode. • News emphasize experience of suffering. • Repeating of adjectives and/or non-essential in/definite article.

Table 2: Grammatical resources that contribute to tenor and mode of Phase 3

In Phase 4, the argumentative import of this narrative is generalized beyond one woman’s story and is built on further in Phases 5-9 of Rudd’s speech. We don’t have space to explore

further here how patterns of language choice are built cumulatively. However, even focusing on one linguistic feature logogenetically, i.e. as the text unfolds, can be instructive. For example, patterns of tense choices are very important across the whole speech as Rudd variously reconstructs a version of the past, (Phase 3), acknowledges present responsibilities (Phases 4-6), proposes immediate actions (Phases 7-8), and envisages a particular type of future (Phases 9-10).

In the context of the National Curriculum for English, the close examination of such cumulation, as well as co-patterning of linguistic choices in nation-changing speeches such as Rudd's offers students motivated ways of rehearsing understandings about how language is structured for particular uses in particular contexts. Given the rhetorical and political consequences of such speeches, their means of harnessing what are often taken-for-granted linguistic resources provide rich material for educational study.

Obama's 'Victory' speech

Obama's Victory speech occurred at a pivotal moment in US history, and was a deeply symbolic opportunity for him to unite disparate community groups, heal wounds within the Democratic party and with the Republican party at a time of deep rifts, engage all citizens in difficult political decisions, maintain a sense of optimism and agency during troubled times and establish a strong identity for his new government. Obama's skill as an orator was one of the most important factors in his victory.

As Charlotte Higgins (2008) indicated "The sheer numbers of people who heard him speak live set him apart from his rivals – and indeed recall the politics of ancient Athens, where the public speech given to ordinary voters was the motor of politics, and where the art of rhetoric matured alongside democracy". The speech can be downloaded at <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/politics/baltext1105,0,2684817.story?>)

Like Rudd, Obama used extensive cyber-networks (most significantly YouTube) to engage the imaginations of potentially marginalised voting communities, alongside traditional forms of campaigning. This, coupled with his iconic status as a young, handsome and articulate black man, invested him with a powerfully symbolic status. As a result, his Victory speech came pre-loaded with the complex power of its own history. When this young black man stood up to make his speech, he was thus already in a position to embody, as much as claim, victory in his rhetoric. Yet the speech itself was in no way redundant. Even though we recognize the limits of language in full meaning-making, we also recognize that powerful political purposes were also served by the way in which Obama deliberately and systematically selected co-occurring language choices that "mannered one another" (Hasan, 1988) in distinctive ways in his Victory speech.

The generic structure of Obama's speech

Like Rudd's parliamentary motion, Obama's Victory speech could be considered as a persuasive text, whose key purpose is to convince the American people that America can (and indeed needs to) change (a conceit, by the way that Obama has kept returning to in many of his subsequent speeches on the world stage). However, it is a Victory speech, not an Apology, a celebratory or 'inflating', rather than a deferential or 'stooping' verbal act, and as such engages very different rhetorical strategies. Even as a victory speech, it has many purposes, including the new president's acknowledgment of individuals who contributed to his victory; tracing the origins of the campaign; reassuring his critics; and making his position on national and international issues clear. But it also has a significant persuasive purpose ie to persuade American citizens that America can change for the better "Yes we can", despite the enormity of the challenges ahead. At 2,168 words, it's not much more than half the length of Rudd's speech, but could be divided into nearly the same number of functional phases. We stress that the phasal analysis below is only one way of describing the unfolding of this speech, but it provides a useful means of identifying how he harnesses distinctive linguistic choices developmentally, logogenetically, across the speech.

1. Phase 1: Greeting "Hello Chicago"
2. Phase 2: Position/thesis "If there is anyone ... Change has come to America"
3. Phase 3: Specific Thanks "A little bit earlier this evening ... belongs to you"
4. Phase 4: Broad thanks and Acknowledgement of citizen power "I was never the likeliest candidate ... This is your victory"
5. Phase 5: Argument 1: The scale of current problems and the need for change " And I know you didn't do this ... we as a people will get there"
6. Phase 6: Argument 2: the need to meet national challenges "There will be setbacks ... I will be your president too"
7. Phase 7: Argument 3: the need to meet international challenges "And to all those watching ... achieve tomorrow"
8. Phase 8: Argument 4: Biographical Recount of Anne Nixon Cooper "This election had many firsts ... she knows how America can change"
9. Phase 9: Concluding call to action - from the past to the future "America we have come so far USA"

Obama's movement across different generic phases, like Rudd's, is marked by different patterns of linguistic resources that achieve distinctive local purposes while building the rhetorical utterance as a whole. The persuasive point that underpins the whole speech is that change has come to America, but to be effective "a new spirit of service, a new spirit of sacrifice" is required. Each of the arguments work towards a recommendation for all Americans to "summon a new spirit of patriotism, of responsibility, where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves but each other". Interestingly, the beginnings and/or ends of many of Obama's phases are distinguished through highly marked linguistic choices, for example many end with short audience-rousing sentences after a

sequence of longer sentences. These marked linguistic choices and switches in rhetorical strategies generate Obama's unique style and keep his listeners engaged throughout the whole speech. We will explore some of these strategies further below.

Like Rudd, Obama selects explicitly narrative and explicitly argumentative phases, both of which contribute strikingly to the argumentative force of the speech as a whole. Like Rudd's, the different local functions of these phases are reflected in their different structures and patternings of language choices. We will now examine briefly two crucial relations, those of co-patterning and accumulation of language choices, in comparable phases in Obama's Victory speech, without the close scrutiny and summary tables used for the parallel Rudd phases.

Obama's opening (Phase 2)

The purpose of the opening phase (see Appendix) is more complex than Rudd's moving of a single parliamentary motion in his opening phase. We could see Obama's opening as the Thesis statement in an Argument structure, the position being that change has come to America and with it, certain responsibilities. Yet Obama is doing much more than simply putting an argumentative position, he is building solidarity, establishing his authority and reassuring the potentially disaffected, amongst other important political functions. These more delicate and less conspicuous purposes can be systematically examined in terms of what kind of relationships are assumed and presumed, tenor, and how the text is structured as a speech written to be spoken, but mediated through various electronic technologies, mode. We will not be able to go into as much depth here as we did with Rudd's speech, but hope that what we offer is illuminating for further analysis.

The tenor of Obama's phase 2

Both Obama's and Rudd's speeches appeal to a more inclusive social order, but Obama draws on different interpersonal resources to realise quite unique relationships with his audience. As indicated above, Obama brings a highly visual authority to the speech, as the first black president of the USA he is the embodiment of victory. His authority is also carried in a less visually corporeal way, through the various semiotic means afforded by the electronic technologies that were used in powerfully democratic ways throughout his campaign, most notably YouTube and new forms of social networking. As a result, Obama does not need to make explicit the authority of his position as the new president of the USA, in the way that Rudd did when he moved the apology in his role as Prime Minister of Australia. He does not once refer to himself individually, 'I', in this crucial opening phase, either as an agent or as an acted upon participant, reinforcing the argumentative purpose of this phase as one of nation building towards collective responsibility.

So, if he does not explicitly draw attention to himself through the first person singular here, what role does Obama assume in his relationship with his listeners? In this opening phase, he

manages, like Rudd, to build an intimate relationship with a wide and disparate audience, but through very different linguistic means. Following his direct greeting, his remarkable first sentence, discussed further below, explicitly evokes an imagined wider audience “If there’s anyone out there ... tonight is your answer”. Here the **indefinite** (“anyone”) and **second person possessive** “your” **pronouns** make the addressees explicit. In the remainder of the phase, the relationship is assumed in the use of the **first person plural** “we” a pronoun whose use includes himself with the rest of America. The **inclusive** “we” is profoundly important throughout Obama’s speech, and he takes great care in specifying the individual identities that make up this collective “we” “young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled”. In the linguistic structuring of this long **noun group**, effectively a list of pairings of groups of American citizens, we can see how Obama’s political purposes are rhetorically realized. The danger in using lists in a public speech is that some groups of listeners will not be able to recognize themselves in them. Yet Obama ensures against such potential alienation by the judicious use of conjunctions. His use of “and” in the first three and the last pairings suggests sets of contrasting groups, or polar opposites of a continuum within which most people could locate themselves, whereas dropping this conjunction in the middle pairings suggests that these particular groups are open-ended. Through this rhetorical means, Obama ensures that all listeners will be able to locate themselves within the specified or implied groupings, but eventually collectivised as “we” or “Americans”. This sense of collective responsibility is further evident in his use of **present and future tense** to construe an enduring and universal truth about this “we”, “We are and always will *be* America”, and his consistent use of the **possessive** and **inclusive pronoun**, “our”, to indicate the abstract values that are shared, “the dream of our founders”, “the power of our democracy”.

It is worth paying close attention to the linguistic means by which Obama addresses his many audiences throughout the remainder of his speech, moving from possible addressees who did not support him, imaged as “doubters”; to the inclusive “we” of the Chicago audience and all US citizens who voted for him; to an international audience. This widening of the scope of his audience, from Chicago, America, then the world, rhetorically strengthens the role of the US on the world stage as this new president shapes his own role alongside that of his country’s.

Powerful though it is, this opening phase does not achieve its impact through the kind of strong evaluative language that Rudd used. There is no need in a Victory speech for **explicit appraisal** that Rudd needed to use to imaginatively align his non-Indigenous audience emotionally and morally, with the experiences of the stolen generations. Instead, Obama chooses **declarative mood** to make bold, unqualified and generic assertions, “It’s the answer”, in statements whose variation in length create a powerfully poetic rhythm (see mode below). The only hint of qualification occurs in his use of the **modal adjunct** “still” in the first sentence, but its repetition, three times, in association with more abstract thinking verbs, “still doubts ...”, “still wonders ...”, “still questions ...”, in a long clause of concession increases,

rather than decreases the impact of his final assertion, “Tonight is your answer”. Given the scale and momentousness of the occasion, the media saturated campaign, the millions in the Square, Obama does not need to build the drama through language here but merely to acknowledge it.

Obama uses many other linguistic strategies to construe the collaborative relationship with US citizens that is so fundamental to his political purposes in this speech. These are too many to explore in this paper, chief among them being his use of lexical metaphor, “put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day” to create enduring and poetic images of cooperation towards shared goals. The juxtaposition of the concrete, arc, hands, bending, and the abstract, history, time, provokes both strong feeling and judgement from the point of view of appraisal. These and numerous other interpersonal resources perfectly realise Obama’s purpose of building a shared identity and responsibility in this opening phase. Such resources are organized in striking ways that further sharpen their mnemonic purposes, and we will draw on that aspect of our toolkit to do with Mode to explore these.

The mode of Obama’s phase 2

The organization of this opening phase is truly remarkable, drawing as it does on rhetorical structures dating back to Cicero, and other Roman and Greek political orators. At the topmost level of organization, it is structured as a triptych, each paragraph after the first beginning in the same way and being of similar length, “It’s the answer told ...”, “It’s the answer spoken ...”, “It’s the answer that led ...”. Such rhetorical structures simultaneously create impact and support the listener’s memory. Obama again uses the triptych or tricolon within each sentence, the opening subordinate ‘if-clause’ with its three ‘who-clause’ embeddings being one example. A clause of such length and syntactic complexity is rarely used in speeches, which are traditionally designed in shorter sentences that do not place as much strain on listeners’ memories. Yet it worked in Obama’s case, largely because of his rhetorically powerful use of tricolon structures. The meanings in each grouping are more accessible, given their structural parallelism, “who still doubts ...”, “who still wonders ...”, “who still questions ...”. With “who still” set up as part of the pattern, listeners do not need to devote any processing energy to it, and can concentrate on the following verb. The effect of this complex, but strategically structured syntax of the opening sentence is to make the listener anticipate the **New** in the conclusion all the more, ensuring that the short four word main clause “tonight is your answer” provides a long awaited prosodic climax. This tricolon structure is accompanied by pairing structures, often within noun groups “lines that stretched around schools and churches”; and “people who waited three hours and four hours”. Structures such as these pack in significant additional information in a rhythmic and poetic way, using the marked repetition, pairing and tricolon structures that we saw Rudd using earlier. Nothing in the organization of this phase of the speech can be left to chance. We are all swept up in the emphatic conclusiveness of the victory and the power of “Yes we can”.

Our necessarily brief snapshot of some of the language choices that contribute to the interpersonal and organisational power of this opening phase does not do full justice to the rhetorical impact of Obama's Victory speech. However, we hope it gives teachers and students a taste of how a functionally oriented linguistic framework can be used to appreciate just how patterned are the language choices made by Obama as he, like Rudd, crystalizes and shapes powerful national sentiment at a key moment in his new government. While this opening achieves its impact in both claiming victory and building solidarity, it would be counterproductive for Obama to continue in this vein. Like Rudd, he has other persuasive purposes to achieve and other ways of addressing his disparate audiences in his building of a unified national identity. In the very next phase for example, he uses very different interpersonal resources as he expresses his personal thanks, frequently selecting the personal pronoun "I" and lexical items which carry forcefully inscribed affect "grateful", "love of my life" and judgement "unsung hero", "brave and selfless leader", "forever grateful". Following this thanking phase, he progressively builds the warrants that support his main argumentative contention, respectively acknowledging citizen power, and outlining the scale of the challenges ahead, both national and international. By the time he gets towards the end of his speech he again shifts rhetorical strategies. In Phase 8, like Rudd, he offers a "loaded recount" of an iconic elderly black woman's life, as a particularly powerful warrant for his argument about the need for change.

Obama's phase 8

This phase, where Obama tells his Anne Nixon Cooper story, is the equivalent of Rudd's Biographical Recount of the life of Nana Fejo. Both use the lives of elderly black women to construct a view of their nation's history, individualising and humanising the dramatic features of that history in the process. Both are powerful stories, powerfully told, and it is interesting to compare how each achieves its distinctive rhetorical effect and contributes to the unfolding of the argumentative force in two different national contexts. While Rudd chooses to use one person's story as the launching place for his argument, drawing more directly on her account of her experience and her wordings too, Obama uses his to sum up his arguments towards the end of his speech. Both draw on distinctive rhetorical strategies within these recount phases in ways that achieve their stylistically distinctive, but politically similar purposes.

The tenor of Obama's Phase 8

Like Rudd, Obama chooses language appropriate to narrative to reconstruct the key historical experiences of Anne's life across a century. Like Rudd, he starts by reporting what Anne witnesses, selecting **mental process verbs**, "saw", "was there to witness" with Anne as source of the experience of history. What happens is thus rendered through her focalizing consciousness, we learn about phenomena as she witnesses these "see them stand up and speak out and reach for"; "A man touched down ... a wall came down ..., a world was

connected ...". In this speech, listeners learn about history through her eyes rather than things she does herself or what she feels. When feeling is inscribed, it is associated with abstract and general participants, "despair in the dustbowl", "depression across the land". The abstractions of "heartache and the hope" are emotional phenomena that he reports her as having "seen", rather than "felt" herself. Abstract appraisal choices create a certain distance between Obama and Anne, and between Anne and the listeners, a distance that is less evident in Rudd's relationship with Nana Fejo. Obama's exploitation of an individual's biography is strikingly different in purpose to Rudd's parallel use of other people's stories. There is a different kind of narrative instructiveness here, as if Anne Nixon Cooper serves as an iconic step in Obama's own ascent to power. Like her, he is black, but now President of the United States. He himself is his own answer to any detractors or doubters, the ones he addresses in the opening moments of his speech.

Obama uses other interpersonal strategies as he builds a particularly powerful argument around Anne's story, including the use of long noun groups into which a large amount of attitudinal information is packed. For example in describing the time at which she was born, it was "when someone like her could not vote for two reasons, because she was a woman and because of the color of her skin". Here the judgement about entrenched racism and sexism is not explicitly inscribed in the lexical choices, but is nonetheless powerfully evoked. These and many other interpersonal resources are organised in rhetorically powerful ways, which we will look at briefly as we examine Mode (Higgins, 2009).

The mode of Obama's phase 8

Like Rudd, Obama uses particular organizational resources to draw attention to what he wants the listener to attend to most. For example, the frontloading of **circumstances of time** e.g. "And tonight", "At a time when women's voices were silenced and their hopes dismissed", "When the bombs fell on our harbor and tyranny threatened the world" draws particular attention to the progression of time, an important organizational feature of this vast sweep of history. Such temporal markers in Obama's speech do more than guide the listener through the salient elements of this spoken recount. They also offer sites for the evocation of judgements about the social inequities of the past, as a journey towards the present and a hopeful sign for the future.

The aesthetics of this speech are further heightened as Obama utilizes the tricolon and pairing structures we observed earlier "despair in the dust bowl and depression across the land". These, and many other rhetorical devices where tenor and mode choices co-pattern in this narrative phase, render the highly compressed sequence of events both interpersonally memorable and structurally poetic. This penultimate phase of his Victory speech thus provides a unique lead up to the powerful conclusion (Phase 9), contrasting starkly with the co-patterning of tenor and mode choices used there.

In comparing, however briefly, snapshots of these two powerful speeches, we have used a functionally oriented linguistic framework to illuminate how the two new leaders address different constituencies, mix genres and attempt to produce widespread consensus amongst diverse social groups by means of their addressivity. Though we have concentrated in this paper on the linguistic achievements of the speeches, a true multimodal analysis would take account of their material embodiments in place and time and how gesture, pausing, crowd choruses such as “Yes we can” added to the richness of the semiotic moment. In our conclusions, we flag some pressing challenges facing grammar teaching in school English in a context where the grammar needs to be both multi-faceted and multi-level.

Some insights for grammar teaching and learning in English

The charge given to writers of the national curriculum makes it clear that any body of knowledge about language is to encompass change, dynamism and evolution. As an evolving knowledge base, our resources should be flexible and the steps we take with students need differentiation. Crystal (1987) has argued that while formal patterns in language are often complex, there are two essential steps that must be undertaken whatever grammar we use in our work on texts:

Two steps can usually be distinguished in the study of grammar. The first step is to identify units in the stream of speech (or writing, or signing - units such as ‘word’ or ‘sentence’. The second step is to analyze the patterns into which these units fall and the relationships of meaning that these patterns convey.” (p. 88)

In our analyses, we broke the two speeches into generic phases and considered the functions of each phase. This was important if only because our speeches are complex and multi-generic, combining aspects of argument and narrative in new ways. Following this, we looked closely at language choices and the patterns into which these fell. In the case of tenor, this involved consideration of **Mood**, **Modality**, **Person** and **Appraisal**. In the case of mode, this involved consideration of **Theme**, **New** and aspects of cohesion such as **Conjunction** and patterns such as repetition. Thus the relations of meaning that these choices conveyed were co-patterned relations, they worked together, and they were cumulative, they gathered force. But there is another shift we need to take in English if we are to engage students with the linguistic diversity of the broader social world. Not only do our students need to relate grammatical patterns to meaning in the texts they read and analyse, they need to explain the effect of these choices on readers or listeners and whether other choices might work or not work. This takes us beyond the two steps articulated by Crystal (1987) into the third important step of explanation and this puts additional pressures on any grammatical metalanguage.

What does this mean for senior English? It means developing an approach to close study of language that involves three crucial and inter-related steps:

(i) Learning to **identify units** in the stream of speech, or writing or signing. Traditional grammar is very useful in this step of the process (being able to identify what is there in a stream of text, a noun or noun group, a verb or verb group, a clause or sentence. It is less useful on units that are above the sentence, text, stage, phase, an intermediate unit between text and stage.

(ii) Learning to **analyse the patterns** into which these units fall e.g. patterns of verb choices that create inwardness in a narrative, patterns of naming that create character, or patterns of signposting for point changes in an argument; learning to explore **co-patterning of grammatical choices** in texts and their effect on text meaning e.g. how we manage a shift from argument to narrative and the effect of this on listener-reader alignment. This step requires a shift from traditional grammar into a functional grammar that considers the work that a word class is doing in a clause or, more importantly the work that patterns of word choices are doing in a text i.e. a focus on meaning. A recent review of empirical research by Andrews et al. (2006) has again highlighted the inadequacies of traditional and transformational grammar when it comes to improving literacy repertoires. The national curriculum advice is clear here too on the need to inter-relate 'learning about' and 'learning to' use language. There is much we do not yet know and this brings us to a vital third step in the process of learning and teaching grammar.

(iii) **Learning to explain the part these patterns play** in human communication e.g. relating language choices to the social contexts in which they occur. This is an orientation that takes us into text interpretation and explanation based on grammatical reasoning. Teachers need resources for analysing not only political speeches but also the political campaigns that give them 'legs'. How can tools of SFL be applied to the study of internet activism such as *Get-Up*? What might a new grammar offer study of practices that generate hope and new forms of participatory democracy such as we saw in Obama's campaign?

Finally, there is the matter touched on in our introduction, coherence. What kind of grammar is going to help teachers put it all together and make sense of language? Certainly the study by Harper and Rennie (2009) underscores the need for a systematic account of how language works. One way of thinking about the issue of sense making is in terms of questions. A good grammar is one that enables us to ask and answer interesting and important questions about language, explanatory power. This task takes us well beyond the comforting mediocrity of grammar at the point of need into what is referred to as "grammatics" Halliday (2002), a way of using grammar to think with. The speeches of Obama and Rudd provide a powerful site for exploring the potential of a grammatics adequate to the rhetoric of social inclusion. But the work is at a beginning. The development of a flexible framework oriented to meaning, to complexity, to change and challenging questions calls for extensive research with and on behalf of teachers in their 21st century classrooms.

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Appendix

Selections of Text of PM Rudd's 'Sorry' address, Australian Parliament House, 12 Feb, 2008.

Retrieved from Sydney Morning Herald **13 February, 2008**
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/02/13/1202760379056.html>>

Phase 1. Motion

(Note: organised as numbered sentences)

1. I move:
2. That today we honour the indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.
3. We reflect on their past mistreatment.
4. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.
5. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.
6. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
7. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

8. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.
9. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.
10. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.
11. We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

Phase 3. Biographical Recount

1. Some have asked, Why apologise?
2. Let me begin to answer by telling the Parliament just a little of one person's story - an elegant, eloquent and wonderful woman in her 80s, full of life, full of funny stories, despite what has happened in her life's journey, a woman who has travelled a long way to be with us today, a member of the stolen generation who shared some of her story with me when
3. I called around to see her just a few days ago.
4. Nanna Nungala Fejo, as she prefers to be called, was born in the late 1920s.
5. She remembers her earliest childhood days living with her family and her community in a bush camp just outside Tennant Creek.
6. She remembers the love and the warmth and the kinship of those days long ago, including traditional dancing around the camp fire at night.
7. She loved the dancing.
8. She remembers once getting into strife when, as a four-year-old girl, she insisted on dancing with the male tribal elders rather than just sitting and watching the men, as the girls were supposed to do.
9. But then, sometime around 1932, when she was about four, she remembers the coming of the welfare men.
10. Her family had feared that day and had dug holes in the creek bank where the children could run and hide.
11. What they had not expected was that the white welfare men did not come alone. 12. They brought a truck, two white men and an Aboriginal stockman on horseback cracking his stockwhip.
13. The kids were found; they ran for their mothers, screaming, but they could not get away.
14. They were herded and piled onto the back of the truck.
15. Tears flowing, her mum tried clinging to the sides of the truck as her children were taken away to the Bungalow in Alice, all in the name of protection.
16. A few years later, government policy changed.
17. Now the children would be handed over to the missions to be cared for by the churches.
18. But which church would care for them?
19. The kids were simply told to line up in three lines.
20. Nanna Fejo and her sister stood in the middle line, her older brother and cousin on her left.
21. Those on the left were told that they had become Catholics, those in the middle Methodists and those on the right Church of England.
22. That is how the complex questions of post-reformation theology were resolved in the Australian outback in the 1930s.
23. It was as crude as that.
24. She and her sister were sent to a Methodist mission on Goulburn Island and then Croker Island.
25. Her Catholic brother was sent to work at a cattle station and her cousin to a Catholic mission.
26. Nanna Fejo's family had been broken up for a second time.
27. She stayed at the mission until after the war, when she was allowed to leave for a prearranged job as a domestic in Darwin.
28. She was 16.
29. Nanna Fejo never saw her mum again.
30. After she left the mission, her brother let her know that her mum had died years before, a broken woman fretting for the children that had literally been ripped away from her.

Selections of Text of Barak Obama's Victory speech, Chicago, November, 2008.

From the Baltimore Sun (Downloaded 28 December, 2008)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/politics/bal-text1105,0,2684817.story?>

Phase 2. Position/thesis

1. If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.
2. It's the answer told by lines that stretched around schools and churches in numbers this nation has never seen, by people who waited three hours and four hours, many for the first time in their lives, because they believed that this time must be different, that their voices could be that difference.
3. It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled, Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states.
4. We are, and always will be, the United States of America.
5. It's the answer that led those who've been told for so long by so many to be cynical and fearful and doubtful about what we can achieve to put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day.
6. It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this date in this election at this defining moment change has come to America.

Phase 8: Biographical Recount

1. This election had many firsts and many stories that will be told for generations.
2. But one that's on my mind tonight]]s about a woman who cast her ballot in Atlanta.
3. She's a lot like the millions of others who stood in line to make their voice heard in this election except for one thing: Ann Nixon Cooper is 106 years old.
4. She was born just a generation past slavery; a time when there were no cars on the road or planes in the sky; when someone like her couldn't vote for two reasons – because she was a woman and because of the color of her skin.
5. And tonight, I think about all that she's seen throughout her century in America -- the heartache and the hope; the struggle and the progress; the times we were told that we can't, and the people who pressed on with that American creed:
6. Yes we can.
7. At a time when women's voices were silenced and their hopes dismissed, she lived to see them stand up and speak out and reach for the ballot.
8. Yes we can.
9. When there was despair in the dust bowl and depression across the land, she saw a nation conquer fear itself with a New Deal, new jobs, a new sense of common purpose.
10. Yes we can.
11. AUDIENCE: Yes we can.
12. OBAMA: When the bombs fell on our harbor and tyranny threatened the world, she was there to witness a generation rise to greatness and a democracy was saved.
13. Yes we can.
14. AUDIENCE: Yes we can.
15. OBAMA: She was there for the buses in Montgomery, the hoses in Birmingham, a bridge in Selma, and a preacher from Atlanta who told a people that We Shall Overcome.
16. Yes we can.
17. AUDIENCE: Yes we can.
18. OBAMA: A man touched down on the moon, a wall came down in Berlin, a world was connected by our own science and imagination.

19. And this year, in this election, she touched her finger to a screen, and cast her vote, because after 106 years in America, through the best of times and the darkest of hours, she knows how America can change.
20. *Yes we can.*
21. AUDIENCE: Yes we can.