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Pre-informational versus pre-debate introductions and story formulations in South African news interview talk: Organisational properties

ABSTRACT

In his Conversation Analytic (CA) study of the sequential structure of North American political-news interview openings, Clayman (1991) focuses, among others, on the procedures news interviewers need to employ to set the scene for (i) informational- and (ii) debate-news interview talk. Clayman (1991) contends that the way in which news introductions and story components are constructed determines which of the two types of interview will follow. This research article reports on the discourse findings of an analysis of South African **business-news interview talk** carried out within Clayman's (1991) Conversation Analytic framework. The principal aim was to determine whether the organisational properties of pre-informational and pre-debate introductions and story formulations identified by Clayman (1991) were reflected in the South African data. The analysis verified the typicality (generality) of Clayman's (1991) findings with regard to the organisation of informational news interviews. For this reason, it was argued that the findings might be exploited by language practitioners in the domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to generate communicative and meta-communicative teaching materials for prospective South African news interviewers in the business sphere. Since the analysis revealed a very low incidence of debate-news interview talk, it did not confirm Clayman's (1991) findings with regard to pre-debate introductions and story components. Possible reasons for this low incidence are considered in the article. An important justification for this study lies therein that, although a few researchers have focused attention on the organisation of South African news interview talk (e.g. Greyling, 1998; Brokensha, 2000a; 2000b; forthcoming), little information is currently available about the components required to assemble South African informational and debate news interviews.

1. Introduction

While the turn-taking system characteristic of everyday conversation specifies that any participant may initiate talk (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974: 729–731; cf. Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991: 97; Psathas, 1995: 37), the news interview turn-taking system is characterised by "a distinctive normative procedure" (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991: 97; cf. Harris, 1991: 80) in which the news interviewer has the sole right to take the first turn. In this non-questioning turn, the interviewer employs a number of procedures to establish a topical agenda for the question-answer sequences that are to follow (Clayman, 1991: 48–49). In addition, the interviewer "sets the scene" (Clayman, 1991: 65), as it were, for either an informational or debate interview. Specifically, the news introduction and story components "are methodically selected and combined" (Clayman,

1991: 65) in the opening sequence in such a way that they foreshadow one of the two types of interview.

This research article provides an account of an analysis of a corpus of South African business-news interview talk conducted in terms of Clayman's (1991) Conversation Analytic model.[1] The descriptive aim was to establish whether the organisational properties underlying American informational and debate news interviews in the political sphere manifested themselves in the South African data. The author argued that, if the analysis confirmed Clayman's (1991) discourse results, an important applied linguistic objective would be to consider how the results might be used to design teaching materials that are aimed at South African business-news interviewer trainees, and that are in line with the requirements of outcomes-based education (OBE).

It is important to bear in mind that, as the descriptive aim outlined above indicates, the focus of the analysis was on the institutionalised discourse of informational- and debate-news interview talk, rather than on issues of power, gender, or ethnicity. Although a detailed study of the ideological dimension of news interview interaction cannot be ignored, the institutionalised language practices that govern the organisation of news interview talk constitute what Clayman (1991: 72) refers to as "a largely unexplored domain ... in media studies". Clayman (1991: 72) goes on to state that:

> While this domain may seem rather mundane in comparison to the domain of ideology, and perhaps trivial in comparison to large-scale institutional forces, it is nevertheless a significant dimension of newswork, a dimension with its own organizational practices and constraints. Our grasp of the institutional frameworks of news production will remain incomplete until the domain of discourse is more thoroughly explored.

There are a number of reasons why the present study is regarded as valid. Principal among these is the fact that Clayman's (1991) analysis focuses solely on a corpus of **political-news interview talk**. Given that an interview in the field of politics is generally adversarial in character (cf. Harris, 1991) – and therefore takes the form of a debate – the author was interested in determining whether **business-news interview talk**, which seems to be geared towards straightforwardly providing the broadcast audience with information pertaining to the financial sector, might also be structured around a debate. An additional justification for this study pertains to the fact that, while several discourse studies of South African news interview interaction have been carried out (e.g. Greyling, 1998; Brokensha, 2000a; 2000b; forthcoming), there is at present a paucity of information available about the specific components required to construct South African informational and debate news interviews.

2. Methodological orientation

2.1 Data selection

In order to establish the typicality of Clayman's (1991) findings, audio as well as audio-visual recordings and turn-by-turn transcriptions were made of 45 business-news interview programmes broadcast between 1999 and 2000. These programmes were SAfm's *Appleton Market Update* and Summit Television's *Face-to-Face* and *TechnoLogic*. The programmes, which constituted the primary corpus of lingual data, were collected for a Ph.D. study, and the author would like to acknowledge the written permission of both SAfm and Summit Television to utilise them for

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1. Adopting a discourse-based approach places this research article in the realm of qualitative research (cf. Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). However, a statistical analysis of the corpus of South African business-news interview talk was also made (see section 4) with a view to verifying or invalidating the typicality of Clayman's (1991) discourse findings.

purposes of research. A number of interview programmes that were initially recorded for analysis were discarded because their opening sequences were omitted during the editing process. In order to cross-validate the discourse phenomena reflected in the primary corpus of data, the author obtained 55 commercially prepared transcriptions of SAfm's *Appleton Market Update* (cf. Clayman, 1992: 198).

Silverman (2000: 149–150) points out that working with recorded data, which is one of the prerequisites of the Conversation Analytic perspective, holds numerous advantages. For instance, preparing transcriptions of lingual data "[involves] close, repeated listenings to recordings which often reveal previously unnoted recurring features of the organization of talk" (Silverman, 2000: 150; cf. Richards & Lockhart, 1994: 11). Moreover, recorded data "are a public record, available to the scientific community, in a way that fieldnotes are not" (Silverman, 2000: 149; cf. Sacks, 1992: 622). Recordings can also "be replayed…and analyses taken off on a different tack unlimited by the original transcript" (Silverman, 2000: 149). Besides these benefits, recorded talk allows the researcher to step back and to look at discourse phenomena "from a detached perspective" (Van Lier, 1988: 238; cf. Schratz, 1992: 89).

2.2 The Conversation Analytic framework

The discourse features reflected in the three news interview programmes mentioned above were, as already stated, analysed within Clayman's (1991) discourse model which is outlined in Table 1. The author acknowledges that other models of analysis could be equally appropriate for achieving the aims outlined in section 1, and that analysts should avoid "believing that they have found the One True Way to investigate questions of language use" (Green, 1995: 1; cf. Greyling, 1998: 212). However, Clayman's (1991) discourse model was selected because it not only accommodates informational and debate news interviews, but also interviews comprising a single interviewer and interviewee, and those consisting of two or more interviewees.

The suitability of Conversation Analysis as a research tool for the study of institutional discourse becomes clear when one compares the approach to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975; 1992) Discourse Analytic (DA) approach. In their model of analysis, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975; 1992) propose that the exchanges in one institutional setting, the classroom, consist of initiation-response-feedback (I-R-F) sequences (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975: 21; cf. Hoey, 1991: 72; Nunan, 1993: 35). What is problematic about the I-R-F model is that, while it can accommodate exchanges in the classroom, and can also be employed in doctor-patient interaction in clinicians' offices, the generality of the model means that it fails to describe the systematic differences between these institutional settings (Drew & Heritage, 1992: 14). By contrast, the Conversation Analytic approach allows analysts to identify what Heritage & Greatbatch (1991: 95–96) refer to as "a unique 'fingerprint' for each institutional form of interaction – the 'fingerprint' being comprised of a set of institutional practices differentiating each form…from other institutional forms…".

According to Drew & Heritage (1992: 19), Conversation Analysis is relevant for the study of institutional discourse since it treats context in interaction "as both the project and product of the participants' own actions." DA analysts and other researchers who employ category systems, on the other hand, take the notion of context for granted:

They [ignore] the local context as both relevant for and inextricably implicated in meaning production, and instead [substitute] the theoretical assumptions concerning "context and meaning", which [are] embedded in the category system itself (Psathas, 1995: 8).

Drew & Heritage (1992: 19) refer to this particular view as the so-called "bucket" theory of context.

2.3 Data analysis

Adopting the principles of qualitative research, the author conducted an exhaustive analysis of the 45 news interviews taken from the *Appleton Market Update, Face-to-Face* and *TechnoLogic* in order to corroborate or invalidate the typicality of the procedures summarised in Table 1. To be specific, in an initial analysis, the corpus of South African news interview talk was scutinised within Clayman's (1991) framework, the aim being to identify recurrent patterns of interaction. A detailed study was then made to validate the discourse findings recorded in the preliminary analysis. Finally, the author collected additional lingual data and recycled through the data to further cross-validate the conclusions reached in the preceding analyses (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 121–124; cf. Clayman, 1992: 198).

Informational news interviews	Debate news interviews
Pre-informational introductions:	**Pre-debate introductions:**
• Through relevant descriptive items, an interviewee may be introduced as a participant-observer/eyewitness. Such an interviewee is "shown to have first-hand knowledge of the focal matter" (Clayman, 1991: 61).	• In news interviews that take the form of a debate, an interviewee may be introduced as an advocate who "[is] prepared to defend a particular point of view" (Clayman, 1991: 62). Pairs of advocates, who display divergent opinions, may also be introduced. News interviewers may assert that interviewees hold particular views. Views, however, "may be exhibited far less directly...e.g. through party affiliations" (Clayman, 1991: 62).
• A news interviewee may also be introduced as a certified expert – someone who has specialised knowledge about the focal news item under discussion. The expertise of a particular interviewee may be explicitly stated. However, a guest interviewee's expertise may also be exhibited "through descriptions of relevant organizational affiliation..." (Clayman, 1991: 62).	
• The introduction of a participant-observer or certified expert is coupled with descriptive items referred to as person- and organisation-descriptions (Clayman, 1991: 57–58).	• As in the case of a participant-observer or certified expert, an advocate is characterised through person- and organisation-descriptions (Clayman, 1991: 57–58).
• Two principles – the topical relevance principle and the principle of recipient design govern the selection of descriptive items (Clayman, 1991: 60).	• The topical relevance principle and the principle of recipient design determine which descriptive items will be selected (Clayman, 1991: 60).
Pre-informational story components:	**Pre-debate story components:**
• Story formulations that precede informational-news interview talk "report discrete events while indicating little if any conflict or disagreement surrounding them" (Clayman, 1991: 67). In pre-informational story formulations, "subjective interpretations of matters are generally absent" (Clayman, 1991: 67).	• In pre-debate story components, a state of disagreement may be established in various ways. For instance, it "may be straightforwardly announced", or "exhibited by detailing the contrasting views that characterize opposing sides of the issue" (Clayman, 1991: 65).

Table 1

3.   The analysis

3.1 Pre-informational introductions and story components

According to Clayman (1991: 57), when interviewers introduce interviewees to the news audience in the introductory segment, they employ so-called "person-reference" terms which are syntactically linked to specific descriptive items. For instance, the interviewer may identify an interviewee by title and name (e.g. "Mr. Nelson Mandela"), and then join these items to other descriptive items (e.g. "former president of the Republic of South Africa"). A typical descriptive item is an organisation-description (Clayman, 1991: 58). As this term suggests, an interviewee is described through his or her affiliation with a particular organisation. Person-reference terms as well as organisation-descriptions were evident in the corpus of South African business-news interview talk as illustrated in the excerpts of data below.

(1)   [Appleton Market Update: 17 November 1999]

38   IR: Up next on the Appleton Market Update, we're talking to
     →   Edwin Hertzog, and he's the executive chairperson of the Medi-Clinic Corporation.
             They came out with interim results... (Continues)

(2)   [Face-to-Face: 29 November 1999]

1   IR: We're Face-to-Face with
     →   Phil Biden, chief executive officer of BOE Limited.
             The group's just reported a twenty-three percent increase in headline earnings per share... (Continues)

It is interesting to note that the selection of descriptive items by interviewers is not made at random. As Clayman (1991: 58) observes, "[the] practice of describing is not a detached activity performed purely as an end in itself". Instead, "...descriptions are always produced in some specific context [and] for some practical purpose...". For instance, in order to establish an informational interview, the interviewer is required to describe the interviewee by employing one of two specific alignment-types. As noted in Table 1, Clayman (1991: 61) refers to the first alignment-type as a participant observer or eyewitness – someone who has first-hand knowledge of the focal news item under discussion. Evidence of this alignment-type was found in the South African data. In excerpt (3), for example, it is clear that the interviewee ("Francois Schindehutte") is identified as someone who will actively participate in the listing of M-Net and Supersport on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSO). He is thus "aligned to offer comments" (Clayman, 1991: 62) on the decision by M-Net and Supersport to expand into the rest of Africa. Similarly, in excerpt (4), after characterising the interviewee ("Nic Downing") in terms of his affiliation with "the Appleton Group", the interviewer introduces him as an eyewitness to the latest activities on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

(3)   [Face-to-Face: 15 November 1999]

1   IR: M-Net and Supersport are spreading their wings this week with the two channels taking secondary listings on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. This is the first country outside of South Africa which the channels will list on. And M-Net and Supersport will also be the first South African listing to participate in a dual listing on the NSE.

> Joining me on Face-to-Face now is M-Net's financial director, Francois Schindehutte who's heading off to Nigeria tomorrow to prepare for Friday's listing... (Continues)

(4)   [Appleton Market Update: 19 November 1999]

14   IR: You're tuned to SAfm 104 to 107, radio for the well informed. I'm Kobus Bester and this is the Appleton Market Update. And up next is Nic Downing of the Appleton Group, and we're going to have a look at what's been happening on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange today. A pretty good day, Nic?

In addition to being described as a participant-observer, a guest interviewee may also be characterised as a certified expert. When this particular alignment-type is used, interviewees are portrayed as possessing specialised knowledge about the topical agenda to be discussed in the upcoming interview (Clayman, 1991: 62). An interviewee's expertise may be explicitly asserted. As is frequently the case, however, expertise may be exhibited through organisation-descriptions or through descriptions of, among others, the interviewee's occupation or publishing activities. A detailed analysis of the corpus of South African news interview interaction revealed that this alignment-type was common. Consider, for example, excerpts (5) and (6) below.

(5)   [Face-to-Face: 25 November 1999]

1   IR: The launch of the final chapter of the Employment Equity Act this week has sent shivers through many parts of corporate South Africa. At the core of the issue is how companies should go about changing their employment structure, to first of all comply with the act, and secondly to maintain standards.
    →   One of the people who's studied the act extensively is legal expert Sara Gon who's also acted as a judge in the Labour Court... (Continues)

(6)   [Appleton Market Update: 17 November 1999]

50   IR: ... (Several lines omitted) We're now talking to Stephen Cranston.
    →   He's the senior editor um at the Financial Mail with the latest survey of retirement funds. Good evening er...Stephen.

In excerpt (5), it is clear that the interviewer directly asserts that the interviewee ("Sara Gon") is a "legal expert". In excerpt (6), on the other hand, the interviewee's expertise is indirectly displayed through a reference to his position ("senior editor") as well as through an organisation-description ("the Financial Mail"). By employing these descriptive items, the interviewer indicates that the interviewee is "qualified to speak to the focal matter" (Clayman, 1991: 61) which, in this case, revolves around "the latest survey of retirement funds" in South Africa.

What is important to note here is that, in describing a participant-observer or certified expert, the interviewer is required to adhere to two principles. The first principle, which Clayman (1991: 60) refers to as the topical relevance principle, specifies that the interviewee must be characterised exclusively in terms of those descriptive items that are directly related to the topical agenda. The second principle – that of recipient design – stipulates that a descriptive item must be expanded upon if it is clear that the item will not be understood by the broadcast audience.[2] Close scrutiny of

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2.   As noted in Table 1, these principles also govern the selection of news interviewees who are characterised as advocates.

the corpus of South African lingual data revealed that both principles operated in the selection of descriptive items. These principles are illustrated in excerpts (7) and (8).

(7) [Appleton Market Update: 19 November 1999]

53   IR: You're listening to the Appleton Market Update. We'll now be talking to Hans Josefsson, the Swedish Trade Commissioner heading the Swedish Trade Council in Johannesburg. The warning is out, the Swedes are coming and we'd better watch out... (Continues)

(8) [Appleton Market Update: 17 November 1999]

53   IR: You're listening to the Appleton Market Update. And now up next is Bill Cooper. He's the chief executive officer of the industrial transport concern, Dorbyl... (Continues)

It is evident that the topical relevance principle operates in excerpt (7), since the guest interviewee is characterised in terms of items that are directly related to the focal news item: the interviewee ("Frans Josefsson") is described in terms of his position ("the Swedish Trade Commissioner"), and this descriptive item is relevant to the topical agenda, which, in this case, concerns Swedish trading activities in South Africa. In excerpt (8), the interviewer assumes that the broadcast audience will be unfamiliar with Dorbyl. By expanding upon this organisation-description ("the industrial transport concern"), the interviewer adheres to the principle of recipient design.

In order to establish an informational interview, the interviewer not only selects the specific alignment-types illustrated in the excerpts above, but also formulates the story component – which is designed to provide background information to the forthcoming topical agenda – in specific terms. According to Clayman (1991: 67), pre-informational story components are assembled in such a way that, instead of "[exhibiting] a 'debatable' state of affairs" (Clayman, 1991: 67), they "[emphasise] the circumstances [and/or] implications of events" (Clayman, 1991: 67). Pre-informational story formulations were evident in the corpus of South African news interview discourse. Two examples of such formulations are illustrated in excerpts (9) and (10) below.

(9) [Face-to-Face: 19 November 1999]

1   IR: Time for Face-to-Face on Summit Television. I'm Gary Alfonso. The first thing that jumps to mind when you mention the name Raymond Parsons is yes exactly, the man behind South African organised business over the past twenty-five years.

→   But these days, Raymond Parsons is a Professor of Business Economics at Wits, so perhaps fitting that a person with such a background writes a book on South Africa's economic future.
We're Face-to-Face with Raymond Parsons now, the author of a new book called *The Mbeki Inheritance,*

→   and it's a look at where South Africa's economy was and where it's going in the future. Raymond, welcome to Face-to-Face.

(10) [Appleton Market Update: 17 November 1999]

16   IR: Now...up next, Rob Dow of African Merchant Bank Holdings. He's the chief executive officer,

and they came out with er pretty strong growth figures today in attributable income and earnings per share for the year ending thirtieth of September ninety-nine. Positive contributions by all operating areas resulting in a growth in attributable earnings of forty-eight percent to 115.6 million and annualised EPS growth forty percent.
Good evening Rob.

An analysis of excerpt (9) reveals that the interviewer establishes the interviewee's expertise as a financial commentator through a reference to his occupation ("Professor of Business Economics at Wits") as well as through a description of his publishing activities ("...so perhaps fitting that a person with such a background writes a book on South Africa's economic future") (arrow 1). In the story component (arrow 2), the interviewer provides the broadcast audience with background information to the author's book, *The Mbeki Inheritance*, stating that the book takes a look at past and future economic conditions in South Africa. Since the story component does not indicate any controversy surrounding the publication, it foreshadows an informational interview. Likewise, in excerpt (10), it is apparent that the story formulation indicates that the upcoming news interview will be informational in character, since it simply provides specific details about the financial performance of African Merchant Bank Holdings.

3.2 Pre-debate introductions and story components

With regard to debate-news interview discourse, an exhaustive analysis of the corpus of South African lingual data revealed that pre-debate introductions and story formulations are not typical of business-news interview interaction. Indeed, out of the 45 news interview programmes examined, only the interview opening shown in excerpt (11) below indicated that the forthcoming interview would take the form of a debate.

(11) [Face-to-Face: 22 November 1999]

1   IR: The Competition Commission is only a few months old.
→   Already it's facing some big challenges and some harsh criticism.
→   With Nedcor leaving no stone unturned to merge with rival Standard Bank, many players are looking to see whether it's going to cry foul over the deal.
→   And last week at a conference, organised by financial services group, BOE, businessmen and legal experts pointed out some of the pitfalls of the new Competitions Act.
→   We're Face-to-Face now with Ruiters, head of the Competition Commission and recently appointed director-general of Trade and Industry... (Continues)

In the story component in excerpt (11) (see arrows 1, 2 and 3), it is evident that the interviewer foregrounds the opposing views held by the Competition Commission and by "businessmen and legal experts" over the implementation of the Competitions Act. Although the interviewee's standpoint on the issue of the Competitions Act is not expressly stated, it is clear that, as he is described as head of the Competition Commission (see arrow 4), he is "aligned as [an advocate]" (Clayman, 1991: 62) who will defend the act in the upcoming interview. The fact that the interviewee defends the existence of the Competitions Act in the interview that follows is evident in the exchange that follows.

(12) [Face-to-Face: 22 November 1999]

9   IR: Alistair, let's look back at the Competitions Act as it's come under some criticism. People say that there are drawbacks because it's inconsistent, it's ambiguous, and it doesn't make provision for mergers to take place and joint ventures. What is your response to that?

10   AR: Well look, I think any piece of legislation is subject to interpretation. I think the Competition Commission having had two and a half months to administer this piece of legislation um would also itself be going through a testing period in trying to understand the implications of what's written on paper... (Several lines omitted) ...we encourage mergers, we- we encourage people to merge if it creates efficiency, if it leads to international competitiveness and if it meets all the requirements in terms of that.

11   IR: Alistair, what's of no comfort to business is- are the costs involved. The filing fees are considered punitive.

12   AR: I don't think they're considered punitive. I think our filing fees are- are comparable with most commissions around the world... (Continues)

Interestingly, in analysing the corpus of South African data, the author identified some news interview openings that appeared to project debate interviews. However, on closer examination, this was shown not to be the case. Consider, for example, excerpt (13) below.

(13) [TechnoLogic: 18 November 1999]

1   IR: Hi and welcome to TechnoLogic. I'm Manu Padayachee.
         Forty-six years ago, scientists discovered the genetic fingerprint, DNA, the coding that defines all organisms.
→   Now technology has evolved to the point where these genes can be isolated, cut, and pasted into a completely different species. So a gene from yeast could make crops last through the dry seasons, a gene from an arctic fish could protect tomatoes from frost. The technology that allows for the genetic modification of food has been hailed as a possible solution to world hunger.
→   But others call these creations Frankenstein food or mutant crops that's sparked off an ethical debate across the globe.
→   Joining me in the studio to discuss this very issue is Muffy Koch, a biotechnologist with Innovation Biotechnology and Doctor John Fagan, Professor of Molecular Biology at the... (Inaudible) University in the United States... (Continues)

One could argue that, by declaring that the production of genetically modified foods has "sparked off an ethical debate across the globe" (arrow 2), and then stating that two guest interviewees have joined him in the studio "to discuss this very issue" (arrow 3), the interviewer sets the scene for a debate interview. However, as excerpt (14) illustrates, in the interview that follows, the interviewees (MK and JF) do not exhibit conflicting perspectives with regard to genetically modified (GM) foods.

(14) [TechnoLogic: 18 November 1999]

3   IR: Where do we stand in relation to the United States in terms of the development of the technology?

4   JF: Um…in terms of regulation, uh the US does not have a law relating to the safety, regulation or um commercialism of genetically engineered crops. They've used a patchwork of regulation from other areas which has not been at all successful in dealing with the issue. Here in South Africa, the decision has been made to have a er regulation that's explicitly going to deal with this issue.

5   IR: Muffy, how stringent are these regulations, are they enforceable?

6   MK: Well enforceability is absolutely primary in any regulation procedure. And so a lot of work has gone into making sure that whatever regulations are in place are enforceable. And they're very strict. We really don't want to make a mistake. This is a very valuable technology, but as with any technology, it could be abused and we don't want to make that mistake.

7   IR: So…give me some specifics of the regulations. What do they deal with?

8   MK: Well the GMO act that John was referring to covers all living genetically modified organisms and the problem with a living organism is that… (Continues)

A possible explanation for the seeming disparity between the pre-interview opening and the interview itself lies in what Clayman (1991: 65) refers to as "foregrounding" and "backgrounding". In the story component in excerpt (13), technological advancements in the field of genetically modified foodstuffs are highlighted, and therefore foregrounded (see arrow 1), while the controversy surrounding the technology is mentioned last, and thus backgrounded (see arrow 2). According to Clayman (1991: 67), by placing an item (which, in this instance, alludes to opposing views with regard to gene technology) last in the story formulation, the interviewer demonstrates that it is not the chief focus of the interview to follow.

4.   Discussion of the findings

Based on the discourse analysis conducted in terms of Clayman's (1991) model outlined in Table 1, the author concluded that (1) the discourse features of pre-informational introductions and story components were prevalent in the corpus of South African business-news interview talk, while (2) pre-debate introductions and story formulations were virtually non-existent. As Table 2 below indicates, a statistical analysis of the interactional patterns reflected in the 45 news interview programmes which made up the primary corpus of data cross-validated the conclusions reached.

Discourse feature	Frequency of occurrence
Pre-informational introductions:	
• Introducing participants or observers (eyewitnesses)	11
• Introducing certified experts	36
Pre-informational story components:	
• Reporting on discrete events while omitting subjective interpretations	27
Pre-debate introductions:	
• Explicitly introducing an advocate/pairs of advocates	0
• Indirectly characterising an advocate or pairs of advocates through party affiliations	1
Pre-debate story components:	
• Announcing a state of disagreement over a particular news item	0
• Indirectly announcing a state of disagreement over a particular issue	1

Table 2

There are a number of possible reasons as to why the analysis of South African business-news interview talk revealed a low incidence of pre-debate introductions and story components. First, and as noted in the introduction to this paper, political-news interview talk is generally by nature adversarial, since politicians are typically characterised as advocates who, through their party affiliations, represent opposing points of view (cf. Harris, 1991). In business-news interview talk, on the other hand, rather than being required to defend a particular standpoint, business people are required to comment on the financial performance of their companies, while financial analysts are expected to provide the broadcast audience with information that pertains, for instance, to current market activities.

Second, in debate news interviews in the political sphere, interviewees "[frequently] ... come in pairs", and are portrayed as representing 'both' sides of [a particular] issue" (Clayman, 1991: 63). In business-news interview talk, this does not appear to be the case: the analysis of the corpus of South African lingual data revealed that interviewers seldom introduced more than a single interviewee at a time and therefore did not introduce two sides to a focal news item.[3]

Another possible reason for the minimal occurrence of debate-news interview talk concerns the composition and interests of the broadcast audience. Political news interviews are scrutinised by journalists, government officials, and the general public, to name a few (cf. Clayman, 1992: 164). By contrast, if one takes a look at business news interview programmes on SAfm and Summit Television, is clear that audience members are composed of, among others, business leaders, investment professionals, and financial experts, who require accurate and up-to-the-minute information about local and international markets.

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3. Out of the 45 news interviews analysed, only two featured two interviewees.

5. Implications of the findings for materials design

Since the analysis reported on in sections 3 and 4 verified the typicality of Clayman's (1991) findings with regard to pre-informational introductions and story formulations, the author maintained that the discourse findings of the analysis could be employed by ESP practitioners to design language activities for South African business-news interviewer trainees. Adopting Van Lier's (1996) pedagogical principles of awareness, authenticity and autonomy, and taking the requirements of OBE into account, the author devised the activities outlined in Tables 3 and 4.

Focus	The activity exhibits a meta-communicative focus.
Purpose	The purpose of the activity is not only to heighten learners' awareness of the strategies business-news interviewers employ to establish informational news interviews, but also to sensitise them to how these strategies differ from those used to set up debate interviews.
Class arrangement	Learners work individually and discuss their findings in pairs.
Procedure	Each learner makes audio recordings of at least five South African business-news interview openings and transcribes the recordings on a turn-by-turn basis. Learners then analyse the opening sequences in terms of Clayman's (1991) model in order to identify the strategies interviewers employ to establish informational-news interview talk. In pairs, learners report back on their findings, and questions such as the following are addressed: 1. Did the interviewer introduce the interviewee as a participant-observer, certified expert, or as an advocate? 2. Identify the descriptive items the interviewer used to characterise the alignment-types mentioned in 1. 3. Did the interviewer employ the topical relevance principle and/or the principle of recipient design in his/her selection of descriptive items? 4. Were the story components formulated in such a way that they foreshadowed debate or informational interviews?

Table 3

Focus	The activity exhibits a communicative focus.
Purpose	The purpose of the activity, which is structured around a role play, is to enable the learner who assumes the role of the interviewer to assemble a pre-interview introduction and story component that project an informational news interview.
Class arrangement	Learners work in pairs.
Procedure	In pairs, learners collect information about a topical issue in the field of business and select a suitable interviewee. The learner who assumes the role of the interviewer decides which strategies he or she will use in the opening sequence to construct an informational interview. The learner who takes on the role of the interviewee prepares for the interview by reviewing the information on the topical agenda. In a role-playing activity, the "interviewer" sets up an informational interview and asks the "interviewee" three questions.

Table 4

Clark & Ivanic (1992: 170) contend that critical language **awareness** can only "emerge from the … interpretation of real language" (cf. Lynch & Anderson, 1991; Van Lier, 1996; Burns, 1998). For this reason, the activity outlined in Table 3 has been structured around authentic samples of

South African business-news interview talk, rather than around secondary pedagogic material. Since the activity is a consciousness-raising activity aimed at encouraging learners to gain insight into the organisational properties of informational-news interview discourse, it is consistent with one of the specific outcomes of OBE which stipulates that learners should develop critical awareness of language usage (*Curriculum 2005*: 23; cf. Wessels & Van den Berg, 1998: 7).

In addition to designing activities that sensitise learners to the discourse features of pre-informational introductions and story formulations, it is important to generate activities that simulate informational-news interview talk and that therefore adhere to Van Lier's (1996) principle of **authenticity**. The communicative activity outlined in Table 4 has been devised around a role-playing activity that enables learners to employ the various strategies required to assemble an informational interview. The activity therefore fulfills another requirement of OBE, namely, that learners need to make use of communication strategies to achieve specific purposes (*Curriculum 2005*: 23). Since the activity avoids encouraging learners to become "passive recipients of instruction" (Van Lier, 1996: 12) and instead, enables them to utilise the skills they will need "to function effectively in their occupational...roles" (Spady, 1994: 63; cf. Cheung, 1997: 120), it adheres to what Van Lier (1996: 12) refers to as the pedagogical principle of **autonomy**.

A role-playing activity such as the one in Table 4 "provides opportunities for students to climb into the kinds of linguistic behaviour-patterns which they will need to produce outside the classroom and to integrate these behaviour-patterns with their own personalities" (Littlewood, 1992: 91; cf. Cheung, 1997: 119). However, activities should also be structured in such a way that they enable learners to carry out simulations of interview talk in real-life settings (Littlewood, 1992: 92). Thus, ESP practitioners need to devise experiential or whole-task activities that take prospective news interviewers out of the classroom situation and into the world of practice where they can apply their skills independently.

6. Conclusion

This research article reported on a discourse-based analysis of a corpus of South African business-news interview talk, the main aim being to determine whether the interactional patterns in the corpus reflected the organisational properties of North American pre-informational and pre-debate introductions and story components identified by Clayman (1991) in his model of news interview openings. The analysis confirmed the typicality of informational interviews, but invalidated Clayman's (1991) findings with regard to pre-debate introductory segments and story components. The author proposed that, since the findings of the analysis pointed to the generality of pre-informational introductions and story formulations, they created "a target profile" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998: 57–58) of the procedures news interviewers need to employ to construct informational news. This profile was used to generate communicative and meta-communicative activities for South African business-news interviewer trainees. The author proposes that future research should focus on how South African informational-news interview talk in the business sphere is managed within the interview itself.

Abbreviations and transcription conventions used in the excerpts of data

IR	Interviewer
(Inaudible)	An unintelligible utterance
–	An abruptly checked utterance
→	Draws the reader's attention to a particular discourse phenomenon
1,2,3	Turns are numbered 1, 2, 3, et cetera

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