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## Mapping place: further delicacy in circumstantiation

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# Mapping *Place*: further delicacy in circumstantiation (绘制“空间”：环境成分的更精细描述)

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## 摘要

本文认为对“空间”的言语释解的描写需要有更加精细的手段。具体而言，在系统功能语言学的及物系统中，“空间”属于“环境成分”范畴，是对语域变量——语场——的体现（Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004）。目前的研究表明作为环境成分的“空间”包含多种意义，但是很难分类（Dreyfus & Jones, 2008）。本文以抽象程度为标准对“空间”进行了分类，目的在于说明具有更多精密层次的分类对语篇分析和语篇细读教学都大有裨益。

**关键词：**“环境成分”化；及物；语义；语法；空间意义

## 1 Introduction

This chapter reports on our work on circumstantiation in order to better understand discursive construals of *place*. Our experiences teaching English literacy to students from diverse backgrounds have convinced us of the explanatory power of Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly with respect to reading English texts. This work has been greatly assisted by our familiarity with the detailed descriptions of linguistic options provided by SFL theory. As analysts and educators, we have used the grammatical tools to identify the choices taken up (or not) by writers and to support discussions of those choices and their effects on meaning. Through this work, it has become apparent that some aspects of the grammar are more finely tuned than others. In particular, we have found that the methods of identifying and describing the range of meanings associated with *place* or *location* are currently underdeveloped in SFL theory. As educators, we are interested not only in the range of meanings construed in *place* but also in whether or not there is an ontogenetic dimension in the occurrences of concrete and abstract places represented in texts studied by students at different ages. We begin this paper with an overview of how *place* is dealt with in a range of fields, with particular emphasis on SFL theory. We will then report upon our project, describing and modeling the range of meanings associated with *place*, as identified in a small corpus of texts from our work. Throughout the paper, our intent is to demonstrate the need for more delicate descriptions of *place* in order to enhance our analytic and pedagogic strategies.

## 2 Studying *Place*

Studies of *place* are not new. There are entire branches of disciplines devoted to understanding *place*, such as philosophy, sociology, physical geography and architecture (Malpas, 1999). Many of the studies undertaken in these fields, such as physical geography and architecture, are concerned with the concrete material environment, its arrangements and effects on humans (Stenglin, 2009; 2011).

However others, such as those undertaken in the field of philosophy, are more interested in the social and cultural meanings invested in *place*. As such, *place* is variously conceived of as being: “ ‘space’ imbued with meaning... it refers more to the meanings that are invested in a location than to the physicality of locality.” (Vanclay, 2008:3).

These studies are concerned with the connections and meanings humans invest in actual physical places, whereas we are concerned with the meanings humans invest in linguistic construals of *place* - that is, the myriad of ways physical and non-physical *place* is recruited in the expression of human experience. Thus we are recognizing the importance of *place* in not only our material lives but also in our discursive lives (Coventry, Tenbrink et al. 2009 ). We argue that the way in which *place* is described currently in SFL theory does not capture this depth and breadth.

Within the field of SFL, *place* has been theorized and studied by a number of scholars. These studies can be divided into two groups: the first is the treatment of *place* or space in language, as per Halliday (1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2004). The second is the theorization of space as a meaning making resource in its own right, as per Stenglin (2009 and 2011) and Ravelli (2008). However, it is with the former that we are concerned, i.e. with how *space/place* is construed in language.

Beginning with Halliday (1994), *place* has been captured within the experiential metafunction through the Transitivity constituent of circumstance. As one of the sub-categories of circumstance, *place* (which is known variously as location: space and location: place) locates an event in a spatial location. Thus, it covers circumstantial constituents that answer the probe “where?”, reflecting a somewhat semantic orientation to the classification of *place*. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:261) state:

...if we think of ‘circumstantiation’ as a general concept, we can get some sense of the semantic space which is being constructed...

*Place* is a frequently realized meaning in texts, as Matthiessen’s (1998) study of circumstances shows in a 1443-clause sample of a variety of written registers. In this study, Matthiessen found that circumstances of *place* were the most commonly occurring type of circumstance, accounting for almost half the total number of circumstances, as can be seen in the following table.

Type		number	percentage
locative	temporal	101	15.3%
locative	spatial	287	43.6%
	extent	30	4.6%
	cause	44	6.7%
	manner	134	20.4%
	accomp	27	4.1%
	role	11	1.7%
	angle	6	.09%
	matter	18	2.7%
TOTAL		658	

**Table 1: Circumstances in 1443 clause sample of English (Matthiessen, 1998)**

Of the various experiential meanings added to the clause through circumstances (spatial, temporal, extent, cause, manner, accompaniment, role, angle and manner), according to Matthiessen’s study, *where* events happen (contained in circumstances of *place*) is the meaning most frequently added.

Halliday pairs space with time. Like time, he subclassifies space into either definite (e.g. *at home*) or indefinite (e.g. *near*); absolute (e.g. *in Australia*) or relative: near (e.g. *here*) or relative: remote (*there*); and rest (e.g. *in Sydney*) or motion: towards (e.g. *to Sydney*) or motion: away from (e.g. *from Sydney*).

definite		<i>at home</i>
indefinite		<i>near</i>
absolute		<i>in Australia</i>
relative	near	<i>here</i>
	remote	<i>there</i>
rest		<i>in Sydney</i> <i>at the airport</i>
motion	towards	<i>to Sydney</i>
	away from	

Table 2: Subclassifications of Circumstance: location (from Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 263-264)

As can be seen from these examples, some contain the same *place*, *Sydney*, within them (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), indicating that the classification is made according to the preposition, whereas for others (e.g. *at home* and *near*) the classification is made according to meaning contained within the nominal group and the motion described by that meaning e.g. *to Sydney* (towards). As will be seen below, we suggest that the meaning in the nominal group, i.e. the *place* itself, and not the preposition nor the direction, which can be used to develop Circumstantiation toward further delicacy, even though this does not use grammatical reasoning to do so.

In terms of ideational meaning at the discourse semantic stratum, the circumstance is seen as being peripheral to the nuclear meanings construed in a clause, or in the process and participant configuration of ‘who does what to whom’ (Martin & Rose, 2007).

However, as many circumstances of *place* contain nominal groups, it is useful to examine the treatment of nominal elements in the theory. The discourse semantic groupings of entities (or nominal ‘lexical items’) made by Martin & Rose (2007:80) is relevant here. They categorise entities as either concrete, abstract or metaphoric, as follows:

Examples		
concrete	everyday	man, girlfriend, face, hands, apple, house, hill
	specialised	mattock, lathe, gearbox

abstract	technical	inflation, metafunction, gene
	institutional	offence, hearing, applications, violation, amnesty
	semiotic	question, issue, letter, abstract
	generic	colour, time, manner, way, kind, class, part, cause
metaphoric	process	relationship, marriage, process, humiliation
	quality	justice, truth, integrity, bitterness, security

**Table 3: Kinds of entities (Martin & Rose, 2007:114)**

This delineation between concrete, abstract and metaphoric entities is useful; however, for our purposes, it does not go far enough. It does not quite get at the nuances of meaning expressed in circumstances of location. The nuances of meaning we are referring to can be seen in the following examples<sup>1</sup>, taken from Pilawuk (Brian, 1996) an Australian children's book which tells the story of an Aboriginal child forcibly removed from her family by the Australian Government authorities.

*Missionaries moved my family from our own country to Malak Malak country in the Daly River area*

*I was forcibly taken from my family*

*I was taken to Darwin*

According to the framework made by Martin & Rose, the entities in the above circumstances are all classified as 'everyday' entities despite the very different meanings about identity, home and kinship that are being construed. These different meanings are lost when analysed from the perspective of Martin & Rose. Thus the starting point for this paper is that we can develop the descriptions of *place* further to better get at the different meanings within them, thus further expanding our understandings of the field of a text. Thus, *place* is regarded here as capable of construing more meanings than just the concrete physical environment; it also construes a rich and diverse range of meanings that get expressed as *place* and in *place*.

This is acknowledged by Halliday in his work (1994), where he states that space includes not only concrete space, but also abstract space. However, he does not attempt to systematically classify abstract space to any further delicacy, and in fact claims it is beyond the scope of his work (1994:61). Thus the categorization of entities by Martin & Rose (2007) offers the most comprehensive available means of accounting for ways of meaning beyond concrete, physical *place* – that is, in the entities, which are, in our case, located in circumstances of *place*.

### **3 Issues for the analysis of *place***

The limited nature of the current description of *place* within the theory was evident to us as linguistic analysts across a range of contexts. For example in a corpus of secondary school student texts from the subject of history, we found the following circumstances of *place*:

<sup>1</sup> (circumstances underlined, entities bolded)

Soldiers	go	to the mess tent
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: location: place

and

Soldiers	go	to war
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: location: place

While it is clear that ‘the mess tent’ is an actual concrete or physical location where soldiers go, ‘war’ is not a physical location; rather, it represents a series of value-laden actions and events with consequences. If the action of going to war were to be located in an actual *place*, that *place* would have to be added, such as ‘in Vietnam’.

A second problematic instance is that while circumstances of *place* are said to answer the probe “where?” (Martin, Matthiessen et al., 1997; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), others seem to better answer the probe “what?” This can be seen in the following clause:

The soldiers	wanted to get involved	in all the excitement attached to this tragic war
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: location: place

The circumstance “Soldiers go to the mess tent” answers the given probe “*Where* do soldiers go?” whereas “The soldiers wanted to get involved in all the excitement...” answers the probe “in *what* did the soldiers want to get involved?” This type of circumstance of *place* is currently not accounted for in SFL theory.

A further issue that can present a problem to analysts and readers is that there is such a multiplicity of types of *place* that are construed in text, from the very concrete, such as “to the mess tent”, to the very abstract, such as “in all the excitement attached to this tragic war” (Dreyfus & Jones, 2008). Such places move the meanings in the text beyond the concrete material world. Halliday (1994:161) has remarked upon this saying:

In the modern elaborated registers of adult speech, especially writing, the circumstantial elements are evolved far from their concrete origins – especially their spatial ones.

The enormous diversity of places we have found in texts, spanning concrete to abstract, and the differences in their meanings indicates that nuances of meaning are not so readily available within the current category of circumstance of *place*. This semantic delicacy is made clear in the following examples previously introduced.

Missionaries	moved	my family	from our own country	to Malak Malak country in the Daly River area
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: location: place	Circumstance: location: place

I	was forcibly taken	from my family
Goal	Process: material	Circumstance: location: place

I	was taken	to Darwin
Goal	Process: material	Circumstance: location: place

While analyses of all the above three clauses feature circumstances of location: place, they are very different places that are being construed. ‘From our own country’ and ‘to Malak Malak country’ contain meanings of both physical *place* and also capture a sense of the spirituality of *place* that Indigenous Australians talk and write about (see for example Read, 2000 ). ‘From my family’ construes a social *place*; and ‘to Darwin’ refers to a geographical *place*, a *place* that can be located on a map. Being able to capture these different connotations of *place* encourages a richer kind of reading of this text, particularly for learner-readers of English.

As linguists, we try to understand the various nuances of meaning in text, and we have, therefore, wanted to be able to capture a fuller range of meanings of *place* than is currently available within the theory. Central to our concern is the question asked by Pickford (2005:26):

“How can we tell the stories of people without telling the stories of their place: how social, cultural and physical worlds intertwine ... how places are lived, perceived and associated?”

We add to this: how can we as linguists capture this variety of spatial meaning? In order to do so, we have begun to map construals of *place* to further delicacy (see Dreyfus & Jones, 2008) and the current paper continues this work.

As we are concerned with construals of *place* in whole texts and not just in the clause, our study approaches *place* from a discourse semantic perspective (Martin & Rose, 2007). This means we examine construals of *place* wherever they are realized grammatically, and explore how these contribute to the realization of the field of a text. In terms of the grammatical location of spatial meanings, they occur not only in the constituent of circumstance, but in the constituent of attribute: circumstance at the rank of group, and in downranked locations such as within qualifiers of nominal groups. These construals of place can be mapped taxonomically to create a richer picture of the field of a text.

## 4 Data and analysis

Our data is drawn from several sources including an ARC funded project “Key Indicators in Adolescent Writing” (Christie & Derewianka, 2008), a doctoral thesis focusing on primary literacy pedagogy (Jones, 2005) and texts studied at opposite points of the schooling continuum. The latter includes picture books commonly used in early year classrooms (Browne, 1998; Graham, 2004; Lofthouse & Ingpen, 2007) and a collection of speeches from political figures such as Aung San Suu Kyi, Noel Pearson and Martin Luther King (New South Wales Board of Studies, 2000). We are interested in the range of meanings construed in *place* and whether or not there is an ontogenetic dimension in the occurrences of concrete and abstract places represented in texts studied by students at different ages.

A preliminary classification of the categories of *place* is contained within Dreyfus & Jones (2008) and reproduced in Figure 1 below:

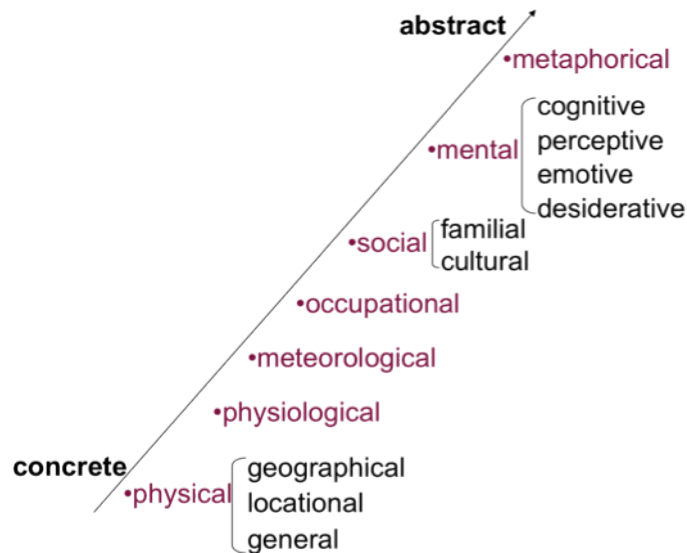


Figure 1: Cline of circumstances of *place* (Dreyfus & Jones, 2008)

This preliminary classification gave us a starting point, but soon proved to be limited due to the difficulty in distinguishing whether some categories are more or less abstract than others. While the classification of concrete places is relatively unproblematic, many of the entities are abstract and metaphorical and cannot be easily placed on a cline of more or less abstraction in a principled way. For example, accounting for the difference in abstraction between social and mental is hard to gauge. Thus, the category of concrete *place* remains a fixed point and our 2008 cline above has been expanded into a fan (Figure 2) to locate abstract places in a cluster rather than on a linear cline. The fanned representation in Figure 2 below reflects the complexity of the pathway through abstraction, which cannot be represented accurately by the simple 2008 cline.

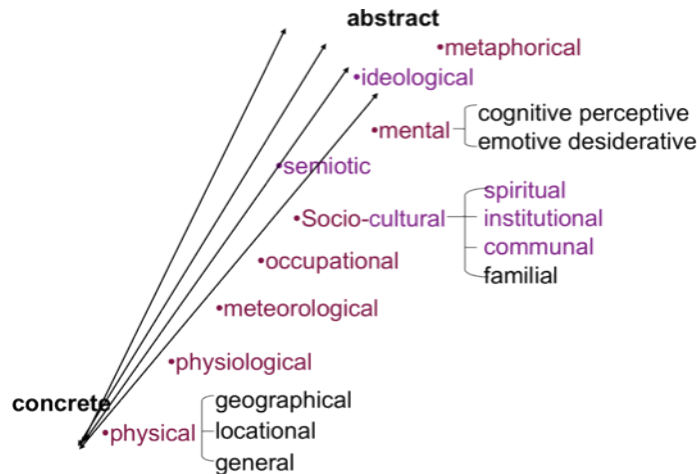


Figure 2: Map of circumstances of *place*

Despite some uncertainty about the ordering of places in Figure 2, some places are certainly more or less concrete than others. Thus, beginning at the concrete end (and as per Dreyfus & Jones, 2008), the first type of *place* is **physical**, which is subdivided into **geographical**, **locational** and **general**. **Geographical** refers to actual places that can be located on a map, for example:



I	was taken	to Darwin
Goal	Process: material	Circumstance: place: physical: geographical

(Example from Brian, 1996)

**Locational** places are those that can be located geographically but the geographical location has not been specified. For example:

They	dug	holes	in the sand*
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: place: physical: location

\*Examples taken from ARC corpus unless otherwise stated.

**General** places are physical places not tied to a geographical or locational *place*. For example:

They	wrapped	sandbags	around their boots
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: place: physical: general

The next relatively concrete *place* is **physiological**, which refers to places of the body. For example:

A lot of flies	flew	into my mouth
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place: physiological

**Meteorological** refers to locations of weather events. For example:

My father	was killed	in Cyclone Tracey	in 1974
Goal	Process: material	Circumstance: place: meteorological	Circumstance: time

(Brian, 1996)

**Occupational** places are those referring to employment. For example:

Women	were needed	in traditionally male jobs
Scope	Process: behavioural	Circumstance: place: occupational

The abstraction continues to develop at this point with **sociocultural** places, which are subdivided into **familial**, **communal**, **institutional** and **spiritual**. **Familial** refers to the social *place* of the family. For example:

I	was forcibly taken	from my family
Goal	Process: material	Circumstance: place: sociocultural: familial

(Brian, 1996)

**Communal** refers both specifically and generally to social units of community. For example:

We	are	in good company
Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute: circumstance (place: sociocultural: communal)

(Goldman, 1917)

**Institutional** refers to places to do with society's institutions such as the judiciary, education and government. For example:

Aborigines	should be	under the protection of the law
Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute: Circumstance (place: sociocultural: institutional)

(Pearson, 1996)

**Spiritual** places are places of religion and spirituality, such as:

In my religion	we	celebrate	the sabbath	on Saturdays
Circumstance: place: sociocultural: spiritual	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time

**Semiotic** places cover both the more concrete and the more abstract. Examples of more concrete semiotic places are things like *in a book*. More abstract semiotic places are such things as *evidence* in the following:

He	stated	in his evidence
Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance: place: semiotic

(Pearson, 1996)

From semiotic, we move to **mental** places, places of the mind, which, following Halliday (1994), we use the four transitivity categories of mental processes: **cognitive**, **perceptive**, **desiderative** and **emotive**.

**Cognitive** places are those to do with thinking and cognition. For example:

There is	no doubt	in my mind
Process: existential	Existent	Circumstance: place: mental: cognitive

(Pearson, 1996)

**Perceptive** places relate to the senses of perception, such as hearing and sight. For example:

It	is	firmly	in my sight
Carrier: possessive	Process: possession	Circumstance: manner	Circumstance: place: mental: perceptive

**Desiderative** places refer to places of desire, such as:

This dream	is	deeply	rooted	in the American dream*
Goal	Process ...	Circumstance: manner	...material	Circumstance: place: mental: desiderative

(King, 1963) (\*Also grammatical metaphor)

**Emotive** places are places to do with affect, such as:

The ANZACs	wanted to get involved	in all the excitement attached to this tragic war*
Actor+Senser	Process: mental+material	Circumstance: place: mental: motive

The next category is **ideological**, which refers to philosophical and ideological places, such as those 'isms' identified by (Martin, Maton et al. 2010) in the field of history. For example:

Poor	as	we	are	in democracy
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Attribute		Carrier	Process: relational	Circumstance: place: ideological
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(Kyi, 1995)

Finally, at the most abstract end of the cline we come to **metaphorical** places. Metaphorical places include places containing both lexical and grammatical metaphor, as well as metaphorical abstractions (after Painter et al, 2007). An example of a *place* with lexical metaphor is:

Let us	not wallow	in the valley of despair
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place: metaphoric (lexical)

(King, 1963)

An example of a *place* with grammatical metaphor is:

We	must not allow	our creative protest	to degenerate	into physical violence
Initiator	Process: causative	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place: metaphoric (grammatical)

(Kyi, 1995)

where the word *violence* is a nominalization of the quality *violent* from a clause like: *we must not become physically violent*.

While we have thus far been unable to systematically classify places at the abstract and metaphorical end of the cline, we have nevertheless observed, when applying this analysis to the texts, that there are patterns of occurrences of types of *place*. The next section therefore applies the circumstance of *place* analysis to three groups of texts. The first are three acclaimed picture books for young children: *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998), *Ziba came on a boat* (Lofthouse and Ingpen, 2007), and *Rose meets Mr Wintergarten* (Graham, 2004). The second is *Pilawuk* (Brian, 1996), which is aimed at for primary school aged children, and the third comprises the speeches introduced above. The speeches are studied in the senior secondary subject of English in NSW, Australia (New South Wales Board of Studies, 2000).

#### 4.1 Patternings of *place* in text

This section introduces the texts under analysis, reports on the types and patterns of *place* our analysis has identified, and considers the contribution of those places to the unfolding meanings in the texts.

*Voices in the Park* (Brown, 1998)

*Voices in the Park* tells of an encounter in a suburban park from the perspectives of the four different people involved: a mother and her son, and a father and his daughter. Not counting the title page, there are 30 pages of which 22 have the story written on them, a few lines at a time. The rest of the pages have pictures only. As to be expected in a children's book about going somewhere, there are numerous circumstances of *place*: 28 in total, an average of more than one per page of writing. Of these 28, 23 are physical: location. Six of these are *in/to/at the park*. The others relate to either more specific places in the park where the events take place, such as *on the slide*, *on the climbing frame*, *on the bandstand* or to the interactions that take place between characters such as *straight up to this lovely dog* and *to this boy*. Not surprisingly, texts written for young children frequently feature events and happenings that take place in environments with which they are familiar such as the house, the park and the shops. *Home* occurs as a circumstance of *place* just three

times; each time it is located significantly at the conclusion of a character's monologue, as if a coda to the events experienced in the park, marking a return to familiar domesticity. We have analysed *home* as sociocultural: familial, due to the fact that unlike 'house', which is simply a *place* in which things are housed, *home* in *Voices in the Park* conjures up different kinds of homes inflected with ideas of filial affection and restraint, social generosity and fearfulness, class privilege and struggle.

*Ziba came in a boat* (Lofthouse, 2007)

*Ziba came in a boat* describes the journey of a young female refugee and her family's journey in a boat to a hopefully safer country. Neither the country of origin nor the country of destination are named, thus while there are 18 circumstances of *place*, none are physical: geographical. All but two of the circumstances of *place* are concrete, with physical: locational places dominating, numbering 10 of the total 18. This means places that could be located geographically but are not predominate. A typical example of this is:

Gunfire	echoed	through the village.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place: locational

Thus the story tells us where things happened, but not in a way that could be tied to a geographical location – though we as readers might guess at that, and the pictures provide hints. The effects of this obfuscation of geographical location are the avoidance of identifying any particular peoples or conflicts and the amplification of the reader's sense of being 'without place'.

The other concrete circumstances of *place* are four physical: general, e.g. *in the hull*, and two physiological, e.g. *on her cheeks*. The text also has two more abstract circumstances of location: one mental: cognitive - *in her mind*, and one metaphoric of the grammatical kind, i.e. *warmth* in *to the warmth of the mud-brick house*, though this could also be understood as a combination of two meanings: the quality *warm* in the grammatical metaphor *warmth*, and the location of the mud-brick house. This combination of meanings is discussed below, but at this point it is sufficient to say that this shows the beginning of a shift towards more abstract places.

*Rose meets Mr Wintergarten* (Graham, 1993/2004)

*Rose meets Mr Wintergarten* is a story about Rose Summer and her family who move into a new house next door to an ill-humoured elderly man. The story tells how Rose and her mother defy the neighbourhood rumours about the old man and help liberate him from his isolation (and ill-humour). In this story, there are 19 circumstances of location, of which all are physical. Sixteen are locational, e.g. *over Mr Wintergarten's fence*, *in the street* and *next door*; two are general, e.g. *in her hankerchief* and one is geographical. The fact that most of these are locational reflects a concern with places of the home and neighbourhood, but being tied to a specific geographical location is not a concern of the story. It could be any neighbourhood, and thus the story has a universal appeal.

Our survey of these texts written for young children reveals that concrete physical *place* is the dominant setting selected. Despite the obvious grounding of experience in the material world, in books such as *Voices in the Park* and *Ziba came in a boat*, there are the beginnings of a move toward abstraction, for example in the use of 'home' as *place* invested with meanings of family and belonging.

*Pilawuk* (Brian, 1996)

*Pilawuk* is described as ‘an oral history written down’ (Brian, 1996) for readers in the middle primary school years. The writer’s intention is to explain the experience of the Stolen Generations<sup>2</sup> through an autobiographical recount (Martin & Rose, 2007 and 2008). In this sense it is one of a number of moving texts through which Indigenous Australians have sought to educate non-Indigenous Australians (see the ‘Bringing Them Home’ report Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, 1997). *Pilawuk* recounts the removal of her family from their lands, her separation from the family into the care of several foster homes, as well as her subsequent growth into agency and eventual reunion with her mother. As might be expected of a text concerned with displacement, circumstances of *place* dominate the text. Yet not all of these places are concrete locations as *Pilawuk*’s physical, social and cultural worlds intertwine in the telling of loss, struggle and reconciliation. Of the 72 clauses comprising the text, there are 25 circumstances of *place*, of which 16 construe physical places, six construe socio-cultural places and a few others construe meteorological and physiological places. Of the physical places represented in the text, nine are geographical places which depict an early life of being moved across landscape (*to Malak Malak country in the Daly River, to Adelaide, to Darwin*) while six are locational, as institutional life is recounted (*in tin dormitories, to the toilet block outside, at the mission, at Cabra College*). These distinctions are important because understanding how *place* and socio-cultural meanings are associated is critical to the writer’s purpose and we have endeavoured to capture the human feelings of belonging and affiliation through the categories of socio-cultural *place*. These are presented as more or less social and cultural distance; for example, we recognize that socio-cultural: spiritual place (*from our country*) represents the deeply spiritual bonds of first peoples with country and history. We propose a further subcategory of communal place (*from the Ngangiwumerri people*) to capture the distinction between belonging to country and belonging to people, although we recognize links between country and people. Socio-cultural: familial circumstances (*from my family, from their families, the second family*) represent the often more intimate and ‘local’ unit of immediate and extended family. While socio-cultural: institutional (*from the mission*) represents a *place* with less emotional and spiritual investment, the sense of comfort from group membership described by *Pilawuk* suggests that it is important to recognize this category. In *Pilawuk*, of these socioculturally oriented categories, familial *place* is the most frequently occurring as the fracturing and reconstruction of the family unit bears testament to institutional intervention and human resilience.

Our initial analysis of the three picture books and *Pilawuk* suggests that there is indeed an ontogenetic dimension to the occurrence of different circumstances of *place* in texts selected for use with learners. The literary picture book and the autobiographical recount are examples of genres (Martin & Rose, 2008), which typically situate events in physical places. In the picture books, these are places that do not need to be named geographically to make their meanings; the places are the recognizable suburban landscape of the park, and home, or of the movement across the water in the quest to find a new home. In contrast to this, the most common physical *place* in *Pilawuk* is geographical, as this is a story deeply connected to actual places – as an oral history, we would expect actual locations. Additionally, *Pilawuk* features a greater proportion of abstract circumstances of *place*, mostly socio-cultural,

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<sup>2</sup> This term refers to the generations of Indigenous Australian children removed from their families by official institutions during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

continuing the march toward abstraction in later years of schooling. The relative proportions of different types of circumstances of *place* occurring in the texts written for young people are represented in the table below:

Location: place		Voices		Ziba		Rose		Pilawuk	
Physical	geographical	0						9	36%
	locational	23	83%	10	62%	16	88%	6	24%
	general	2	7%	4	25%	2	12%	1	4%
Physiological		0						1	4%
Meteorological		0						1	4%
Occupational		0						0	
Socio-cultural	spiritual	0						1	4%
	familial	3	10%					4	16%
	communal	0						1	4%
	institutional	0						1	4%
semiotic		0						0	
mental	cognitive	0		1	6.25%			0	
	emotive	0						0	
Ideological		0						0	
metaphorical		0		1	6.25%			0	

**Table 4: Types of circumstances of *place* in children's books**

In contrast to the stories of childhood, the speeches from senior secondary school represent instances of expository genres (Martin & Rose, 2008). They too are concerned with human diversity and the struggle for justice. The speeches are chosen for inclusion in the senior secondary curriculum because of their historical and political value and as examples of the art of rhetoric. Howie (2007) argues that these speeches were selected because they are illustrative of the age of Enlightenment and its ideals of liberty, egalitarianism and fraternity. The anthology contains 12 speeches representing a period of time from 63BC to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (New South Wales Board of Studies, 2000).

As the arguments in the speeches are woven from evidence, reasoning and generalization, the grammatical patterns through which these are realized become more complex. Thus, unlike the children's texts, these texts have layers of embedding so that spatial meanings are found downranked into a variety of locations. These are included within:

the qualifier of the nominal group within a participant

<i>Many of my male colleagues [[who have suffered imprisonment for their part in the democracy movement]]</i>	<i>have spoken</i>	<i>of the great debt of gratitude they owe their womenfolk ....</i>
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Behaver	Process: behavioural	Circumstance: matter
<i>in the democracy movement</i>		
Cir: location: place		

(Kyi, 1995)

the qualifier of a circumstance of time within a participant

<i>My own experience during the years I have been engaged in the democracy movement in Burma</i>	<i>has convinced</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>of the need to emphasize the positive aspects of tolerance.</i>
Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver	Circumstance: matter
in the democracy movement in Burma			
Cir: location: place			

(Kyi, 1995)

and within projected clauses:

Who	could doubt	that there is still much to revise in the story of the European conquest of North and South America that we inherited?
Senser	Process: cognitive	Phenomenon
There	Is	Still much to revise in the story of the European conquest of North and South America that we inherited?
	Process: existential	Existent
		in the story of the European conquest of North and South America that we inherited?
		Cir: location: place

(Hughes cited in Pearson, 1996)

Not only do the speeches feature circumstances of *place* in more grammatically complicated structures, they present new realms of meaning. Being about ideals, the speeches feature very different kinds of circumstances than those found in the texts written for younger readers. The speakers and writers of the speeches craft texts that are concerned with matters outside of the material, observable worlds represented in the picture books. Instead they construe abstract worlds of ideas and values. Our cline from concrete to abstract may be understood as a cline of ‘more or less materiality’ where the most concrete physical circumstances represent embodied experience of *place* with other circumstances of *place* labeled and arranged according to decreasing embodiment and increasing symbolic experience construed. The worlds of the speeches use ideas, reasons, consequences and exhortations to construe ‘virtual, text-based’ realities (Hasan, 2001) that are not available to be perceived with human senses. In these speeches we have found many types of abstract and metaphoric places. These include what have been called ‘metaphorical abstractions’ (Painter, Derewianka et al) e.g. *in situations of conflict* in the following clause:

it	is	women and children [[who have always suffered most]]	<b>in situations of conflict</b>
Carrier	Pro: rel	Attribute	Circumstance: location: place: metaphorical abstraction

In addition to the grammatical metaphor described earlier, the speeches also feature lexical metaphors, such as:

Let	us	not wallow	<b>in the valley of despair</b>
Pro...	Actor	...cess: material	Circumstance: location: place: lexical metaphor

However, we have found that there has been no comprehensive work done on the classification of abstractness, as it were, though the classification of entities offered by Martin & Rose (2007) goes some way into beginning this comprehensive treatment of abstraction, as noted above.

While we have not yet found a definitive way to classify the kinds of abstract places found in the speeches, we can still nevertheless make observations about their patternings. The shift into more abstract circumstances of *place* observed in the speeches illuminates the different types of abstractions that occur as places, the kinds of abstract places favoured by some orators over others. To illustrate these points, we have selected two speeches for further discussion. The first speech is an address by Australian Aboriginal intellectual and activist Noel Pearson made at the University of Western Sydney on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1996. The second is a speech delivered via video to the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995 by detainee and leader of the Burmese democracy movement Aung San Suu Kyi (1995). The following table indicates the distribution of the different categories of *place* according to our descriptions.

Location: place		An Australian History for us all ( Pearson)		Beijing Address (Aung Sun Suu Ki	
Physical	geographical	5	7%	4	10%
	locational	5	7%	7	17%
	general	0	0%	1	2.5%
Physiological		0	0%	1	2.5%
Meteorological		0	0%	0	0%
Occupational		0	0%	0	0%
Socio-cultural	spiritual	0	0%	0	0%
	familial	2	2.9%	3	7.2%
	communal	5	7%	0	0%
	institutional	12	16.9%	3	7.2%
semiotic		18	25.4%	1	2.5%
mental	Cognitive	3	4.3%	1	2.5%
	emotive	0	0%	0	0%
ideological		0	0%	0	0%
metaphorical		21	29.5%	20	48.6%
TOTAL		71	100%	42	100%

**Table 5: types of circumstance of *place* in two speeches**

We will initially illustrate these categories with examples from Pearson's speech 'An Australian history for us all'. It was delivered at a tumultuous time in Australian history. A new conservative Australian government led by Prime Minister John Howard was set to 'water down' the effects of the 1992 High Court of Australia decision (known as Mabo after one of the plaintiffs Eddie Mabo) which promised land justice for Indigenous Australians and removed the principle of Terra Nullius from Australian law. Just a few days earlier Prime Minister Howard had argued publically that Australian history was erroneously plagued by middle-class guilt about relations with Indigenous Australians, throwing his support behind a conservative



historian's dismissal of the 'black armband view of history'. At the same time, a popular support for the right-wing One Nation Party was building in Australia generally. Pearson's speech demolishes the conservative line of argument by countering with a carefully constructed historiography of his own. He argues instead for a distinction between personal guilt and 'collective consciousness and conscience that encompasses a responsibility for the present and future, and the past', branding Howard's position as anti-intellectual. As such, the speech is an example of a Challenge, generically displaying the staging of Orientation ^ Position ^ Rebuttal (Martin & Rose, 2008:137). In the following section we examine each of these stages for the patterning of categories of *place* and argue that there is a distinct logogenetic shaping to the occurrences of different categories.

### **Extract 1: Orientation**

Chancellor, distinguished guests. It is my honour to have been invited to speak this evening on some questions about Australian history that are presently at a fundamental issue in this country.

I have the great privilege to have been taught history at the University of Sydney by Professor Schreuder, who was for me inspirational and I hope that the University of Western Sydney has shared that pleasure. I was therefore delighted to accept his invitation, but alas I cannot promise my teacher's rigour. I come only with some observations about how our popular understanding of the colonial past is central to the moral and political turbulence we are still grappling with as Australians.

The Orientation stage of Pearson's text introduces the topic for the speech and modestly establishes his credentials. Pearson acknowledges the purview of his speech and the setting for its delivery (the academy) in the two circumstances of *place* that occur in this brief stage of seven clauses; these are *in this country* (physical: geographical) and *at the University of Sydney* (socio-cultural: institutional).

### **Extract 2: Position**

I fear however that I am in danger of indulging in agonizing navel-gazing about who we are and conducting what Prime Minister John Howard calls the perpetual seminar for elite opinion about our national identity. I will nevertheless persevere....

Space here prevents us from reproducing more than the opening lines of the Position stage; in its entirety, it is sixteen clauses in length. In the above extract, Pearson introduces the conservative position wryly. He continues to carefully source the position to the Prime Minister's most recent public appearances through circumstances of *place*: semiotic such as *In his Sir Robert Menzies Lecture* and *on the John Laws radio program*. The extent of its social impact are construed in several abstract circumstances of *place* e.g. *in the Australian community* (socio-cultural: community), *in our national government* and *upon Australians* (social-cultural: institutional).

### **Extract 3: Rebuttal**

There is no doubt in my mind that the Prime Minister's characterization of the historiography that has developed over the past twenty-five years, and the particularly lively discourse in the wake of the High Court's decision in the Mabo Case, which judgement canvassed the legal and moral implications of this history, is a characterization that resonates with the instincts and feelings of ordinary Australians. ....

Pearson commences his lengthy Rebuttal (215 clauses) by acknowledging that some of PM Howard's criticisms will resonate with non-Indigenous Australians. But from that point the speech moves into a series of phases which argue the importance and even necessity of historical revision and pay tribute to the contributions of

Australian historians such as Henry Reynolds and of Aboriginal people such as Pilawuk who have contributed their personal oral histories. We have identified a concomitant escalation in the number of circumstances of place: semiotic in these phases as Pearson draws on his extensive knowledge of history to construct his case. Examples include *in the writing and indeed teaching of Australian history, in what I consider to be a truly masterpiece lecture series for the Boyer, from the histories, in his Enid Lyons Memorial Lecture, in my Hancock memorial lecture and in the matter*. Partway through his rebuttal and having established an evidential base, Pearson shifts from emphasising the past to emphasising the present, arguing that what is done now is more important than attributing blame and guilt about the past. This shift coincides with an increased number of circumstances of metaphorical *place*; most common being grammatical metaphors such as *in the achievements of the past, in my experience, from injury, from oppression, under the protection of the law*.

In the closing phases of the speech, Pearson argues for an end to the anti-intellectualism of the existing milieu. He sheets home blame to the media through a series of circumstances of *place* that are semiotic but, unlike the earlier semiotic places of historical sources, these are locations of popular semiosis (e.g. *on the evening news grabs, on the radio airwaves*). Pearson concludes with an appeal to a more generous collective consciousness which coincides with several circumstances of place: sociocultural: community (*upon the Australian people and in our community*). Interestingly, Pearson's final selection for circumstance is a return to the speech beginning and the site of contestation; that is, place: geographical (*in this country*).

Space also prevents us from presenting our analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi's (1995) speech in detail, however we have found similar logogenetic patternings in choices of spatial meaning. The speech's purpose is to argue for the increased participation of women in governance at all levels around the globe. In the 42 circumstances of *place* in the text, a number of these are locational: geographical (*in our world, in my country, across our borders, on our planet*) as the speaker carefully makes connections between Burma and the outside world for her video audience of women from around the world. Almost half of the circumstances of *place* are metaphorical. These twenty metaphorical places include 8 lexical metaphors (*within the heart of the family, outside the spheres of officialdom*), 7 grammatical metaphors (*in the governance of the country, within the democratic movement*) and 5 metaphorical abstractions (*in situations of conflict*). Like Pearson's speech, those circumstances having to do with concrete physical *place* tend to cluster in the opening and closing stages of the speech while the metaphorical circumstances occur in the argument stages as she develops her points. We suggest that such rhetorical patterning may be common in many persuasive texts as their speakers and writers locate their ideas and arguments in relation to events in the physical worlds of their listeners' and readers' experience.

#### **4.2 Semantic 'pile-up'**

Our analysis has shown that abstractions in circumstances of *place* seem to co-occur and accumulate meaning in more abstract texts, such as the speeches. This pile-up of spatial abstractions can be seen in the extract below from Aung Sun Suu Kyi's speech:

The watchfulness and active cooperation of organizations *outside the spheres of officialdom* are necessary to ensure the four essential components of the human development paradigm...

In the abstract *place* of ‘the spheres of officialdom’ there is both a lexical metaphor (spheres) and grammatical metaphor (officialdom). The extract from Pearson’s text below also features this combination.

In conclusion, what substance is there in *the new emphasis* on our colonial history that Prime Minister Howard and his Minister [for Aboriginal Affairs] are urging *in the crusade* against the black armbands and their alleged obsession with guilt? The answer is nothing at all.

Such intensity of abstraction presents challenges for our learner readers. Where abstractions accumulate, readers have to be able to unpack the individual layers of meaning in the abstractions and metaphors, reading multiple ones at once. Maton’s (2011:66) construct of semantic density is useful in understanding the effect of multiple abstractions in texts. Semantic density refers to “the degree to which meaning is condensed within symbols (terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, etc)”. In Maton’s terms, this represents an increase in semantic density, and this increase occurs across two dimensions. The first is the increase in density due to the sheer increase in number of abstractions, and the second is due to the increase in type of abstraction. Being able to unpack the semantic density in reading, and then repack it in writing are important skills students need to master to be successful in the later years of schooling.

## 5 Conclusion

In summary, our analysis suggests that learner readers encounter increasingly abstract meanings construed as circumstances of *place*. They are required to recognise complex meanings represented as *place*. At times places will be concrete, and sometimes infused with human feelings; at other times entirely virtual realities will be construed as physical *place*. Further, as circumstances of *place* become increasingly abstract, it seems the frequency in abstraction also increases, thus the challenges of reading are multiplied, and so too are the demands on our linguistic and pedagogic tools.

In conclusion, we have argued in this paper that a more delicate classification system for circumstances of *place* is necessary if we want to be able to capture the meanings bound up in the kinds of places that are construed in texts. We have tried to demonstrate this by using texts that have particular sets of spatial meanings that can only be got at through a deeper analysis of circumstance of *place*. We have more finely tuned our 2008 classification of *place* to include some new categories and to expand others, e.g. we have problematised the category of semiotic abstraction which, on the one hand, can be quite concrete, such as “in a book” and on the other hand, can be more abstract, such as “in a lecture”.

Additionally, in this paper we have tried to present an ontogenetic dimension to the research to show how spatial meanings reflect particular concerns and meaning realms of different texts. That is, at the one end of childhood, the concerns are focused around concrete physical locations, but also include the more abstract socio-

cultural places of family and home. At the other end, in the senior secondary speeches, we find a multiplicity of places, with particular focus on the abstract and metaphoric. Whilst we have been able to name the more abstract types of location, we have not yet been able to systematically classify them. Nevertheless, we have been able to show how they pattern in particular ways across a text logogenetically, mapping onto particular stages.

It is anticipated that further research will be conducted to both continue to attempt to classify the abstract places and to look at how these abstract places co-occur with other abstractions found in texts. Such a project continues an important tradition of linguistic and educational collaboration. Teaching reading is important labour and requires the most precise tools available so that we might render the culture – its present and future, and its past - more visible to learner-readers.

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#### Abstract

This paper concerns more delicate descriptions of discursive construals of *place*. Specifically, it argues for descriptions of further delicacy within the category of circumstance of *place*, within the system of Transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) realising the register variable of Field. Circumstances of *place* have been found to contain a rich array of meaning yet have also been difficult for researchers to classify (Dreyfus & Jones, 2008). This paper presents our work to classify circumstances of *place* from most concrete to most abstract in order to show how further levels of delicacy are useful both for the analyst as well as for teachers and students engaged in close readings of texts.

**Key terms:** circumstantiation, transitivity, semantics, grammar, spatial meaning