CHAPTER 8
LINGUISTIC ORDERS

The socially and psychologically complex interaction between writer and reader is, however, carried out through the thin line of words transmitted on the page. From a writer's point of view the task, is, as Hemingway famously said, "getting the words right" (Hemingway, 1958). Words are the material we work with, what we inscribe to create our meanings and influence the readers. When we are done writing, they are what remain on the page for others to see.

Multimedia technologies, of course, do now extend the resources which can be mobilized on the page, but still language remains central to the craft of writing. While some of the same issues of communication at a distance discussed here may be applicable to them and their integration with the written word also pose important issues, I will not attempt to subsume these other communicative arts into principles developed for writing, and I leave the analysis and theory of multimodal representation to others.

Since words are essential to the craft of writing, it should be no surprise that the disciplines of language, written signs, language order, and language manipulation have been central to writing practice and pedagogy. Grammars, handbooks, dictionaries, thesauri, books of sentence and genre models, vocabulary builders, and exercise books have emerged in the last few centuries as the practice of writing spread and became organized into larger systems of influence through schooling and printing. Language reference books have become the companions of writers and editors. Reference books create a common coin of mutual understanding and easy interchange, disciplining the idiosyncrasy of each of our language choices and expanding the repertoire of communicative tools and expressive potential. It is not an accident that young writers become fascinated by books of phrases and figures, stylebooks, grammars, and dictionaries of their own and other languages. Nor is it surprising that parodies highlight the lexicon and structure of different genres and styles. Nonetheless, these reminders and regulators of the linguistic order often evoke deep ambivalence in writers. Regularity and commonality may seem the enemies of creativity, meaning, and authenticity. They remind us of the conventional against which we create the particular, unique, and urgent within our texts. Attention to the tools rather than the message seems to detract from the communicative impulse. Resorting to the familiar invites cursory reading and rapid categorization rather than immersive engagement. Further, the regulated orders and disciplines of language necessary for mutual understanding suggest

social histories of class, power, hierarchies, orthodoxies, and other forces that favor "proper" language and restrict speaking rights to those already privileged. Stigmatizing the language of others as disorderly and improper provides a ready way to discount discomforting meanings, affiliations, and actions.

This tension between order and novelty is necessary and productive for writing as we must struggle with our tools to construct the words that will capture our meaning impulses and open the minds of our readers to those feelings, ideas, and actions we wish to evoke. We must work with a medium others understand, but we must evoke a freshness of attention to make meaning come alive to activate the spirit at rest. If the reader is already in action we must then speak the common language with an uncommon relevance. Such tensions excite linguistic creativity to push the boundaries of the sayable, ever inventing fresh tricks to use what we have in new ways, to propose new language by analogy and metaphor, to borrow and transfer from one domain to another. Human cleverness and responsiveness to situations push language to its limits. Insofar as we articulate orders to facilitate and regulate language use, others will use that order for reflective creativity, using the very terms of order to violate and transcend. The very articulation of an order creates a new abstracted position from which to play and innovate.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ORDERLINESS OF LANGUAGE

It is, paradoxically, both impossible and easy to overstate the importance of the orderliness of language in the emergence of modern forms of human life. Language is entwined with almost all we do and how we think about what we do. Written language has then entwined those actions and thoughts into larger enduring sets of representations and meanings spread across broader and more distant groups of peoples. Language and its progeny writing provide the means to construct cooperations, meanings, knowledge, and the interactional space to enculturate youth into the content and practices of interaction. Thus the orders of language order human relations, belief, and knowledge while focusing the processes and practices by which we commune with each other. The orders of language can be seen as infrastructural to human community and consciousness and, therefore, important to understand for strategic reflective choice making for enlisting cooperation, creating knowledge, and refining thought. How then can we overstate the importance of how the orders of language pervade human life?

Yet, this importance may delude us to believing that language contains all thought, experience, meaning and knowledge of the world—that all is to be

found in language. We are tempted by the search for universally wise texts and Borgesian libraries that inscribe all of knowledge and will answer all questions we may have and all questions yet to be asked. Indeed, within fundamentalist communities, belief in the universality and infallibility of one or another sacred scripture precondition stances towards the textual world of secular knowledge. Nonetheless, language is not all of life and does not preexist life. Sophisticated non-human biological and social creatures without language have experiences, cooperate, and share attention and orientation toward their environments (see for example, Johnson & Karin-D'Arcy's 2006 and Tomasello's 2006 reviews of non-human co-orientation). Further, we attend to, consciously respond to, and even mutually co-orient to many aspects of our experience without attempting to express them in language or inscribe them in our books. Even less linguistically articulated are those aspects of our experience we react to unconsciously. And even those things humans cast into language only get their meaning if people engaged in action attend to and make sense of the linguistic representation.

Spoken language is nothing in itself except disturbed air and written language is nothing except dark pigment on wood pulp or electrons on a display. Those traces would not be there unless people intentionally created them and invested them with meaning. In this respect whenever we consider language and its orders, written or spoken, as autonomous and meaningful in themselves without considering how those orders are understood, developed, and used in practice by human beings in situations, we are overstating the force of language orders. We can overstate the importance of language if we claim it as absolute, autonomous, and determinative.

In another way, it is very easy to understate the importance of the orderliness of language and written language, not noticing how infrastructural they are for all we do. Language and its orders are so pervasive they become invisible, lost within the activities themselves. We think thoughts without wondering about the language that expresses the thought, let alone about how the particulars of our language and its ordering principles prompt, constrain, and focus thoughts and actions. We think about our knowledge without questioning the material out of which it is made as the amateur appreciator of sculpture might not notice or think about the stone, its properties and the chisel marks. We are so engaged in the actions enabled by language we may not even notice the way language shapes forms and guides those actions. Though lawyers and economists spend much of their days processing and producing texts, they will likely say they are arguing the law or making economic projections rather than reading or writing. Nor are they likely to reflect the way the formulas of their language create the means of making the expressible thoughts of their field. Likewise, in our

everyday activities, all of us will likely say we are shopping rather than writing shopping lists, reading packages and labels, and mentally calculating costs.

Yet again, it is difficult in another everyday way to forget prescriptive orders of language, as we are constantly being held to norms of language. As children we are instructed and corrected by teachers, parents, and other adults. As adults we are constantly held accountable for speaking and writing the "right" way, whether we are being held accountable to status dialects and prescriptive standards of edited prose or to affiliational social and cultural dialects.

So our difficulty is to develop a balanced view of linguistic orders that respects their tremendous power in creating common understanding while still unlocking the potential for more knowledgeable, reflective, skillful, critical, creative practice that participates in the contingent and evolving nature of language.

CREATING ORDERLINESS OF LANGUAGE

Literate interaction is transacted over the page, on the computer screen, and on the inscribed surface where the writer places words for readers to find them and engage with in the kinds of social and cognitive work discussed in the prior chapters. Yet the order we create in each textually-mediated interaction is not a spontaneous assemblage of newly created parts. It depends on the order of inscription symbols that has developed over time for each language. This written code typically indexes a related spoken language that is often (but not always) familiar to the user; however, this written code also then develops characteristics diverging from the spoken language. The independence of the written language from the spoken is indicated by such obvious logographic features as conventions of spacing and punctuation, but also by such subtle features as non-phonetic spelling indicating word histories or semantic relations, and syntaxes only decipherable on the page and not by ear (Harris, 2000).

The order of words we create in each utterance depends on communally shared orders of words available for our use and principles and practices for assembling them in ways intelligible to others (for historically grounded accounts of the emergence of linguistic patterns, see Bybee, 2010; Hopper & Traugott). The need for mutual intelligibility puts pressure towards normalization. Patterning allows us to create more variety with fewer linguistic elements and allows combinations that are easier to understand, in contrast to using random variation with no regularities to aid formation and interpretation. The greater familiarity and depth of knowledge a writer has with the language or languages shared with the readers, the more resources the writer has at hand, the larger set

of choices, and likely the greater ability to reflect, compare, and choose among options. Linguistics, philology, and lexicography have taught us much about the resources we have available and the logics by which these resources can be organized. The knowledge they have made available forms a useful part of the education of each writer, revealing a deeply subtle and delicate instrument of expression.

Yet the centrality of written symbols and language as the medium of written communication may mislead people to mistake knowledge of the medium to be the whole craft of writing—leaving all else to mysteries of artistic genius. Such an approach can lead to two dialectically opposed forms of fetishism—of unregulated imaginative genius or of obsessive rule-seeking. Both forms of fetishism detach language production from the social processes that bring language into being and vivify its use. With genius alone we have only the privacy of the individual imagination as a motivating source and an organizing power with no sense of the interpersonal force of language. With regulation alone we have only knowledge of the tools of language, without a strategic sense of when, where, and why to use them. We only have collections to no purpose.

The sources of the orderliness of language have been attributed to the sacred origins of language, the nature of language, the nature of human sound production and reception, the nature of the mind that produces and understands language, the biology of breath and vocal production, the nature of inscription systems, the social processes that create social cohesion and alignment, historical accidents, and the historical production of regulatory texts and institutions (often associated with schooling, publication, and record keeping). In fact, speculation over the nature and origins of language and the attempt to understand the orderliness of language are some of the earliest forms of knowledge fostered by literacy, as written language presented puzzles of how best to accurately inscribe the spoken language, how to speak accurately what has been written; further, written language provided a stable object to collect, organize and study. Writing language down provides the opportunity and need to discover and regulate its orders. Early uses of writing for government and financial record keeping created exigency for orderliness and regularity. The early use of writing in transcribing the divine word provided exigency for accuracy of transcription and oral performance as well as interpretation (Bazerman & Rogers, 2008a, 2008b; Prior & Lunsford, 2008).

While no definitive, fully-evidenced story has emerged concerning the origin of language and the orderliness of language, it seems likely to occur at the intersection of physiological, cognitive, sociological, linguistic, and historical processes, for each seem to present a strong prima facie case for influence. Spoken language necessarily occurs within the physiological limits of human

voice production and control along with aural discrimination. The palette of spoken language follows the volume and pitch range of our production and reception. Similarly, the typical size and differences of written characters matches our visual discrimination at about an arm length and the fine motor control of writing implements at the same arm length. Our cognitive processes of memory, categorization, and selection in the moment of use seem to ensure that we will impose order on language. Sociological processes of creating co-alignment, mutual understanding, and group cohesion would strongly suggest that orderliness, local standardization, and typification would emerge out of the need to be understood by others. We would not expect it to be any different: since spoken and written language were developed by humans, it is reasonable to expect that the media of expression would match our physiological, biological, psychological, and social capacities, and would carry out functions that would engage all these capacities.

KEEPING LANGUAGE ORDERLY:
HOUSEKEEPING AND PRESCRIPTION

Much of the development of language is lost in pre-recorded time (writing of course is the key instrument for making a record of time). Yet literacy has influenced the need and opportunity for orderliness and regulation. The emergence of literacy had an effect on gathering and organizing what we know, which in turn had a regulatory effect on future productions. Print and the broader circulation of texts extended the need for greater regularity. The association of language with nation states and the rise of education systems based on standardized literate languages led to further ordering of language forms, training of users, and regulation of practices. The historical emergence of regulatory texts, such as grammar books and dictionaries, became essential tools of editorial, educational, and social prestige processes, providing strong means for language codification. All these ordering forces will be embodied in the received language, there for us to discover and make sense of as we grow up.

Without conscious ordering and various social mechanisms for maintaining consistent order, language, both spoken and written, tends to evolve within generations, perhaps faster. Consider how rapidly vulgar Latin in creolization with other languages formed the varieties of Romance languages—each of which has its own pull of differentiating dialects that have persisted despite national political and educational regulation, such as we see in the Spain where not only the Gallic Catalonian resists Castilian hegemony, but Galician sits both geographically and linguistically between Portugal and France (which

have each centralized their own dialectical Romance varieties under national and educational regulation). Asturian, Leonese, and Aragonese and others also maintain some distinctive linguistic status. Even the written and learned Medieval Latin rapidly evolved in spelling, grammar, and vocabulary (following the transformations of dialect) until regularization to classic norms was enforced through schooling in the Renaissance.

Prescriptive normalization has been especially intense for writing in the last few centuries, supported through reference books, school books, school practices, national linguistic academies, publishing and copy-editing standards, broad circulation of documents, and other devices. The force of this prescriptivism is troubling to a scientific linguistic point of view on several grounds. Since the time of Saussure (1916/1983) and Bloomfield (1914) linguistics has adopted a descriptive rather than a prescriptive stance, to reflect actual uses. Second, following Bloomfield, linguistics has taken spoken language as its primary data, seeing the spoken as more natural. Third, following Saussure, linguistics has largely (though not exclusively, particularly recently) pursued synchronic orders, removed from particular time and particular instances of use. Nonetheless, the process of prescriptive ordering is a deeply historical one, with formation of institutions to influence historical processes (often to resist historical change) in order to regulate uses, particularly since the advent of writing.

Writing in itself brings systematicity and regulation in the order of signs used to transcribe language, as has been studied by numerous scholars, starting with Gelb (1952) and more recently Daniels & Bright (1996) and Coulmas (1996). Scholarship on language systems highlights the differences in principles and form by which language has been transcribed from iconographic and hieroglyphic to syllabic and alphabetic. We can see the very impulse towards creating language studies as a communal attempt to make orderly sense of the rich and expanding resources of language. Most of the history of such inquiries has something of a housekeeping impulse, whether accompanied by the prescriptivist fist of social authority and sanctions or the velvet glove of the helping hand. Even purely descriptive linguistics as practiced in the last century (adopting a hands-off orientation that requires substantial training in professional objectivity) still relies on a belief that the order is there to be found, and that discovering and articulating the order that is already there in nature can help us learn, preserve, and understand the dynamics of the language. Despite the descriptivist stance of most theoretical linguistics, we still find regulatory, normalizing, or even prescriptive grammars, orthographies, and dictionaries remaining at the heart of our educational, editing, and professional writing practices (even to the point of now being embedded in the software by which we now typically write). Language is too large and complex for us not to make

order of for our own use and to facilitate group communication. If language production appears frequently as fully spontaneous, it is only because we have internalized so much of the order that we can deploy it skillfully and rapidly in response to situations we perceive ourselves to be in.

LEARNING TRANSCRIPTION

The richness and complexity of language presents an organizational problem for the language learner, as the child must make sense of all the phonological, prosodic, interactional, lexical, and semantic information in her ambient linguistic environment and coordinate that with her own means of production, whether the child is aided by a specific neurobiological language device as proposed by Chomsky (1965) or the child's brain creates emergent orders in the interaction with learning as argued by Bates and Goodman (1997 and 1999). Learning written language also requires coming to terms with systems built on histories and practices of regulation and prescription. Even as children become aware of the social functions of writing they also are introduced to the ordered symbols of their cultural legacy. In alphabetic languages this is taught through devices such as the alphabet song, alphabet bestiaries, and normative phonics (even though the letters may have only a loose approximation for the phonetics of the language being transcribed.) These orders as well are observable in the ambient communicative universe, as children experiment with form as a means of expression.

Studies of emergent literacy present complex stories of children attempting to make sense of, learn, and deploy the literate behaviors they see around them, with highly particular, local, idiosyncratic personal constructions by children embedded in local circumstances, but which also triangulate towards normalized uses of culturally ambient forms (Rowe, 2009). Letter formation and invented spelling at first are only loose approximations to the standard, for example, but over time normalize through a combination of personal regulation to achieve observed forms and external regulation of schooling and correction by adults, peers, and software (Sharer & Zutell, 2003). Similarly the available orders of syntax and morphology become to varying degrees normalized, particularly as associated with advancement through schooling and school tasks. Schoolbooks, self-help books, and other guides introduce and reinforce forms and practices. Similarly students and other writers in development are introduced and normalized to the genres that form the repertoire of the school, the workplace, and social life—each with their separate methods of induction, modeling, and correction.

For people writing in alphabetic and syllabic languages where the symbols are limited and abstracted from meaning units such as words, these principles are imbibed early in their training and are not necessarily a matter of reflection or subtle expressive choice (except when perhaps defamiliarized as in some poetic contexts or writing in dialects). Depending on the language and the instability of the phonetic correspondences, alphabetic transcription may be variously problematic for literacy learners, but is usually resolved by primary school years. Spelling may also contain etymological information as well as morphological features tied to grammar and syntactical issues. These may be called to students' attention as they are learning more advanced spellings and are being held accountable for grammatical correctness. Even when moving between two languages using an alphabetic system with Roman characters, there are challenges of phonetic mapping and spelling—issues highlighted for example, when singers must perform scores in different languages. In some consonantal syllabic languages without vowel pointing (such as dialects of mid-Eastern languages), understanding and using the transcription system properly is intertwined with lexical, morphological, and syntactic issues as well as meaning, such that a high level of expertise is necessary for accurate transcription and reading. Further, in languages which have complex mixtures of iconic, pronunciation, and disambiguation elements in the characters, such as Chinese, the study of characters and their differentiation remains a complex concern throughout one's literate life, intertwined with extended vocabularies, meaning potentials, allusions, and fresh combinations. So in choosing or forming a character a writer may be invoking cultural histories, textual resonances, regional differences, or meaning associations of the sort that in other languages occur at the word, phrasal, and intertextual levels. So while in some languages the orderliness of the writing (or character) system is relatively unproblematic and thus usually not foregrounded, in others distinctions within the transcription system remain important carriers of meaning and thus call for conscious attention.

This learning of the transcriptional orders of language goes hand in hand with developments of visual perception and discrimination, as well as motor and attentional control, for both reception and production. Eyes must learn to focus on small symbols with minor stroke differences, and these must be perceived (at least in alphabetic, consonantal, and syllabic languages) as sound equivalents. Fingers must come under control in coordination with visual feedback and productive intentions to produce letters and words. Dots and punctuation marks must be noticed and seen as worthy of attention in production and reception, along with morphological markers. Such issues as placement on page, genre markers of format, and sustained attention for multi-clausal statements

and logical relations, continue throughout one's maturation as a writer, as one encounters new forms of suspended sentence, appositional phrases, sentence rhythm, rhetorical figures, and the other elements we associate with advanced style. Deficits caused by injury and aging may also require adjustment of the most basic regularized motor production skills and visual recognition, as well as to the more advanced cognitive skills necessary for attending to larger organizational structures.

WORDS AND LEXICAL ORDERS

It is seductive to imagine that the lexicon of any language, in the manner Saussure proposes, is an orderly system of differentiations of paired or neighboring terms. In pursuit of this vision, various language reformers have proposed creating more orderly and univocal vocabularies for a language, where each signifier designates a unique signified and each signified has a unique term; further, in some systems such as Bishop Wilkin's (1668) system of real characters only things he considers to be true are designated signifiers and no signifiers are afforded anything that might be considered phantasmagorical. For some languages, national academies and other regulators attempt to keep the vocabulary orderly and spelling constant in the face of neologisms and incursions from dialects or other languages. They also may attempt to protect signifier-signified relations from ambiguity and duplication. These academies have their origin in the Florentine Accademia della Crusca, founded in 1582, which provided the model of the Académie française founded in 1635. The *Vocabolario della Crusca* first published in 1612 was one of the earliest national dictionaries and current editions still maintain an authoritative role in defining the official language, as does the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (first published in 1694). In 2012 there were over 85 such bodies around the world, many of them having official government status (List of Language Regulators, 2012).

Even in officially unregulated languages like English, dictionaries provide censuses of the common stock of language. English has no single official dictionary, but since Samuel Johnson created his *A Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755, several competing dictionaries have shared authority for British and American versions of this language. Although most contemporary lexicographers consider themselves to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, the dictionaries they produce limit and focus meanings, establish authoritative spellings, and slow the adoption of neologisms. Dictionaries put some order into the welter of social, historical uses and roots of words, variations of spellings,

multiple meanings of words, and relationships of words bearing having related referents. In the face of the fecundity of language extending processes, they create logical distinctions among words, and put order in the complexity of features and dynamics associated with words. The more authoritative of these dictionaries are used to regulate print and educational contexts, and copy editors, teachers, examiners, and similar language guardians have the task of enforcing not only words, but spelling and grammatical forms and usage as well. Dictionaries and related references such as thesauri also help guide writers among the alternatives to make choices that are not too idiosyncratic and are intelligible to others. Yet, even though authoritative dictionaries can slow word change and can provide a reference point, they cannot stop innovation and change, through borrowings from other languages, neologisms, simplifications, hybrids, and the need to respond to new concepts and objects on the landscape. New words and locutions also serve ever-present needs for social affiliation, differentiation, and saliency.

The complex and evolving relation between meanings and the available words is reflected in the long discussion of the relation of lexicon and semantics that bridges linguistics, psychology, and philosophy. Within linguistics the idea of creating a fully ordered semantic field, or possible meanings against which words can be measured, has turned out to be quixotic. As languages grow and cultures change their knowledges, the semantic possibilities change and extend both for individuals and members of the community. Lexicon and semantics grow through both an inward conceptual expansion and a probing outwards into the world to identify possible things to be indexed and turned into meaning through the form of words, often using shards and analogies of previous words and meanings. As a result dictionaries become baggy collections where disparate meanings and word relations are stored and made evident. Yet for reference purposes this disorder is contained within highly ordered systems of representative devices, such as the conventionalized form of dictionary entries and the arbitrary arrangement of alphabetic order, itself based on the oddities of spelling and conventional ordering of letters in any language.

Specialized words and meanings of particular fields, whether theological, sports, criminal, or academic also expand in complex ways the resources of a language. Chemistry provides a very striking example, as it has developed a highly technical esoteric nomenclature for the naming of elements and compounds and has transformed general vocabulary words to technical ones, such as *bonding*. Unless one is to some degree a part of the epistemic community, one has little idea of the meaning of words and the relation to others. Learning the lexicon goes hand in hand with learning the theory and knowledge of the field. Within these specialized worlds, authoritative bodies may periodically

attempt to clean up and order what they know, disambiguate terms, and lay out theoretical and concrete relationships of terms. Again consider the example of chemical nomenclature where each word part conveys a specific and fixed meaning about constituent elements and molecular form, which in turn exhibits familial relations among compounds. Even here, however, changes in knowledge and theories can destabilize tightly tuned systems of nomenclature.

When we are writing within such carefully honed domains of ordered meanings and words matched to them, our meanings are determinative of our words and our words of meanings. We must be carefully attuned to always getting the word choice right, on penalty of being viewed as ignorant and unpersuasive—as well as not being understood accurately. Expressing new meanings or meanings that cut against the grain of the knowledge system can be difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, when writing across domains or in less highly constrained epistemic arenas, we have at our call such a heterogeneous collection of words that choosing the right word to evoke in the reader the meaning we hope for can be a puzzle.

What this means for the developing writer is that expansion and refinement of vocabulary is a constant challenge, even late into one's career. Writers look to discover the relations among words, how they evoke meanings in combination with each other, the meaning worlds they take the readers to, and how words may be applied to particular circumstances to identify particular states of affairs. Often vivid meaning is most effectively accomplished not by exotic or unfamiliar terms but by apt choice among the most familiar stock, but in a way that freshly animates meanings, so people are attentive to the particulars evoked rather than normalizing the message into the familiar and unremarkable.

SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR, ORDERING WORD RELATIONS

As with the different lexicons and semantic possibilities of each language, each language also offers a different range of morphological markings and syntactic relations. Verb morphology, for example, can provide strikingly different possibilities for expressing time relations as well as number, mood, voice, and epistemic evaluation. With respect to only one of those dimension, verb tense, some languages offer only limited options, such as a simple present, past, and future, while others offer finer distinctions such as in the last few minutes, earlier today, the remote past, or dream time. Some languages offer perfect or continuous markings to express completed or ongoing events within different time frames, and so on.

Similarly, the syntactic patterns available in each language have consequences for what relations among lexical items are expressible and with what emphasis (Slobin, 1987). As prescriptive grammars attempt to regulate and hold constant standards of correctness, they also work to restrict meaning potentials, but writers driven by meanings may seek to stretch the boundaries of regulation. This is visibly so where written dialects and registers may carry in their morphological and syntactic features messages of social affiliation or reference, stance, power, cognitive and affective domain, or other salient meanings. Correctness according to the rules of reference book is only authoritative in those domains which take them as authoritative, such as in school or formal edited publications. Prescriptive grammars articulate and make more predictable the morphological and syntactic systems of languages which may evolve and lose distinctions without regulation. For example, even with attempts at regulation, the subjunctive mood is vanishing in American English and becoming less recognizable to readers. From the perspective of writers, familiarity with the regulated and prescribed morphology and syntax provides a range of expressive potentials which may be mobilized, but this must always be tempered by an understanding of changing usage and what is likely to be familiar and intelligible without undue cognitive strain by readers.

While the study of grammar and debates over the orderliness of language go back at least to the Alexandrine grammarians in the third century BCE, the authoritative prescription of grammatical rules does not seem to have emerged until the late medieval school which changed the curriculum from immersion in classic texts to the systematic presentation of principles of language. The earliest popular grammar codification was the *Doctrinale* of Alexander of Villedieu, written in 1199 in verse as a mnemonic. In English Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar (*1762) appears to be the first widely used prescriptive grammar. The rather late arrival of prescriptive grammars is tied to standardizing practice for education or publishing purposes. While ordering processes of language arise from practice (whether driven by psychological, social or cultural forces), self-conscious linguistic regulation is only a late comer to help standardize practice with particular historical problems, such as Medieval Europe being confronted with an influx of ancient Greek and Latin texts or political desires to impose a standard educated dialect over a large region. The orderliness of language exists prior to the regulation, and the attempt to meet regulated norms is rarely a core motive of writing, except in school examinations or contexts where one may be severely stigmatized for using non-elite forms.

There is also a history of advice for larger units of text organization from paragraphs to whole texts. Books of models and forms for letters, going back

to the medieval *ars dictaminis* and Renaissance style books, but these are always in the form of advice, potentials to be mobilized at the writer's choice. In schooling sometimes these forms are taught (such as modes of comparison, contrast, narration), and some examinations presume certain forms as the most effective solutions—five-paragraph essays. Similarly, examinations for career advancement, such as in the Chinese Imperial examinations, can enshrine expected forms, such as the eight-legged essay. Training for particular professions sometimes includes practice in stylized versions of genres currently in use, with some conservative reifying effect in the face of evolutionary forces in actual practice. Economic or legal stakes, and even legal regulation, can also be extremely strong in defining, for example, what must appear in a patent application, contract, or other document with legal and contractual force. Forms and questionnaires also represent attempts to regulate representations, but even such forms vary and evolve.

THE EDUCATIONAL USES OF RULES

Evidence indicates that direct instruction in language rules outside of the context of need and practice has dubious value for first-language speakers (Graham, 2006; Hillocks, 1986). Significant gains have been observed in student writing when they are relieved of the pressure of producing "correct" language. Indeed it is unclear how much conscious or explicit invocation of rules usefully occurs during composition by competent writers familiar with a language, at least until the later stages of sentence crafting, editing, and proofreading.

On the other hand, it is impossible to produce utterances longer than fragmentary phrases without a sense of the orderliness of language; moreover, some highly-skilled writers use conscious knowledge of lexical, grammatical, and syntactic distinctions and patterns to extend their expressive potential. The extent to which writers gain that sense of orderliness from neurological constraints, interactional experience, internalized early learning, wide reading, or other mechanisms is still uncertain, as is how that knowledge is best invoked in instruction, composition, revision, and editing. What is clear is that historically our explicit documentation and regulation of the orderliness of language came after our ability to use writing. Thus the pedagogic strategy of attempting to habitualize, normalize, and regulate the repetitive elements of language apart from the acts of creating valued meanings may have human processes backwards.

The motive from the learner's perspective is always to make meaning, or at least master the tools of meaning so as to become a more competent meaning-

making creature. As G. H. Mead points out, we regularize ourselves to an intelligible social identity in order to be understood and understandable by others. We then look on this identity and from it construct a sense of the self, the self that resides in social relations to others. Therefore, the learner's sense of the self as a writer depends on how he or she is induced into these orders. If these orders are learned and practiced within a wider set of meaning-sharing practices, the learner comes to recognize a self that can create meanings through skillful and technical use of the tools of written language. On the other hand, if the learner experiences these orders as something to be followed for oneself alone, and comes to see his or her primary competence as the ability to follow the rules and produce correct utterances, the learner will have confidence only to produce the most conventional and normalized of utterances, always under the anxiety of failure of propriety.

Any detail or difference of language can be the bearer of meaning. Language users have an incentive both to create novel variations and to recover the potential of variation of those aspects of language that have become so routinized and stabilized so as to become in a sense invisible, routinely not calling attention to themselves. Indeed at the higher level of skills, such recovery and attention to detail is of great importance. Thus while letter forms are taken for granted by most of us and their recognition and production are early habitualized in children, graphic designers lavish attention to the development and selection of type-faces, whose meaning and value is only appreciated by a few, although design consequences may be felt subconsciously as comfort and discomfort by the inattentive reader. The detail of definite or indefinite article can have important meaning consequences if one is paying attention with a level of precision, as is highlighted in Dorothy Parker's reputed quip about Lillian Hellman "Every word she writes is a lie, even *a* and *the*." We may say the same about sentence rhythm, sequencing of lexical images, deployment of prepositions. The more skilled the writer is, the more the writer attends to such details with care.

Variations that call attention to themselves by violating conventional orders are even more visible and can contain strong effect to wrench messages outside propriety. If rules and orders become habitualized, routinized, and engrained as moral order then every attention-getting and novel meaning-making variation may be viewed as transgressive or even repellent. The taboo borders of vocabulary, politeness and face devices, and syntactic familiarity put constraints on individual expressiveness, but they also create the possibility to experiment with shocking meanings and messages that are just over the border.

The orders of language we teach are themselves artifacts of literacy—produced, recorded, and spread through literacy and largely arising from literate

practice, such as creating relations between phonology and letters, making dictionaries, or writing grammars. Much of what we teach as order does not come from the simple need to create common language, but is tied to histories of political power, control of educational systems, centralization of printing, class stigmas, xenophobias and ethnocentrisms, hypercorrectness of regulators, linguistic ideology, reformist zeal, or idiosyncrasy. Insofar as these then establish a public standard they are real, but they are freighted with much baggage which the learners may not be aware of and which may influence their perception of themselves as writers.

Consequently, teaching and learning of linguistic orders must always draw on and serve the learner's sense of meaning making; if language learning becomes purely a matter of forming habits without purpose, then the learner will have little motive beyond obedience and will not know what the learning is good for, except rote repetition or fetishized evaluation.