

TEACHING TEXT TYPES IN LATIN LETTERS

A Didactic Use of Linguistic Concepts *

Résumé. — Ceux qui apprennent le latin ont tendance à porter leurs efforts aux niveaux du mot et de la phrase. Dans cet article, nous proposons de leur rendre accessibles des concepts issus de la recherche en linguistique textuelle. La connaissance des types de textes devrait aider les élèves de l'enseignement secondaire en latin à comprendre et à traduire les textes latins. Nous introduisons quatre modes de discours, chacun d'entre eux étant doté de caractéristiques linguistiques propres. Ces modes de discours sont applicables à des textes relevant de nombreux genres mais nous nous concentrons dans cet article sur les lettres de Cicéron et de Pline.

Abstract. — Students of Latin tend to focus on the word and sentence level. In this article, we propose to introduce concepts from text linguistic research to students. Knowledge of text types should help students of Latin at secondary schools in comprehending and translating Latin texts. We introduce four Discourse Modes, each with its own linguistic characteristics. These modes are applicable to texts of many genres, but in this article we focus on letters by Cicero and Pliny.

Introduction

Learners of the Latin Language usually focus on the word and sentence level, studying vocabulary, morphology and syntactic phenomena like the case system, congruency and the various forms of embedded predications. These phenomena are all well explainable at the *sentence level*, since they are used to clarify the relations between words within the sentential boundaries.

It has been proven, however, that experienced language users make frequent use of another type of linguistic knowledge which transcends the level of the sentence, often called the *discourse level*. This knowledge at the

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level of discourse helps them to anticipate on the following discourse or to quickly correct their anticipations. For learners of Latin, or any other language, it is much more difficult to grasp the regularities at this discourse level, partly because the amount of text needed to understand them is much larger and partly because the language learner has got used to looking at the micro level of the sentence which mostly suffices for a correct translation. They are not commonly made aware of linguistic features at the discourse level¹. This may be due to the fact that these discourse features are not a widely spread topic in Latin scholarship (cf. H. PINKSTER [2015, p. 33]): learners and their teachers do not dispose of this information.

In this article, we first briefly summarize applied linguistic research into reading processes to argue that learners of Latin should be presented with information about features of Latin on the discourse level. Next, we introduce a model that has been successfully used to analyze discourse features of narrative texts. The basis for this model is the framework of Discourse Modes by C. S. SMITH (2003). Her analysis concerns English texts, and it has recently been adapted to Latin (and Greek) by several Amsterdam classicists². And finally, we apply this model of Discourse Modes to a corpus of several letters written by Cicero and Pliny, resulting in a description of discourse phenomena in Latin letters. The intended audience of this description consists first and foremost of learners of Latin and their teachers³. The outcomes may, however, also function as a starting point for a systematic and elaborate investigation of discourse linguistic phenomena in Latin letters.

Text comprehension and text types

Reading a text means that a reader constructs the message of this text. In cognitive approaches to the reading process this construction is called the situation model, a “mental representation of the people, objects, locations, events and actions described in a text” (definition taken from R. A. ZWAAN [1999], p. 15).

Proficient readers use the text and several types of knowledge to construct the situation model⁴. These types of knowledge are generally de-

1. But see A. BALBO (2011).

2. C. H. M. KROON & P. ROSE (1996), C. H. M. KROON (1998, 2002, 2007, 2009), R. J. ALLAN (2007, 2009), S. M. ADEMA (2008, 2009), L. W. VAN GILS (2009).

3. The start of the present research was to help students to get a grip on the variegated genre of correspondence. This research has also been published in Dutch in *Lampas* 2015, a Dutch journal for classicists.

4. This section is based on W. KINTSCH & T. A. VAN DIJK (1978), T. A. VAN DIJK & W. KINTSCH (1983); W. KINTSCH (1988, 1998, 2004), R. A. ZWAAN & C. M. BROWN

scribed in terms of a top-down/bottom-up model. A summary is given in **Table 1** (D. PENNELL-ROSS [2008]).

Semantics Issues of meaning, all levels	TOP-DOWN	
	Knowledge of the world	Reader's own knowledge
	Social/historical/geographical context	Knowledge assumed on part of intended audience
	Genre	Text type
	Discourse/pragmatic level	Level of connected text vs. sentence
	Syntax	Function of word or phrase at sentence level
	Morphology	Form of word
	Part of speech	
	BOTTOM-UP	

Table 1. Top-down/bottom-up model

This model was designed to describe two types of readers, top-down readers who start from their knowledge of the world and bottom-up readers who construct meaning by starting from the smallest meaningful units. However, research has shown that the reading process is less clear-cut than this dichotomy suggests. Proficient readers constantly switch between all these types of knowledge when processing a text.

Teachers should offer non-proficient readers knowledge of all these types (M. A. BARNETT [1988]; R. A. ZWAAN & C. M. BROWN [1996]; T. VAN HOUDT [2008]; D. PENNELL-ROSS [2008]). N. DUKE et al. (2011) have reformulated the results of reading research into 'ten essential elements of fostering and teaching text comprehension':

1. Build disciplinary and world knowledge.
2. Provide exposure to a volume and range of texts.
3. Provide motivating texts and contexts for reading.
4. Teach strategies for comprehending.
5. Teach text structures.
6. Engage students in discussion.
7. Build vocabulary and language knowledge.
8. Integrate reading and writing.
9. Observe and assess.
10. Differentiate instruction.

(1996). Their theories have been applied by several classicists, e.g. D. PENNELL-ROSS (2008); T. VAN HOUDT (2008); A. VAN DER PLAAT (2011).

Most of these activities are common practice for teachers of Greek and Latin ⁵. The fifth element may, however, be less prominent than, for instance, the seventh, since building vocabulary and language knowledge (grammar) is a much more traditional part of school methods than teaching the features of text structure in Greek and Latin.

M. A. BARNETT (1988, p. 128) recommends, as do e.g. A. C. GRAESSER et al. (2003) and N. DUKE et al. (2011), to introduce and review text structures explicitly, gradually making the students more responsible until they can recognize structure and textual schemata on their own. The suggestions of M. A. BARNETT (1988) are aimed at modern foreign language teachers and she proposes that teachers themselves furnish a summary of text types based on their intuitions. In the case of Latin and Greek, we may create such a summary of text types by making use of linguistic research of Discourse Modes in general and in Latin and Greek texts specifically.

Discourse Modes in English

The sentence can be seen as the micro level of a text. On the other hand, genres, for instance epic, historiography or correspondence, may be seen as a classification on the macro-level. Genres, however, do not present a homogeneous set of linguistic features and are heterogeneous in nature. Forensic speeches, for instance, present an argumentation at the macro-level, but they often include narrative parts, and historiography may be a narrative genre, but often argumentative or descriptive parts interrupt the ongoing narrative. Therefore, we need to identify text types at the meso-level, like narrative, description or exposition ⁶. Text types have distinctive linguistic features and we may use them to explain, and teach, language phenomena that transcend the level of the sentence.

A useful distinction into several text types, also called ‘Discourse Modes’ is found in the work of the linguist C. S. SMITH (2003). Her modes of discourse together form a set of local text types, based on the types of states of affairs and specific coherence relations between these states of affairs ⁷. Linguistic features may make these coherence relations explicit, but are not always present. Smith presents examples using various types of Eng-

5. With the exception of number 8 (Integrate reading and writing).

6. Text types have been studied by, for instance, E. WERLICH (1976), R. E. LONGACRE (1983) and D. BIBER (1989). T. VIRTANEN (1992, p. 298) defines text types as follows: “text types may be characterized as the aggregate of prototypical surface features”.

7. Smith’s terminology is slightly different. She speaks of the progression of the text rather than of coherence relations and uses the term *situation types* where we use types of states of affairs.

lish texts to illustrate this. Examples (1) to (4) are taken from her book and illustrate the types of states and the coherence relations that are specific for narrative, description, information and report ⁸.

In narrative, the temporal relation between states of affairs is the main coherency principle, as is the case in the brief excerpt below.

(1) *Narrative* (taken from C. S. SMITH [2003, p. 27])

I slipped outside into a shock of cool air and ran down the pier. Several small boats were rocking lazily to and fro in the water. I unfastened the rope to one, paddled outward the “Republic”, then hauled myself hand over hand up a rope ladder to the topgallant bulwark, over onto a broad empty desk.

Time progresses in this excerpt, which is made explicit once by means of the adverb *then*. The types of states of affairs that are specific for narrative are events (cf. ‘I slipped outside’) and particular situations (cf. ‘boats were rocking lazily’). Both events and particular situations describe (mostly past) states of affairs that take place at specific moments in a story world. The distinguishing feature between *events* and particular *situations* is their boundedness. An *event* is bounded: it reaches its endpoint in the story world. A *situation* is unbounded and does not reach an endpoint at this specific moment in the story world ⁹.

The fact that the states of affairs in the example above are temporally related becomes more clear when we contrast the excerpt with an example that is coherent in a different way, viz. spatially. The states of affairs in the example below each describe different parts of the space under consideration (cf. *high, covered, before us, long, in the shallows*).

(2) *Description* (taken from C. S. SMITH [2003], p. 29)

We were in an impressive and beautiful situation on a rocky plateau. It was too high for grass, there was very little earth and the place was littered with boulders, but the whole plateau was covered with a thick carpet of mauve primulas. There were countless thousands of them, delicate flowers on thick green stems. Before us was the brilliant green lake, a quarter of a mile long, and in the shallows and in the streams that spilled over from it the primulas grew in clumps and perfect circles.

The most important type of state of affairs in description is a situation. These situations can be particular, as in the example above (e.g. ‘we were in an impressive and beautiful situation’), and general (e.g. ‘the four main canals of Amsterdam are concentric half-circles’).

8. A fifth Discourse Mode in Smith’s framework is *argument*.

9. Boundedness (and its relation to telicity) is explained more elaborately by I. DEPRAETERE (1995).

In the information mode, coherency exists because several states of affairs consider aspects of the same element, as is the case in the example below in which several aspects of humpbacks are presented.

(3) *Information* (taken from C. S. SMITH [2003, p. 32])

Humpbacks are found in every ocean. Together with blue, fin, sei, Bryde's, and minke whales, they belong to the rorqual family of baleen whales. Fully grown females, which are bulkier than the males, can weigh 40 tons, and reach lengths of 50 feet. Humpbacks tend to favor shallow areas, often quite close to the shore [...]

Informational excerpts consist of general situations (e.g. 'Humpbacks tend to favor shallow areas').

The fourth Discourse Mode, report mode, is characterized by the direct relation between the states of affairs and the communicative setting. That is, states of affairs in this mode are not presented in relation to the preceding state of affairs. This is the case in example 4 (cf. 'here', 'diplomats say that').

(4) *Report* (taken from C. S. SMITH [2003, p. 30])

At this news conference here, even before he took questions, Schroeder implicitly challenged the official US explanation for the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade – that target analysts relied on a faulty street map – by renewing his demand for a formal NATO inquiry into the bombing.

Diplomats say that Schroeder, who just returned from China, was angry that a trip he had long planned to herald his chairmanship of the European Union was transformed into an official apology for the embassy bombing.

Events and situations (particular or general) may all occur in report mode, but they will be presented with a strong focus on their anterior, contemporaneous or posterior relation with the communicative setting.

Discourse Modes in Latin narrative genres

Discourse Modes represent text types at the meso-level of texts. These text types are not specific for English, but may be discerned in texts of other languages, among which Greek and Latin. To illustrate the Discourse Modes in Latin, we provide three Latin passages containing the Discourse Modes narrative, description, information and report taken from several genres (historiography, epic and biography)¹⁰. This wider scope shows the validity of Discourse Modes across genres and it prevents too strict a focus on one particular genre.

10. These examples are also discussed in S. M. ADEMA and D. STIENAERS (2011).

Example 5 is a brief narrative sequence from Livy's history of Rome. It contains perfect, imperfect and pluperfect tense forms in which the narrator narrates how Romans react to a scheme of Hannibal, who has attached burning torches to the horns of cows.

(5) Livy, *AUC*, 22, 17, 4

Qui ad transitum saltus insidendum locati erant, ubi in summis montibus ac super se quosdam ignes conspexere, circumventos se esse rati praesidio excessere. Qua minime densae micabant flammae, uelut tutissimum iter petentes summa montium iuga, tamen in quosdam boues palatos a suis gregibus inciderunt.

When the troops who had been posted to hold the pass caught sight of certain fires on the mountain-tops above them, they thought that they were surrounded and forsook their station. Where the fewest flames were flashing – for this seemed the safest way – they made for the summits of the ridges, but nevertheless fell in with some of the cattle which had strayed from their herds¹¹.

There is a strong focus on the temporal coherence relations between the clauses which denote events (*conspexere*, *excessere*, *inciderunt*), situations (*micabant*) and events that took place before other events (*locati erant*).

A combination of description and information is found in Vergil's *Aeneid*, when Aeneas lands his ship at the coast of Libya.

(6) Vergil, *Aeneid*, 1, 159-169

Est in secessu longo locus: insula portum efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos. Hinc atque hinc uastae rupes geminique minantur in caelum scopuli, quorum sub uertice late aequora tuta silent; tum siluis scaena coruscis desuper, horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbra. Fronte sub aduersa scopulis pendentibus antrum, intus aquae dulces uiuoque sedilia saxo, nympharum domus. Hic fessas non uincula nauis ulla tenent, unco non alligat ancora morsu.

There in a deep inlet lies a spot, where an island forms a harbor with the barrier of its sides, on which every wave from the main is broken, then parts into receding ripples. On either side loom heavenward huge cliffs and twin peaks, beneath whose crest far and wide is the stillness of sheltered water; above, too, is a background of shimmering woods with an overhanging grove, black with gloomy shade. Under the brow of the fronting cliff is a cave of hanging rocks; within are fresh waters and seats in the living stone, a haunt for nymphs. Here no fetters imprison weary ships, no anchor holds them fast with hooked bite.

11. All translations taken from www.loebclassics.com.

The spatial coherence relation between the situations in the first part of this sequence is made explicit by means of spatial adverbs and adverbial clauses. First a description is given of how the waves break on the sand, then the narrator turns his and our eyes to the huge cliffs enclosing the scenery and proceeds to describe the part in the middle of these cliffs. The two last situations, *tenent* and *alligat*, are not spatially connected to the other states of affairs, but give information about this natural harbour. At the border between the two Discourse Modes, we find the adverb *hic* announcing the switch.

Information and description are similar in that both Discourse Modes present situations that are aspects of the same element (e.g. a natural harbor, a rocky plateau or humpbacks), albeit that there is a strong focus on the spatial coherency in description mode. In the research presented in this paper, we did not distinguish between information and description. The reason for this was that the research outcomes were aimed for a secondary school public (pupils and their teachers).

The report mode may be illustrated in Latin by means of an excerpt from the introduction to Tacitus' *Agricola*. Three temporal eras are covered in example 7: the distant past in which biography was a common genre, Tacitus' recent past in which writing biographies was dangerous and unthinkable and his present time in which he may write what he wants.

(7) Tacitus, *Agricola*, 2-3

Dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum; et sicut uetus aetas uidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in seruitute, adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio. Memoriam quoque ipsam cum uoce perdidissemus, si tam in nostra potestate esset obliuisci quam tacere. Nunc demum redit animus.

Assuredly we have given a signal proof of our submissiveness; and even as former generations witnessed the utmost excesses of liberty, so have we the extremes of slavery. Investigations have deprived us even of the give and take of conversation. We should have lost memory itself as well as voice, had forgetfulness been as easy as silence. Now at last heart is coming back to us.

The first clause, containing the perfect tense form *dedimus*, refers to Tacitus' recent past. Then, he focuses on a time period before *dedimus*, using, again, a perfect tense form: *sicut uetus aetas uidit ita nos (sc. uidimus)*, thus presenting it in relation to his own time, and not in relation to *dedimus*. In the latter case, a pluperfect tense form would have been used, giving the excerpt a narrative character. In the presentational form used here, the excerpt illustrates report. Both *uidit* and *dedimus* are presented in their anterior

relation to the moment of writing, Tacitus' current situation, *nunc demum redit animus*, is a present tense form, contemporaneous to his own time.

Discourse Mode	Tense	Label	Interpretation
Narrative	Perfect	Narrative perfect	Event
	Present	Narrative/ Historical present	
	Imperfect	Background imperfect, ongoing imperfect, iterative imperfect, <i>imperfectum de conatu</i>	Situation
	Present	Narrative/ Historical present	
	Infinitive	Narrative infinitive	
	Pluperfect	–	Event/situation before other state of affairs
Description/ Information	Present	Actual present Universal present Iterative present	Situation
	Imperfect	Background imperfect, descriptive imperfect	
Report	Present	Actual present	Contemporaneous with communicative setting
	Perfect	Present perfect	Anterior to communicative setting
	Future	–	Posterior to communicative setting

Table 2. Discourse Modes, Latin tenses, interpretations and labels

The set of Discourse Modes has proven to be an illuminating way to describe the relations between the semantic value of Latin tenses and their interpretations (S. M. ADEMA [2009]). Discourse Modes are a means to take into account the role of the linguistic context in tense interpretation. Furthermore, Discourse Modes make it possible to present interpretations of tenses in relation to interpretations of other tenses. Example 5, for instance, illustrates that the narrative mode is a concept that makes clear the relation between the narrative uses of the perfect, imperfect and pluperfect.

Thus, the Discourse Modes provide a more coherent view on the Latin tense system than presentations of long lists of possible interpretations of each tense, as is done in traditional grammars. **Table 2** reformulates several important labels interpretations of the Latin tenses and rearranges them according to Discourse Mode (cf. S. M. ADEMA [2009]).

Existing studies of Latin Discourse Modes focus on tense and Discourse Modes in historiography and epic, in which the narrative mode is the most dominant Discourse Mode. C. H. M. KROON (2002) suggests that the epistolary genre is heterogeneous with respect to text type, discussing Pliny's famous ghost letter (7, 27). This heterogeneity should be taken into account when using Latin letters as a teaching corpus.

Discourse Modes in Latin epistolography: goals and methodology

The epistolary genre is a commonly taught genre at the secondary level¹². One of the difficulties of correspondence is the variety in discourse phenomena, at the meso-level. All particles, all types of anaphoric references and all possible interpretations of tenses may be found within one letter, whereas other genres, like epic or historiography at least, have a preponderance of a subset of these phenomena. In order to help students to get a grip on the variegated genre of correspondence, we conducted an analysis of a corpus of letters by Cicero and Pliny.

Cicero	<i>Att.</i> , 12, 14; <i>Att.</i> , 5, 16; <i>Fam.</i> , 14, 18; <i>Fam.</i> , 14, 19; <i>Fam.</i> , 14, 2; <i>Fam.</i> , 14, 3; <i>Fam.</i> , 14, 7; <i>Fam.</i> , 7, 1.
Pliny	1, 13; 1, 9; 3, 21; 4, 19; 5, 16; 6, 16; 6, 7; 7, 20; 7, 27; 7, 33; 7, 5; 8, 10; 8, 11; 8, 16; 8, 24; 9, 2; 9, 33; 9, 6.

Table 3. Overview of corpus¹³

12. In 2015, all students of the Dutch gymnasia had to prepare a corpus of letters for their final national examination in Latin, for instance.

13. This corpus was based on the Dutch obligatory corpus for the national examination in Latin in 2015.

In this analysis, we had very specific goals in mind. We aimed to ascertain the heterogeneity of the epistolary genre, as a follow-up of C. H. M. KROON (2002), by analyzing the coherence relations as indications for specific Discourse Modes (report, narrative, description). As part of this, we wanted to give a quantitative overview of the presence of each Discourse Mode in a small corpus of letters. Our main aim, however, was to present teachers and (high school) students with information about the Latin language transcending the level of the sentence. We wanted to provide an approach to Latin letters based on text types with special attention for the linguistic elements in each text type.

Our methodology was in line with these goals. Our main activity was a close reading analysis of the whole corpus, by analyzing the coherence relations between clauses and thus dividing the letters up into Discourse Modes. We conducted a word count of these excerpts and counted the occurrences of tenses within these Discourse Modes, providing quantitative overviews. In addition, we constructed a non-quantified inventory of other textual cues of the Discourse Modes. This inventory contains linguistic cues that make coherence relations apparent and yield, for instance, a specific interpretation of a verb form. This inventory was meant to provide teachers and their pupils with as many textual indications of a Discourse Mode as possible.

We demonstrate our methodology by means of two illustrations of our close reading analysis. The first is an excerpt of Pliny's famous letter to Tacitus about the death of his uncle and the eruption of the Vesuvius.

(8) **Pliny, *Letters*, 6, 16** (first part)

<p><i>C. PLINIUS TACITO SVO S.</i> <i>Petis ut tibi auunculi mei exitum scribam, quo uerius tradere posteris possis. Gratias ago nam uideo morti eius si celebretur a te immortalem gloriam esse propositam. Quamuis enim pulcherrimarum clade terrarum, ut populi ut urbes memorabili casu, quasi semper uicturus occiderit, quamuis ipse plurima opera et mansura condiderit, multum tamen perpetuitati eius scriptorum tuorum aeternitas addet. Equidem beatos puto, quibus deorum munere datum est aut facere scribenda aut scribere legenda, beatissimos uero quibus utrumque. Horum in numero auunculus meus et suis libris et tuis erit. Quo libentius suscipio, depono etiam quod iniungis.</i></p>	<p>Report</p>
<p><i>Erat Miseni classemque imperio praesens regebat. Nonum Kal. Septembres hora fere septima mater mea indicat ei apparere nubem inusitata et magnitudine et specie. Vsus ille sole, mox frigida, gustauerat iacens studebatque poscit soleas, ascendit locum ex quo maxime miraculum illud conspici poterat.</i></p>	<p>Narrative</p>

Thank you for asking me to send you a description of my uncle's death so that you can leave an accurate account of it for posterity; I know that immortal fame awaits him if his death is recorded by you. It is true that he perished in a catastrophe which destroyed the loveliest regions of the earth, a fate shared by whole cities and their people, and one so memorable that it is likely to make his name live for ever: and he himself wrote a number of books of lasting value: but you write for all time and can still do much to perpetuate his memory. The fortunate man, in my opinion, is he to whom the gods have granted the power either to do something which is worth recording or to write what is worth reading, and most fortunate of all is the man who can do both. Such a man was my uncle, as his own books and yours will prove. So you set me a task I would choose for myself, and I am more than willing to start on it.

My uncle was stationed at Misenum, in active command of the fleet. On 24 August, in the early afternoon, my mother drew his attention to a cloud of unusual size and appearance. He had been out in the sun, had taken a cold bath, and lunched while lying down, and was then working at his books. He called for his shoes and climbed up to a place which would give him the best view of the phenomenon.

Pliny starts his letter by reminding Tacitus of his request, the present tense form *petis* at the very first position of the sentence. Thus, Pliny introduces the subject of his letter. He immediately expresses his gratitude, another present tense form, *gratias ago*. In the next sentence, Pliny starts an elaboration explaining why he thanks Tacitus. In this elaboration he carefully divides his attention between Tacitus and his uncle, using both second and third person pronouns. Pliny looks ahead and deliberates what Tacitus' works will mean for his uncle's fame, the future tense form *addet*. He then inserts a generally valid *sententia* depending on the present tense *puto*, to ascertain how fortunate he deems his uncle that he will live on in both his own work and that of Tacitus, the future tense form *erit* in the next clause. The elaboration comes to an end with *quo libentius suscipio*, with which Pliny starts the second part of his reaction: after thanking Tacitus, he says that he takes up the task, *suscipio, depono*.

In this carefully structured paragraph which, on the main level, seems to consist of Tacitus' move *petis* and Pliny's twofold reactive move consisting of *gratias ago* and *suscipio/depono*, the main clauses are all presented in relation to the time in which Pliny wrote the letter. This means that the report mode is used. In Latin examples of the report mode, contemporaneous relations with the communicative setting are expressed by means of the present tense, such as *petis, ago* and *suscipio* in this letter, and posterior relations by means of the future tense, *addet* and *erit*.

The second part of Pliny's reaction, *suscipio, depono* prepares the reader for a new part of the letter and a possible shift in Discourse Mode, as

it neatly rounds off the paragraph. Pliny says that he will fulfil the task Tacitus asked him in the first sentence, ending his sentence with *iniungis*, an echo of the first word *petis*.

The first two words of the next clause immediately ascertain the reader in the expectation that Pliny will now present Tacitus with the story of his uncle's death. The clause *Erat Miseni* takes us to another time and place, and informs us, at the same time, that another Discourse Mode is now used. The Latin imperfect tense does not express a direct relation between time of utterance and state of affairs, and its use here, therefore, is a clear indication that the Discourse Mode report is no longer used. In the ensuing clauses, the explicit formulation of the date and the events and situations following each other on this day makes clear that the temporal coherence between these states of affairs is foregrounded in this excerpt. All verb forms are in the third person, and their tenses are typical of Latin stories, viz. the imperfect, pluperfect and the (historical) present. Pliny has set out on his task to relate the story of his uncle's death and uses the narrative mode to do so.

The close reading analysis unveils several linguistic cues that a reader uses to identify both the Discourse Modes and the shift in Discourse Mode in this excerpt. Tense usage is important in this process, but also the use of first and second person pronouns versus third person pronouns seems a clear cue. Lastly, the (absolute) temporal adverbial clause indicates a time in the past. The combination of these elements can be seen as marking the narrative mode in the second part of this excerpt.

	Part 1: <i>Petis ut ... quod iniungis</i>	Part 2: <i>Erat Miseni ... conspici poterat</i>
Tense main verb	actual present (5) future (2)	imperfect (3) historical present (3)
Position main verb	first segment (3) later segment (4)	first segment (3) later segment (1)
Person main verb	first singular (4) second singular (1) third person (2)	third person (6)
Pronominal references	first person (2) second person (4) third person (3)	third person (1)
Absolute time		<i>Nonum Kal. Septembres hora fere septima</i>

Table 4. Overview of linguistic features, Pliny, 6, 16

Also in Cicero's letters, linguistic features provide the reader with clues about the Discourse Modes which help the experienced reader to anticipate during the reading process. This may be illustrated by means of a fairly short letter to his wife. This letter, however, also demonstrates that for the epistolary genre a further distinction within the report mode is possible in which clusters of linguistic features are related to particular functions of report in letters.

The letter was written at Gaeta at the beginning of June, 49 BC. Cicero is heading for Greece to join Pompey. He has recently seen his wife Terentia and his daughter Tullia, as appears from this letter, and with this letter he reassures them with regard to his health and takes care of their safety while he is away.

(9) Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 14, 7

<i>Scr. in protu Caietano naue conscensa VII. Id. Iun. a.u.c. 705.</i>	
<i>TVLLIVS TERENTIAE SVAE SAL. PLVRIMAM.</i>	<i>inscriptio</i>
<i>Omnes molestias et sollicitudines, quibus et te miserrimam habui et, id quod mihi molestissimum est, Tulliolam, quae nobis nostra uita dulcior est, deposui et eieci; quid causae autem fuerit, postridie intellexi, quam a uobis discessi: χολήν ἄκρατον noctu eieci; statim ita sum levatus, ut mihi deus aliquis medicinam fecisse uideatur; cui quidem tu deo, quemadmodum soles, pie et caste satisfacies, id est Apollini et Aesculapio. Nauem spero nos ualde bonam habere; in eam simulatque conscendi, haec scripsi.</i>	Report
<i>Deinde conscribam ad nostros familiares multas epistulas, quibus te et Tulliolam nostram diligentissime commendabo. Cohortarer uos, quo animo fortiore essetis, nisi uos fortiores cognossem quam quemquam uirum. Et tamen eiusmodi spero negotia esse, ut et uos istic commodissime sperem esse et me aliquando cum similibus nostri rem publicam defensuros. Tu primum ualetudinem tuam uelim cures; deinde, si tibi uidebitur, uillis iis utare, quae longissime aberunt a militibus. Fundo Arpinati bene poteris uti cum familia urbana, si annona carior fuerit.</i>	Report
<i>Cicero bellissimus tibi salutem plurimam dicit. Etiam atque etiam uale. D. VII Idus Iun.</i>	<i>subscriptio</i>

Aboard ship, Caieta harbour, 7 June 49.

From Tullius to his dear Terentia best greetings.

All the miseries and cares with which I plagued you to desperation (and very sorry I am for it) and Tulliola too, who is sweeter to me than my life, are dismissed and ejected. I understood what lay behind them the day after our parting. I threw up pure bile during the night, and felt an instantaneous relief as though a God had cured me. To that God you will make due acknowledgement in piety and purity after your custom (i.e. to Apollo and Aesculapius). I trust we have a very good ship – I am writing this directly after coming aboard.

I shall next write many letters to our friends, commending you and our Tulliola most earnestly to their care. I should give you words of encouragement to make you both braver if I had not found you braver than any man. And after all, I trust things are now in better train. You, I hope, will be as well off as possible where you are, and I shall at last be fighting for the commonwealth alongside my peers. First and foremost, I want you to take care of your health. Second, if you agree, please use the country houses which will be farthest away from army units. The farm at Arpinum with the servants we have in town will be a good place for you if food prices go up.

Darling Marcus sends you his best love. Once again good-bye.

Dispatched 7 June.

If we focus first on the tenses and their coherence relation, we may note that the indicative predicates of the main clauses are ‘present perfects’ (*deposui, eieci, intellexi, eieci, sum leuatus* and *scripsi*) which present events in relation to the time of writing, and two actual presents (*spero, spero*) and a future tense form (*conscribam*). In addition, the letter contains four subjunctives (*cures, utare* and *poteris* are adhortative and *cohortarer* is counterfactual). All present perfects, actual presents, the future tense and the counterfactual are in first person singular. The three adhortative subjunctives are in second person singular. The second person is also referred to with ten pronouns (*te, uobis, tu, te, uos, uos, uos, tu, tuam, and tibi*). These features are commonly indications of the report mode. The states of affairs are not strongly related among each other; rather they are all relevant for the present situation of the writer and his addressee. If we zoom in on the clustering of these features, their distribution seems to be of significance. In the following table, you see in which part of the letter we find the mentioned linguistic features¹⁴:

14. The *inscriptio* and *subscriptio* have been left out of this analysis.

	Part 1: <i>omnes molestias ... haec scripsi</i>	Part 2: <i>deinde conscribam ... caror fuerit</i>
Tense main verb	present perfect (6) actual present (1) – –	– actual present (1) future (1) subjunctive (4)
Person main verb	first singular (7) –	first singular (3) second singular (3)
Pronominal references	first person (4) second person (3)	first person (3) second person (7)
Position main verb	first segment (2) later segment (5)	first segment (5) later segment (1)

Table 5. Overview of linguistic features, Cic., *Fam.*, 14, 7

The features seem to cluster in a meaningful way in a first and a second part. Related to the clustering of tenses and pronominal references, we may observe that the verbs in the first part of the letter occur predominantly in a later segment of the sentence, whereas in the second part they are all found in the beginning of the sentence, with the exception of *utare*. The different linguistic elements are related to different purposes: the first part is an update of the writer's present situation, whereas the second part contains concerns of the writer for the situation of the addressee. This letter, in fact, illustrates one of the results of our close reading analyses: in letters of Cicero and Pliny, we should distinguish between two subtypes of report. This point and other results are discussed in the next section.

Results

As Cicero's letter, example 9, illustrated, it seems relevant to distinguish between two subtypes of report in letters, each with their own set of linguistic features. There is a subtype in which the letter writer presents his addressee with an update of his own situation, with a predominant use of the perfect and present tense and first person pronouns. The other subtype is focused more on the addressee and actions that need to be taken. This subtype is characterized by the use of future tenses, imperatives and (adhortative) subjunctives, as well as second person verb forms and pronouns. We have labelled the first subtype 'update', and the second 'arrangements'.

A further result of our close readings was a division of the letters according to Discourse Modes. Including the subtypes of report, we categorized all segments as update, arrangements, narrative or description/infor-

mation. This division allowed for a word count per Discourse Mode, yielding numbers that indeed show the heterogeneity of the corpus, as becomes clear from **Table 6**.

Discourse Mode	Pliny	Cicero	Total/Average
<i>Total words absolute nrs</i>	4571	1685	6256
% Report: update	24	70	37
% Report: arrangements	22	24	22
% Narrative	34	3	26
% Description/Information	19	3	15

Table 6. Frequency of Discourse Modes in the letters of Pliny and Cicero

The table presents the relative frequency of the Discourse. Pliny's letters especially illustrate the heterogeneity of epistolography, as each Discourse Mode is represented (almost) equally. His letters contain narrative (34%) and the other two thirds of the corpus is equally used for updates, arrangements and descriptions. In Cicero, narrative and description are rarely found, as 70 percent of his letters (in this corpus) are an update. This word count thus gives us a general idea of the Discourse Modes in the letters.

As explained in our methodology section, we counted the occurrences of tense forms within the Discourse Modes, in addition to the word count. **Table 7** shows the frequency of the tenses within each Discourse Mode, per 1000 words.

These numbers provide information about the preferences and choices of writers in this corpus, within Discourse Modes. In updates, a finite predicate most often is an actual present tense, followed by present perfects. Predicates in arrangements, too, are most often actual present tense forms, in alternation with universal presents, future tense forms and imperative constructions. Iterative interpretations of the present tense are more frequent than other interpretations of the present tense in descriptions. This means that the writers often describe habits and patterns, rather than states. The narrative tense that is preferred in the narrative parts of these letters (mostly those of Pliny) is the historical present, occurring twice as often within narrative as the narrative perfect.

Tense		Frequency per 1000 words					
		Update	Arrangements	Descr. Present	Descr. Past	Narrative	Average
Praesens	Actual Present	50	38	14	4	1	21
	Universal Present	12	20	52	4	5	19
	Iterative Present	6	7	75	0	0	18
	<i>Praesens Historicum</i>	2	0	0	0	55	11
Perfectum	Present Perfect	37	7	15	21	2	16
	Narrative Perfect	1	0	0	0	24	5
	Epistolary Perfect	1	0	0	0	0	0
Imperfectum	Situation in past	5	0	0	0	25	6
	Background (Characteristic)	1	0	1,5	60	11	15
	Epistolary Imperfect	2	0	0	0	0	0
Plusquamperfectum		1	1	1,5	25	9	8
Infinitivus Historicus		0	0	0	0	12	2
Futurum		9	15	1,5	0	0	5
Futurum Exactum			1	0	0	0	0
Imperative & Adhortative Constructions	Imperativus	0,5	11	0	0	0	2
	Conjunctivus Adhortativus	2	9	1,5	0	0	3
	Other (Gerundivum + esse, <i>opus est</i> , etc.)	1	8	0	0	0	2

Table 7. Frequency of tenses in Cicero and Plinius

Discourse Modes are distinguished in texts on the basis of specific types of states of affairs and coherence relations. Tense is but one of the linguistic features by means of which these coherence relations become apparent in a text. Therefore, our close reading was also aimed at uncovering linguistic cues that supported the specific interpretation of a tense form as well as the analysis in terms of Discourse Modes. The corpus was too limited to present quantitative data. Therefore, we present the results of this part of our research in the form of an inventory (**Table 8**).

Discourse mode		Tense/ verb form	Adverbs and adverbial clauses	Predominant person (verbs and pronouns)	Structuring devices
Report: update	Contemporaneous with comm. setting	Present	Temporal-present, e.g. <i>nunc</i>	First person	
	Recurrent activities contemporaneous with comm. setting	Present (iterative)	Iterative: e.g. <i>identidem, saepe</i>		
	Anterior to communicative setting	Perfect			
Report: arrangements	Expectation	Future tense	Temporal-future, e.g. <i>si</i> -clause, <i>ut-primum</i> -clause	Second person, combined with first person	
	Wishes	Subjunctive			
	Fears	Present, <i>verbum timendi</i>			
	Commands	Imperative, present sub- junctive, gerundive + <i>esse</i>			
	Questions	All	Interrogative words and particles		
Narrative	Event	Perfect	Temporal-past, e.g. <i>tunc</i> , temporal cum-clause	Third person	Sequence, e.g. <i>deinde,</i> <i>inde, postero</i> <i>die</i>
	Situation	Present			
		Imperfect			
	Before other SoA	Present			
Description/ Information	Situation	Pluperfect			
		Present	Iterative, e.g. <i>identidem, saepe, semper</i>	Third person	Spatial, e.g. <i>proxima.</i>
		Imperfect			

Table 8. Inventory of linguistic cues of Discourse Modes

One of the types of linguistic cues that are of interest is formed by adverbs and adverbial clauses, for instance adverbs that make the type of state of affairs explicit (e.g. iterative) or situate it in the past. The person of the verb, too, is telling. First person verb forms seem dominant in the update subtype of report, whereas an alternation between second and first person verb forms seems typical of arrangements. Narrative and description are mostly about other persons than the writer and the addressee and, therefore, typically show third person verb forms.

Segments in the narrative and description mode differ from each other in the structuring devices that are used. We found sequencing words such as *deinde* or *postero die*, indicating the temporal coherency relation of the narrative mode. On the other hand, we found, for instance, *proxima* as a marker of the spatial relation between two states of affairs, thus making the coherency relation of the description mode explicit.

Segments classified as arrangements are worth a separate remark, because in those we find a typical set of sentence types that all have to do with the future. Sentences in arrangements in our corpus contained distinctive linguistic features, such as the imperative in commands, interrogative words and particles in questions or *verba timendi* in fears.

The inventory is a topic for further research, in which the frequency relations between the linguistic cues of Discourse Modes would be analyzed and possibly confirmed by means of automatic data analysis¹⁵.

Teaching text structure

The inventory of linguistic cues of Discourse Modes formed the basis for teaching materials to be used when reading letters of Pliny and Cicero. As such, it formed a summary of text types meant for students, in line with the suggestions of Barnett we cited above (M. A. BARNETT [1988], p. 128). As recommended, we designed teaching materials (in Dutch) in which the text types of letters were explicitly introduced, after which the students could gradually become acquainted with the text types by means of exercises¹⁶.

In the first stage of this process, students were presented with an introduction to the letter concerning the content and the text types used, including an overview of the linguistic features. The students had to mark the actual occurrences of these features in the text in order to practice recognizing them and to learn their patterns.

15. See S. MELLET & D. LONGRÉE (2010).

16. The teaching materials have been made freely available to Dutch teachers on the internet: www.quamlibet.nl.

The next stage consisted of another exercise: students had to predict, on the basis of an introduction concerning the content of a letter, what text types could be expected. After their prediction, they had to mark the linguistic features of these text types in the text of the letter and, if necessary, adjust their prediction accordingly.

In the last stage, students only had the Latin text, and they were simply asked to pay attention to linguistic features. This first scanning of the text should now provide them with cues on the text types used, as well as a first idea, based on these text types and lexical information, of the content of the text.

When proficient or, at least, experienced readers of Latin are confronted with a new Latin text, they intuitively scan it first to get an idea about the genre (perhaps even author), text type and content of the text¹⁷. It is this phase of reading that students may train by using these teaching materials and for which we had to make text linguistic intuitions about Latin explicit.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research

The main motivation for the present paper is the observation that language learners benefit from knowledge about discourse linguistic features of texts next to the language features at the sentence level. We used the framework of Discourse Modes to conduct close reading analyses of a corpus of letters. Discourse Modes are defined by means of coherence relations and types of states of affairs. Each Discourse Mode has its own set of linguistic features of which tense and person seem to be the most conspicuous. Awareness of the Discourse Mode helps the reader to anticipate and hence to interpret the text more quickly. Language learners are facilitated in their reading task when trained to find signals of Discourse Modes, a capacity unconsciously used by proficient language users.

The analyses showed that in our epistolary corpus the Discourse Mode *report* mainly occurs in two varieties, namely *update* and *arrangements*. In addition to *updates* and *arrangements*, which occur rather often, the Discourse Mode *narrative* and a combination of *description* and *information* are also frequent in our corpus of letters. Our investigation can be seen as a pilot research which may be extended by means of automatic data analysis. It would be interesting to investigate basic types of letters. The letters in our corpus seemed to show, very roughly, the following patterns of Discourse Modes:

17. Cf. D. V. McCaffrey (2006).

- a. update – arrangements – update
- b. update – description – update
- c. update – narrative – update
- d. arrangements – narrative – arrangements

It is our impression that a change in Discourse Mode is usually indicated in the first couple of words / first intonation unit of the new excerpt. We have quite often found particles and connectors like *nam*, *sed*, *igitur*, *deinde*, *proinde* at this position, but also forms of *hic*, both the pronoun and its adverbs. Another common element found at the start of an excerpt is a name, *quod* in the sense of ‘regarding’ or *de* followed by an ablative indicating a new topic, and marking a (possible) shift of Discourse Mode. The predicate seems to be typically placed at the beginning of a sentence in arrangements, whereas it is placed at the end in updates.

The main goal of this investigation was to provide teachers and (high school) students an approach to Latin letters based on text types. It resulted in teaching suggestions. The effectiveness of these suggestions should be experimentally investigated in further research.

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