Spoken and written modes of languages

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Spoken and written modes: which comes first?

Basic view:

- Spoken – primary (in the history, in the language acquisition by a child)
- Written – secondary, record of the speech
  - BUT: social and educational point of view (literacy, civilization, social prestige, official recognition; language standard)
  - NLP, linguistics: accessibility of written data

Different functions, forms and linguistic characteristics

Functions of spoken and written modes

(prototypical; other distinctions: prepared – non prepared; intently recorded – not recorded; formal – informal)

Speech:
- Quick, direct
- Not lasting
- Presence of the addressee (shared knowledge)
- Immediate feedback from the addressee
- Common context (situation)

Written mode:
- Relative permanence
- Different times, places, contexts
- Preparation, possibility to reformulate (author)
- Possibility to re-read or omit (addressee)

Linguistic characteristics of speech compared to written mode: inexplicitness

A. How did it go?

B. Not too bad. I'm just glad it's over.

C. Was it the last one?

D. Yes, for the time being.

Lack of clear sentence boundaries

And he was saying that erm – you can go to a nightclub in Birmingham – and watch Tony Bennet for about thirty bob – something like this a night with Tony Bennet – have a nice meal in very plushy surroundings very nice warm pleasant

Simple sentence structure, subordination rather at the end of the phrase than at the beginning

[Yesterday we saw the man [who is a friend of the woman [who lives in the house [which used to belong to us]]]].

[The man [who is a friend of the woman [who lives in the house [which used to belong to us]]] cam to see us yesterday].

Further features

- Repetitiveness (lower information density)
- Normal non-fluency:
  - Hesitation, unintended repetitions
  - Grammatical blends:
    Would you mind telling me what's the time?
  - False starts:
    You really ought – well do it your own way
- Monitoring and interaction features
- Informality