

## TEACHING STUDENTS TO CRITICALLY REFLECT ON NEWS REPORTS: EXAMPLE ANALYSES

James Bury

Shumei University, Department of Tourism and Business Management

Phone: +0081474091535, E-Mail: bury@mailg.shumei-u.ac.jp

**Abstract.** *Considered to be one of the most important skills that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students need to acquire, many courses focus on students' understanding of the lexical items and grammatical structures found within academic and authentic texts (Levine, Ferenz and Reves, 2000). However, developing a skill-set that combines academic reading skills and strategies in conjunction with critical literacy skills is essential in students attaining a highly functional level of both Academic English and general English. In this article, lexico-grammatical systems of headline formulation and White's (1997) satellite and nucleus model are used to demonstrate how analytical tools can be used by students to develop critical literacy.*

**Key words:** *critical literacy, critical reading, authentic texts, analytical tools*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to read academic and authentic texts is often considered one of the most important skills that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students need to acquire. Consequently, many courses focus on students' understanding of the lexical items and grammatical structures found within texts (Levine, Ferenz and Reves, 2000). However, in order to attain a highly functional level of both Academic English and general English, students need to develop a skill-set that combines not only academic reading skills and strategies, but critical literacy skills as well.

In this article, an analysis of two news reports of the same topic using lexico-grammatical systems of headline formulation and White's (1997) satellite and nucleus model is presented to demonstrate how these analytical tools can be used by students in classes ranging from English Literature to Critical Thinking. The articles that have been analysed (Appendix A) are from the websites of two popular British newspapers and the analysis offers valuable insights into how analytical tools can be utilised, providing numerous examples of segment analysis. Analyses of the two narratives are presented in Appendices B and C.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has highlighted the benefits of using authentic texts and situations, such as reading news articles, for writing and reading instruction (Kemp, 1993; Hancock, 1999).

The use of authentic texts can create a context in which learners gain autonomy and become empowered to read beyond the language learning classroom, contributing to the acquisition and implementation of critical reading skills (Trites, 1998).

The development of literacy and reading skills in authentic-like situations is particularly important for EFL students as they can often find the transition from reading in traditional classes to reading under authentic circumstances difficult (Levine, Ferenz and Reves, 2000). In conventional reading classrooms, students have the benefit of their instructors' guidance and course materials are often introduced using a graded, developmental approach where texts increase in complexity as the course progresses. However, when students are required to read authentic texts independently, they may not have access to guidance when a reading problem occurs. Thus, developing students' capabilities to read authentic texts is an important step towards functional level English reading.

The reading of news reports in the classroom exposes students to authentic texts while still providing them with the security of the classroom. This offers students the opportunity to read authentic texts independently as well as work under the guidance of a teacher when the need arises. The simulation of reading conditions outside the classroom can help ease students' transitions from learned reading skills to authentic reading skills, thus raising motivation (Levine, Ferenz and Reves, 2000; Guariento and Morley, 2001).

While developing academic reading skills and strategies helps students become functional and competent users of both Academic English and general English (Skehan, 1998; Schuetze, 2010), it is imperative for their future autonomy that they also learn critical literacy skills as the ability to read critically is widely regarded as one of the essential skills that should be gained through university education (Wilson et al., 2004). A common assumption is that students are able to develop critical reading skills simply by following general university courses without active intervention from their teachers or lecturers, but it has been claimed that students often read as passive consumers of information (Wilson, 1999), and do not engage in critical reading unless motivated to do so.

Palinsar and David (1991) define critical literacy skills as the ability to clarify the purpose of a text, to make use of relevant background knowledge, to focus on major content, to evaluate the reliability of content, and to draw and test inferences. According to Bakhtin's (1994) metaphor of voice, critical readers engage in an active process in which they filter texts through the lens of their own individual experience, relate texts to other sources, think of examples to corroborate or challenge texts, and extend or elaborate on the ideas presented in texts. Furthermore, they look for bias, poorly developed logic and hidden assumptions (Wallace, 1995). Developing these skills and the ability to reflect on texts and read critically is an important stage in a learner's development and helps students engage with texts and avoid biased representations.

### 3. ANALYTICAL TOOLS

The headline and lead of a news article typically summarize the text's key elements and outline the central parts of the report (Sperber and Wilson, 1986; Dor, 2003). They also act as the text's abstract and are given textual prominence through their initial position and the use of large and bolded font (Bell, 1991; Toolan, 2001). It is therefore important to initially focus on them during an evaluation.

There are various ways in which the evaluative stance taken in headlines might be compared, most of which are lexico-grammatical systems, including: Transitivity,

Passivisation, Nominalization, Modality and Evaluation, Namings and Descriptions, Collocational incongruity, Metaphor, Presentation of speech and Presupposition (Fairclough, 1995). The headlines of the two reports presented in this article are very different in their semantic prosody and effect, leading to interesting critical discourse analysis possibilities.

News reports in English are characteristically centred on the opening sentence and lead (van Dijk, 1988). White (1997) states that the body of the text rarely follows a straightforward temporal account of the events being reported, instead being structured in segments more to do with importance relative to the lead and headline than chronology, describing them as satellites orbiting a nucleus. The lead-dominated and orbitally-organised structure also contributes to an impersonal effect, suggesting impartiality and objectivity (Toolan, 2001). White (1997) identifies six distinct satellite functions:

Elaboration – a retelling or more detailed description of the headline/lead.

Cause-and-Effect – the reasons for, or consequences of, the headline/lead.

Concession – material represented as contrary to the headline/lead.

Justification – evidence or support for contentious claims made in the lead.

Contextualisation – placing the headline/lead in a temporal, spatial or social context.

Appraisal – evaluation or commentary, typically by an external expert or eyewitness.

The sequencing of satellites in relation to the nucleus allows for the potential re-ordering of segments, so that reversing two eyewitness reports or changing the position of an appraisal in relation to other points in the text would be possible without negatively affecting coherence. In contemporary news reporting, retellings and repetitive amplification are important as they often reveal the sources of information and help clarify events. However, reformulation can lead to misrepresentation (Toolan, 2001).

It has been suggested that the re-sequencing of satellites within a text can naturalise and depict one ideology as most rational, and that authors of news articles cannot be attributed with the same omniscience as fictional narrators (Hoey, 2001). Thus, neutrality can be affected and the ideologies and presentations of texts in the news can become skewed and used to support, promote or discredit certain positions.

Critical discourse research on ‘representation’ has examined the manner in which news reports interact in complex ways with their social and ideological contexts, and while narrative text can be decontextualised from its immediate situation, this is not true for the broader cultural framework. It is therefore inevitable that positions presented in news articles have some effect on readers and, consequently, have real world consequences. Trew (1979) states that mainstream newspapers typically report a version of a story which corresponds to the dominant ideology that operates within its internal structure. Therefore, enabling students to read critically and recognise situations where authors are presenting possibly distorted positions is essential in helping them avoid biased representations.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLES

##### *Headlines*

One major difference and point of analysis between the headlines is the use of Namings. Article 1, from [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), uses full names and makes direct reference to Gurkhas, placing them and their situation as the main focus of the text. Article 2, from [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), only uses surnames and does not mention Mr. Woolas, instead

opting to focus on [Gordon] Brown. The inclusion of Mr. Brown and not Mr. Woolas could be seen as bringing the Headline and article greater importance, as Mr. Brown held a higher position at the time the article was published. By not mentioning the Gurkhas, but opting to include Mr. Brown in the Headline, Article 2 is deflecting the attention away from the underlying situation of the Gurkhas and making the Headline more politically motivated.

Another major difference is the use of connotations and metaphor as the two articles approach the topic from different viewpoints. Stating that 'Joanna Lumley confronts Phil Woolas', Article 1 locates the two in opposition and conflict. While this may be the case to begin with, the article gradually explains that, as the meeting continued the confrontation was resolved and Ms. Lumley left feeling 'reassured'. The peaceful conclusion of the meeting may have been omitted from the headline to make the narrative appear more exciting than a more moderate headline, therefore enticing more people to read it. Whereas Article 1 may have a dramatic headline compared to the content of the text, Article 2 has an even more extreme headline with the use of the evocative expression 'Chaos reigns' and the apparently derisory use of 'merry dance'. From the contents of the article, the use of this term is misleading as Ms. Lumley neither deceived Mr. Brown nor confused him with her behaviour. Furthermore, the mention of Mr. Brown in the headline would lead the reader to believe that he would play a major role in the story, but in fact he is only mentioned in four of the 19 segments.

### *Structure*

Despite covering the same story the two analysed articles have very different structures. Article 1 has a mixed order of satellites in terms of function with the sequence [H, L, E, C, C, C, E, C, C, E, E, E, A, E, A, A, A, C, A, CE, CE, A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A] (where H = Headline, L = Lead, E = Elaboration, C = Contextualisation, CE = Cause and Effect and A = Appraisal). Article 2 follows the structure [H, L, E, E, E, E, E, E, C, C, C, A, A, A, A, A (C), A, A, A]. The variance in length, the mixed structure of segments in Article 1, and the grouping of segment functions together in Article 2 are immediately evident when comparing the two articles. The structure for Article 1 supports the hypothesis that satellites can be rearranged without causing incoherence, but the structure of Article 2 is much more formulaic with clearly defined boundaries between segment function stages. Both articles conclude with Appraisal sections and begin with an elaboration after the Lead, but this section in Article 1 is far shorter than in Article 2, possibly indicating a greater frequency of reporting in previous editions.

Segment 17 of Article 2 has been classified as A (C) as it is an Appraisal comment made by Mr. Woolas, but has important contextualising information about 100 related cases from earlier that week. Unlike White's (1997) model, which does not make allowances for cases where a single segment can have multiple functions, this example demonstrates that a number of possible function combinations are possible. Further examples include Segment 8 of Article 2, which could be described as Appraisal as Ms. Lumley makes comments regarding personal feeling, or Contextualisation as the meaning behind the letters is addressed and explained by Mr. Woolas; Segment 20 of Article 2, which has been classified as Appraisal, but could alternatively be regarded as Cause and Effect as some veterans are dying from treatable diseases as a result of not being granted permission to live in the UK; and Segment 11 of Article 1, which could be classified as both Elaboration and Appraisal. From the two articles analysed the most commonly ambiguous function is

Appraisal as people often give reasons for their opinions and commentary, which could then be further classified as any of the other functions.

Limiting segments to a single function can oversimplify longer, more complex segments of articles and leaves the possibility of disputable classifications within analyses. One possible solution would be to give segments dual or multiple functions, as in Segment 17 of Article 2. While this would be more time-consuming and could lead to longer, more convoluted analyses of texts, it would allow for more detailed examinations to be undertaken.

By using the notation A (C) for Segment 17 of Article 2, it has been demonstrated that the Contextualisation is embedded within an Appraisal, and this may be an appropriate approach for other segments. For example, Segment 5 in Article 1, where an Appraisal of government communication made by Ms. Lumley is embedded within a segment of Contextualisation about Mr. Brown not knowing about the letters, could be allocated the notation of C (A), where the parentheses demonstrate one function being embedded within another.

There are also segments that could be classified as either Elaboration or Contextualisation, but not given dual functionality. For example, Segment 9 of Article 1 could be classified as Contextualisation, placing the Headline in a temporal context, but the segment also elaborates on the setting and gives further details of the Headline 'confrontation'. Temporal Contextualisation can usually be distinguished from Elaboration by time markers, but where a segment spans a period of time from before the Headline occurrence to the actual event, the distinction becomes more difficult to define. It can also be problematic distinguishing between *social* Contextualisation and Appraisal as it is often accompanied by opinion or commentary.

In terms of the amount of narrative space filled by the different satellite functions, excluding the Headline and Lead, the Appraisal section in both articles is the largest. In Article 1, Appraisal accounts for 46.15% of the narrative space, Elaboration and Contextualisation account for 23.08% each, followed by Cause and Effect (7.69%). In Article 2, Appraisal accounts for 44.45%, Elaboration for 38.89% and Contextualisation 16.67%.

Analysis has shown that the most common satellite function in both articles is Appraisal, and further analysis of the Appraisal segments leads to interesting insights into the ideological stance and viewpoint of the author, and the organisation in which they were published. In Article 1, there are 12 segments of Appraisal, one of which has two opinions. Four opinions or comments are from Ms. Lumley, three from Mr. Woolas, two from Mr. Huhne, one from the Home Office, one from Mr. Cameron, one from the Gurhkas' lawyers and a commentary from the author. The three segments from Mr. Huhne and Mr. Cameron are interesting inclusions as they were from political opponents of the government at the time and do not appear to be directly concerned with the topic of the Gurhkas' cases, but more with poor communication within the government, hence functioning more as political manoeuvring than constructive movement towards a satisfactory conclusion of the case described in the articles.

The segment preceding the comments from Mr. Huhne and Mr. Cameron is the author's commentary about the issue being an embarrassment for the government, which acts as a precursor to the conclusion of the article. The two segments from Mr. Woolas seem to convey different reactions, as segment 15 appears defensive, but segment 18 conciliatory. The only contradictory segment is 23, where two opinions are expressed, with Ms. Lumley claiming that she was reassured, but the Gurhkas' lawyer contesting Mr. Woolas' claim that it would be 'bad politics and irresponsible to simply wave them in'.

Article 2 has eight segments of Appraisal, four of which are from Ms. Lumley, three from the Gurkhas' solicitor, and one from Mr. Woolas. The high proportion of Appraisal space given to Ms. Lumley reflects her inclusion in the Headline, but there is no Appraisal from Mr. Brown or any representative of him other than the one segment from Mr. Woolas. The three segments from the Gurkhas' solicitor give the article an apparently firmer grounding in the underlying situation of the Gurkhas than Article 1, and the naming of the Gurkhas' solicitor, David Enright, could show support through greater personalisation. It is interesting to note the greater number of segments of Appraisal from political sources in Article 1, despite the less overtly political Headline.

The two articles analysed in this paper are available online and therefore have a potentially global readership, but the websites are from British newspapers and the stories related to a British topic matter. Therefore, extensive contextualisation may have been unnecessary as the intended readership were possibly already aware of the story. This story was also part of an on-going campaign, being publicly headed by a well known actress, Joanna Lumley, which would have increased public awareness, diminishing the need for contextualisation. Thus, extensive contextualisation may have been excluded in order to avoid repetition and a focus on commentary and opinions adopted. It can therefore be posited that as the amount of exposure a news story increases, less Contextualisation is needed and, consequently, more Elaboration and Appraisal can be found. This is apparent in the two analysed articles.

## 5. DISCUSSION

News stories have a structure profoundly unlike that of other narratives and reports posted online are inevitably unique in structure, content and reading experience, with hypertext possibilities and embedded hotlinks. By analysing the various segments in a text using White's (1997) satellite and nucleus model, students can gain a greater understanding of its nuances and underlying ideologies. However, while White's (1997) model only allocates each segment one classification, it can be argued that satellites can have dual or multiple functions. This is a point that students should be made aware of not only when reading and analysing texts, but also when writing their own essays that could be evaluated and interpreted in different ways by different examiners.

The most commonly ambiguous function found in the analysed reports was Appraisal, so it should be highlighted that students should approach these segments with trepidation. This is especially pertinent as Appraisal constitutes the largest portions of both texts.

As these articles were published online, the structure may be less repetitive in nature than traditional newspaper articles due to the attached and embedded hotlinks. Furthermore, on websites there is also the chance for external Appraisal from readers after the publication of an article via comments sections. While these external comments and opinions can be controversial, they can also be manipulated in order to support or represent the ideological beliefs of the author or newspaper/website as the website administrators can reserve the right to remove or delete comments, giving them the opportunity to present mainly supportive comments. Furthermore, Kareklas et al. (2015) found that commenters' reactions to presented claims directly influence readers' attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, students should be aware of the importance of recognising the sources of Appraisal comments and opinions and how their positions could affect the points being put forward.

The length of time in the limelight and placing of an article on the internet can also affect its structure. Due to increased public awareness and attached or embedded hotlinks, less Contextualisation may be needed than in an article in a newspaper and Appraisal and Elaboration are given greater prominence. The finding that Contextualisation only accounts for 23.08% and 16.67% of the two texts indicates that students should be encouraged to conduct further background reading in order to gain a better understanding of the news being reported, avoiding just relying on one source of information on which to base their opinions.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Teaching students the importance of critical reading and developing their critical literacy skills can greatly increase their chances of recognising skewed or biased representations. However, using just one analytical tool does not provide enough evidence to ensure that students will be able to identify unrepresentative reporting.

Therefore, encouraging students to use a combination of tools and strategies is imperative. By doing so, educators will be able to improve their students' abilities to function at higher and more academic levels.

## REFERENCES

- Bakhtin, M.M. "Discourse in the Novel". In *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* edited by Holquist, M., 285-422. London: University of Texas Press. 1994.
- Bell, A. *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1991.
- Dor, D. "On newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers", *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (1):695-721. 2003.
- Fairclough, N. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman. 1995.
- Guariento, W. and Morley, J. "Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom". *ELT Journal*, 55 (4):347-353. 2001.
- Hancock, J. (Ed.) *Teaching literacy using information technology: A collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educator's Association*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 1999.
- Hoey, M. *Textual interaction: An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge. 2001.
- Kemp, F. "The origins of ENFI, network theory, and computer-based collaborative writing instruction at the University of Texas". In *Network-based classrooms* edited by Bertram, B., Peyton, J., and Batson, T., 161-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1993.
- Lankshear, C., Snyder, I. and Green, B. *Teachers and Technoliteracy: Managing Literacy, Technology and Learning in Schools*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin. 2000.
- Levine, A., Ferenz, O. and Reves, T. "EFL Academic Reading and Modern Technology: How Can We Turn Our Students into Independent Critical Readers?", *TESL-EJ*, 4 (4). 2000. Available at: <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume4/ej16/ej16a1/>
- Palincsar, A. and David, Y. "Promoting literacy through classroom dialogue". In *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies*, edited by Hiebert E., 122-140. NY: Teachers College Press. 1991.

- Scheutze, U. "Spiral Learning: An Introductory Course on Reading Lote Online." *Journal of Language Design* 4 (1):24-31. 2010.
- Skehan, P. *The cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. *Relevance: Commniation and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1986.
- Toolan, M. *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. London: Routledge. 2001.
- Trew, T, "Theory and ideology at work". In *Language and Control* edited by Fowler, R., Hodge, R., Kress, G. and Trew, T. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul. 1979.
- Trites, L. Hypertext and critical literacy. TESOL Convention. 1998.
- van Dijk, T. A. *News as Discourse*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. 1988.
- Wallace, C. "Reading with a Suspicious Eye: Critical Reading in the Foreign Language Classroom". In *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of Henry Widdowson* edited by Cook, G. and Seidlhofer, B. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995.
- White, P. R. "Death, disruption and the moral order: The narrative impulse in mass "hard news" reporting". In *Genres and Institutions: Social processes in the workplace and school* edited by Christie, F. and Martin J. R., 101-133. London: Cassell. 1997.
- Wilson, K., Devereux, L., Machen-Horarik, M. and Trimmingham-Jack, C. "Reading readings: How students learn to (dis)engage with critical reading". In *Transforming Knowledge into Wisdom: Holistic Approaches to Teaching and Learning* edited by Sheehy, F. and Stauble, B., *Proceedings of the 2004 Annual International Conference of HERDSA*, 4-7 July, Miri, Sarawak, (341-348), Milperra NSW: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia. 2004.
- Wilson, T. D. "Models in information behaviour research". *Journal of Documentation*, 55 (3):249-270. 1999.

#### APPENDIX 1 – THE ARTICLES

##### ***Joanna Lumley confronts Phil Woolas over Gurkhas (Article 1)***

Patrick Wintour, Political Editor, guardian.co.uk, *Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009*.

The government's policy towards the Gurkhas descended into a potentially hugely expensive shambles yesterday after the actor Joanna Lumley extracted fresh concessions in an extraordinary live television confrontation with the home office minister Phil Woolas.

The actor, who has been a powerful champion for the Gurkhas as they have fought through the courts and parliament, exploited Home Office heavy-handedness to demand assurances from a sheepish Woolas after five former Gurkhas received letters from the home office apparently telling them they did not qualify to settle in Britain.

The letters arrived only a day after Gordon Brown at prime minister's questions and in a private meeting with Lumley had promised their cases would be reviewed, and insisted he was taking personal charge of the issue.

Brown had not known about the letters and was only informed of their existence by Lumley who tartly spoke of "a gap in communications inside government", and her sense of personal shock.



Lumley disclosed she had been up at midnight sending a three-page personal letter to Brown, only to be told of the letters of rejection yesterday morning.

An angry Home Office hit back, privately accusing Lumley of being exploited by those campaigning on behalf of the Gurkhas, and insisting the letters to the five Gurkhas had clearly said their applications had only been rejected under previous criteria, but would be reviewed under new criteria that would be drawn up by the end of the month. Ministers had agreed to establish new criteria after an unprecedented Commons defeat last week.

Lumley sprung into action, calling a Westminster press conference yesterday afternoon after the five Gurkhas received apparent letters of rejection from the Borders and Immigration Agency.

Alerted to Lumley's decision to hold a press conference, Woolas raced to the TV studios across the road from parliament to send out a message of reassurance about the real meaning of the letters, only for Lumley to follow him and then agree to hold an impromptu meeting accompanied by cameras in the offices of the BBC, the first time the two protagonists had met.

Lumley told Woolas she was shocked at the letters and wanted assurances the Gurkhas, including some Falklands veterans, would not go through "this cartwheel of emotions".

The pair then agreed to hold a joint press conference at which a visibly squirming Woolas insisted the government was obliged by the terms of a court judgement to send the letters.

Home Office sources insisted the Gurkha's lawyers would have understood the letters' true meaning, adding "someone is playing childish games ... a slick political operation is running this".

But at the joint press conference the cornered minister was forced to nod in agreement as Lumley dictated that the Gurkha lawyers would help in drawing up the new guidelines, that the review would be completed by June, and the cases of the 1,500 outstanding Gurkha applicants would all be looked at "most sympathetically".

Lumley insisted: "There is so little to be reviewed, so little to be looked at, except all these men, all these applicants should be received with open arms."

Woolas countered: "This letter is not a letter of rejection. It is a letter explaining the legal process." He added it would be bad politics and irresponsible simply to wave them in.

The home office stressed that of the 1,500 outstanding cases, 100 had been waved through this week. Woolas added he thought the five cases in contention yesterday were also likely to be agreed.

Ministers are worried that they may set a precedent that would allow any overseas soldier who had fought for Britain entry along with their family.

Ministers say they can only construct the new criteria after they have completed the review of the 1,500 cases.

Lumley said: "I know we have been accused of being emotional but that is because I am an actress and a woman, and we are always being accused of being emotional of which I am rather proud. I think that unless you can take judgments of right and wrong like an automaton, you must have emotions because that is our only way of moral guidance."

Although Lumley left the confrontation saying she was once more reassured, the Gurkha lawyers took a harder line insisting it was ridiculous to suggest the floodgates would be opened.

For the government, an issue which has seen them embarrassed for most of a week shows no sign of going away. Tory leader David Cameron said the left hand of government did not know what the right hand was doing.

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman Chris Huhne said: "At worst this was a betrayal of the Gurkhas and at best a monumental shambles in government where one part didn't know what the other part was doing."

Huhne added: "It is amazing that the day after the prime minister says he is taking charge ... decorated war heroes from the Falklands war have received letters saying they won't be allowed to stay."

### *Chaos reigns as Lumley leads Brown a merry dance (Article 2)*

Andrew Grice, Political Editor, [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), *Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009*.

Actress meets with immigration minister over 'contradictory' letters.

The Government's response to the Gurkha veterans' campaign for residence rights in Britain descended into farce yesterday only 24 hours after Gordon Brown appeared to have defused the row.

The actress Joanna Lumley, who is heading the campaign, renewed hostilities with the Home Office after it sent out letters to four ex-Gurkhas, including two injured in the Falklands War, telling them they had lost their fight to live in Britain. Mr Brown and other ministers were unaware of the letters, which prompted claims of "betrayal" by the Gurkhas because the Prime Minister had reassured Ms Lumley in talks on Wednesday.

Phil Woolas, the immigration minister, held an emergency session with the actress in the BBC's Westminster studio in an attempt to calm her over the letters. There were then bizarre scenes as they held a joint press conference in a Westminster restaurant, with Ms Lumley trying to bounce an uncomfortable-looking Mr Woolas into concessions on live television.

Eventually Ms Lumley said she felt "reassured again" after Mr Woolas explained that the letters were not "letters of rejection". They were test cases in a High Court battle last month lost by the Gurkhas but have been overtaken by the Government's review of its policy after last week's Commons defeat on the issue.

The latest episode in the Gurkhas' saga was embarrassing for Mr Brown, who took charge of the matter after disputes between the Home Office, Ministry of Defence and Treasury were blamed for his first Commons defeat.

Ms Lumley revealed that Downing Street called her shortly before she was to hold a press conference yesterday to explain that it had just heard the letters had been sent. She delayed her event after watching Mr Woolas give a BBC interview, and then held impromptu talks with him. "It seems the Prime Minister did not know about this," she said. "I think he was very anxious. It was in contradiction to what he said yesterday." She said Downing Street was "not up to speed", adding: "There seems to be a gap in communications."

Mr Woolas insisted that immigration policy could not "be determined on a whim" but said more than 100 Gurkhas had won the right to live in Britain in the past week.

David Enright, a solicitor for the Gurkhas' campaign, said: "I am not reassured. We should not be waiting years and years." He said the veterans were older and dying from diseases such as pneumonia that would be treated easily in Britain.

## APPENDIX 2

ANALYSIS OF ARTICLE 1 BY PATRICK WINTOUR, GUARDIAN.CO.UK, THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009.

1. Joanna Lumley confronts Phil Woolas over Gurkhas (Headline)
2. The government's policy towards the Gurkhas descended into a potentially hugely expensive shambles yesterday after the actor Joanna Lumley extracted fresh concessions in an extraordinary live television confrontation with the home office minister Phil Woolas. (Lead)
3. The actor, who has been a powerful champion for the Gurkhas as they have fought through the courts and parliament, exploited Home Office heavy-handedness to demand assurances from a sheepish Woolas after five former Gurkhas received letters from the home office apparently telling them they did not qualify to settle in Britain. (Elaboration)
4. The letters arrived only a day after Gordon Brown at prime minister's questions and in a private meeting with Lumley had promised their cases would be reviewed, and insisted he was taking personal charge of the issue. (Contextualisation)
5. Brown had not known about the letters and was only informed of their existence by Lumley who tartly spoke of "a gap in communications inside government", and her sense of personal shock. (Contextualisation)
6. Lumley disclosed she had been up at midnight sending a three-page personal letter to Brown, only to be told of the letters of rejection yesterday morning. (Contextualisation)
7. An angry Home Office hit back, privately accusing Lumley of being exploited by those campaigning on behalf of the Gurkhas, and insisting the letters to the five Gurkhas had clearly said their applications had only been rejected under previous criteria, but would be reviewed under new criteria that would be drawn up by the end of the month. (Elaboration)
8. Ministers had agreed to establish new criteria after an unprecedented Commons defeat last week. (Contextualisation)
9. Lumley sprung into action, calling a Westminster press conference yesterday afternoon after the five Gurkhas received apparent letters of rejection from the Borders and Immigration Agency. (Contextualisation)
10. Alerted to Lumley's decision to hold a press conference, Woolas raced to the TV studios across the road from parliament to send out a message of reassurance about the real meaning of the letters, only for Lumley to follow him and then agree to hold an impromptu meeting accompanied by cameras in the offices of the BBC, the first time the two protagonists had met. (Elaboration)
11. Lumley told Woolas she was shocked at the letters and wanted assurances the Gurkhas, including some Falklands veterans, would not go through "this cartwheel of emotions". (Elaboration)
12. The pair then agreed to hold a joint press conference at which a visibly squirming Woolas insisted the government was obliged by the terms of a court judgement to send the letters. (Elaboration)
13. Home Office sources insisted the Gurkha's lawyers would have understood the letters' true meaning, adding "someone is playing childish games ... a slick political operation is running this". (Appraisal)
14. But at the joint press conference the cornered minister was forced to nod in agreement as Lumley dictated that the Gurkha lawyers would help in drawing up the new guidelines, that the review would be completed by June, and the cases of the 1,500 outstanding Gurkha applicants would all be looked at "most sympathetically". (Elaboration)

15. Lumley insisted: "There is so little to be reviewed, so little to be looked at, except all these men, all these applicants should be received with open arms." (Appraisal)

16. Woolas countered: "This letter is not a letter of rejection. It is a letter explaining the legal process." (Appraisal)

17. He added it would be bad politics and irresponsible simply to wave them in. (Appraisal)

18. The home office stressed that of the 1,500 outstanding cases, 100 had been waved through this week. (Contextualisation)

19. Woolas added he thought the five cases in contention yesterday were also likely to be agreed. (Appraisal)

20. Ministers are worried that they may set a precedent that would allow any overseas soldier who had fought for Britain entry along with their family. (Cause and Effect)

21. Ministers say they can only construct the new criteria after they have completed the review of the 1,500 cases. (Cause and Effect)

22. Lumley said: "I know we have been accused of being emotional but that is because I am an actress and a woman, and we are always being accused of being emotional of which I am rather proud. (Appraisal)

23. I think that unless you can take judgments of right and wrong like an automaton, you must have emotions because that is our only way of moral guidance." (Appraisal)

24. Although Lumley left the confrontation saying she was once more reassured, the Gurkha lawyers took a harder line insisting it was ridiculous to suggest the floodgates would be opened. (Appraisal)

25. For the government, an issue which has seen them embarrassed for most of a week shows no sign of going away. (Appraisal)

26. Tory leader David Cameron said the left hand of government did not know what the right hand was doing. (Appraisal)

27. Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman Chris Huhne said: "At worst this was a betrayal of the Gurkhas and at best a monumental shambles in government where one part didn't know what the other part was doing." (Appraisal)

28. Huhne added: "It is amazing that the day after the prime minister says he is taking charge ... decorated war heroes from the Falklands war have received letters saying they won't be allowed to stay." (Appraisal)

## APPENDIX 2

ANALYSIS OF ARTICLE 2 BY ANDREW GRICE, WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK, *FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009*.

1. Chaos reigns as Lumley leads Brown a merry dance. (Headline)

2. Actress meets with immigration minister over 'contradictory' letters. (Lead)

3. The Government's response to the Gurkha veterans' campaign for residence rights in Britain descended into farce yesterday only 24 hours after Gordon Brown appeared to have defused the row. (Elaboration)

4. The actress Joanna Lumley, who is heading the campaign, renewed hostilities with the Home Office after it sent out letters to four ex-Gurkhas, including two injured in the Falklands War, telling them they had lost their fight to live in Britain. (Elaboration)

5. Mr Brown and other ministers were unaware of the letters, which prompted claims of "betrayal" by the Gurkhas because the Prime Minister had reassured Ms Lumley in talks on Wednesday. (Elaboration)

6. Phil Woolas, the immigration minister, held an emergency session with the actress in the BBC's Westminster studio in an attempt to calm her over the letters. (Elaboration)
7. There were then bizarre scenes as they held a joint press conference in a Westminster restaurant, with Ms Lumley trying to bounce an uncomfortable-looking Mr Woolas into concessions on live television. (Elaboration)
8. Eventually Ms Lumley said she felt "reassured again" after Mr Woolas explained that the letters were not "letters of rejection". (Elaboration)
9. They were test cases in a High Court battle last month lost by the Gurkhas but have been overtaken by the Government's review of its policy after last week's Commons defeat on the issue. (Elaboration)
10. The latest episode in the Gurkhas' saga was embarrassing for Mr Brown, who took charge of the matter after disputes between the Home Office, Ministry of Defence and Treasury were blamed for his first Commons defeat. (Contextualisation)
11. Ms Lumley revealed that Downing Street called her shortly before she was to hold a press conference yesterday to explain that it had just heard the letters had been sent. (Contextualisation)
12. She delayed her event after watching Mr Woolas give a BBC interview, and then held impromptu talks with him. (Contextualisation)
13. "It seems the Prime Minister did not know about this," she said. (Appraisal)
14. "I think he was very anxious. (Appraisal)
15. It was in contradiction to what he said yesterday." (Appraisal)
16. She said Downing Street was "not up to speed", adding: "There seems to be a gap in communications." (Appraisal)
17. Mr Woolas insisted that immigration policy could not "be determined on a whim" but said more than 100 Gurkhas had won the right to live in Britain in the past week. (Appraisal/contextualisation)
18. David Enright, a solicitor for the Gurkhas' campaign, said: "I am not reassured. (Appraisal)
19. We should not be waiting years and years." (Appraisal)
20. He said the veterans were older and dying from diseases such as pneumonia that would be treated easily in Britain. (Appraisal)