Revisit L&W 1967. Reliability of Narrative Analysis
(Labov & Waletzky, 1967)
What is a narrative?

- **Referential** and **evaluative**
- A sequence of clauses in the correct temporal order
- Contains at least one temporal juncture
  - I interpret this to mean some ‘causality’
A complete narrative contains:

- Orientation
- Complication
- Evaluation
- Resolution
- Coda
From “The Security Breach” by Kim Wolterman

As I intimated in the last post, my trip home from Canada was rather exciting. All six of us arrived at the airport at the same time since Jill and I were only leaving thirty minutes after the rest of our group. Canada international travel is somewhat interesting as you have to clear customs there before heading into the United States. That was fine with me, as Jill and I only had 50 minutes to make our connecting flight in Chicago, which would have left no time to go through customs there. Jill and I checked in with the AA agent at the counter, using Ted's credit card to check the two bags. We figured since we were arriving in St. Louis before the guys, we could go ahead and collect the luggage while waiting for them to arrive. The agent gave us the receipt for the luggage and then our boarding passes. Next stop was with an employee of the airport, who scans the boarding passes and advises you about how many checked bags you have listed. First clue that something was awry is that the gal told Ted he had checked one bag, which he had not. Jim was advised the same thing. Jill and I, however, were told we had checked no bags. In looking at the baggage claim receipt, we saw that the AA agent had checked the bags through LaGuardia with Ted. I am assuming that was because we used his credit card, so she just attached it to his ticket. A minor inconvenience, but no biggie. Rather than go back out and try to correct this, we just let it go. But alas that was not all the AA agent had screwed up. As I intimated in the last post, my trip home from Canada was rather exciting. All six of us arrived at the airport at the same time since Jill and I were only leaving thirty minutes after the rest of our group. Canada international travel is somewhat interesting as you have to clear customs there before heading into the United States. That was fine with me, as Jill and I only had 50 minutes to make our connecting flight in Chicago, which would have left no time to go through customs there. Jill and I checked in with the AA agent at the counter, using Ted's credit card to check the two bags. We figured since we were arriving in St. Louis before the guys, we could go ahead and collect the luggage while waiting for them to arrive. The agent gave us the receipt for the luggage and then our boarding passes. Next stop was with an employee of the airport, who scans the boarding passes and advises you about how many checked bags you have listed. First clue that something was awry is that the gal told Ted he had checked one bag, which he had not. Jim was advised the same thing. Jill and I, however, were told we had checked no bags. In looking at the baggage claim receipt, we saw that the AA agent had checked the bags through LaGuardia with Ted. I am assuming that was because we used his credit card, so she just attached it to his ticket. A minor inconvenience, but no biggie. Rather than go back out and try to correct this, we just let it go. But alas that was not all the AA agent had screwed up.
Aim: Can people do this reliably, with high agreement?

- Is the model **Good? Robust? Comprehensive?**
  - Are there categories of stuff in narrative that this model is missing?
  - Is it possible to reliably distinguish between the categories that are there?

- Reliability: need for both theoretical and empirical, scientific reasons

- My proposal: forget about ‘complication’, ‘temporal junction’ and ‘displacement sets’

- Focus on whether we can distinguish orientation, evaluation, actions and coda.
Aim: Can people do this reliably, with high agreement?

- Machine Learning: Categories clearly separated
- Need some level of agreement at least about 70% (Kappa of .7)

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Aim: Can people do this reliably, with high agreement?

- Machine Learning: Categories clearly separated
- Need agreement
- What would you do if this is what you got?

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How Kappa is calculated & methods for:

- Define a codebook, annotation manual
- Collapse categories that are confusible

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Kappa = (Observed agreement - Chance agreement) / (1 - Chance agreement)

Observed agreement = (10 + 12) / 29 = 0.76
Chance agreement = 0.586 * 0.345 + 0.655 * 0.414 = 0.474
Kappa = (0.76 - 0.474) / (1 - 0.474) = 0.54
Aim: Can people do this reliably, with high agreement?

- My proposal: forget about ‘complication’, ‘temporal junction’ and ‘displacement sets’
- Focus on whether we can distinguish orientation, evaluation, actions and coda.
Stephanie Lukin and Georg Albrecht
As I intimated in the last post, my trip home from Canada was rather exciting. All six of us arrived at the airport at the same time since Jill and I were only leaving thirty minutes after the rest of our group. Canada international travel is somewhat interesting as you have to clear customs there before heading into the United States. That was fine with me as Jill and I only had 50 minutes to make our connecting flight in Chicago, which would have left no time to go through customs there. Jill and I checked in with the AA agent at the counter, using Ted’s credit card to check the two bags. We figured since we were arriving in St. Louis before the guys, we could go ahead and collect the luggage while waiting for them to arrive. The agent gave us the receipt for the luggage and then our boarding passes. Next stop was with an employee of the airport, who scans the boarding passes and advises you about how many checked bags you have listed. First clue that something was awry is that the gal told Ted he had checked one bag, which he had not. Jim was advised the same thing. Jill and I, however, were told we had checked no bags. In looking at the baggage claim receipt, we saw that the AA agent had checked the bags through LaGuardia with Ted. I am assuming that was because we used his credit card, so she just attached it to his ticket. A minor inconvenience, but no biggie. Rather than go back out and try to correct this, we just let it go. But alas that was not all the AA agent had screwed up.
Evaluation or Orientation?

“As I intimated in the last post, my trip home from Canada was rather exciting.”

“Canada international travel is somewhat interesting as you have to clear customs there before heading into the United States.”

“We figured since we were arriving in St. Louis before the guys”
Action or Evaluation?

- “First clue that something was awry is that the gal told Ted he had checked one bag, [which he had not].”

- “I am assuming that was because [we used his credit card, so she just attached it to his ticket].”

Evaluation or Coda?

- “But alas that was not all the AA agent had screwed up.”
This past Friday morning, I dressed in my best cowgirl attire including the new (and only) straw hat I own. I put on a long sleeved shirt and jeans to protect me from the sun and boots to protect me from the elements. We started by gathering the horses which took a little under half an hour since Zip did not want to be corralled and saddled. Once the horses, saddled and bridled, loaded up in the trailer, we were off to the pasture east to get some strays before moving cattle closer to the house (a mere five mile ride). I found an old favorite bay horse named Tivio to be my perfect companion. We rode along enjoying the day while the men opened gates and went after ornery steers. By the end of several hours, I had only a sore knee to keep me company (and we did grill steaks and fresh zucchini for lunch). I’d say more riding is in my future. I loved the time out in nature and with my husband.
“We started by gathering the horses [which took a little under half an hour] since Zip did not want to be corralled and saddled”

“Once the horses, saddled and bridled, loaded up in the trailer, we were off to the pasture east to get some strays before moving cattle closer to the house [(a mere five mile ride)].”

“[By the end of several hours], I had only a sore knee to keep me company (and we did grill steaks and fresh zucchini for lunch).”
Action or Evaluation?

- “I found an old favorite bay horse named Tivio to be my perfect companion.”

Evaluation or Coda?

- “I'd say more riding is in my future. I loved the time out in nature and with my husband.”
Towards annotating narrative structures reliably
Why?

- Hypothesis: If we could automatically recognize orientation vs. action vs. evaluation that would be a very useful first step towards automatic derivation of narrative structures
- Riedl papers: Only the actions, not orientations or evaluations
The Narrative Clause

- The "basic unit" of narrative
- A clause that is temporally ordered
- Contains a verb, the "narrative head"
  - WHAT KIND OF VERB?
  - STATIVE VS. ACTIVE?
  - MENTAL STATE VERBS
- Has an "unordered displacement set"
- Labov 1997 defines this much better
The Narrative Clause

1. The temporal organization of narrative.

This discussion of temporal organization includes a new piece of terminology not present in L&W, a "sequential clause."

(1.1) Definition: Two clauses are separated by a temporal juncture if a reversal of their order results in a change in the listener's interpretation of the order of the events described.

Thus all the clauses in (1) are separated by temporal juncture with the following exceptions: (a) and (b) overlap so there is no juncture between them, and (i) overlaps (j) and (k), so there is no juncture between (i) and (j).[5]

(1.1.1) Implication [and definition of a minimal narrative]: A narrative must contain at least one temporal juncture.

As L&W point out, stories can be told without any temporal juncture by syntactic embedding, the use of the past perfect and other grammatical devices. Temporal juncture is the simplest, most favored or unmarked way of recounting the past.

(1.2) Definition: A sequential clause is a clause that can be an element of a temporal juncture.

Any temporal relation of a subordinate clause to its matrix clause will be indicated by its subordinate conjunction like before, after. Other subordinate conjunctions like about in (1c) can only indicate simultaneity. Subordinate (i.e., dependent) clauses cannot therefore enter into temporal juncture.

(1.2.1) Implication: All sequential clauses are independent clauses (but not all independent clauses are sequential clauses).

For an independent clause to be a sequential clause, its head must include a tense that is not only deictic, indicating a specific time domain, but identify sequential time relations. The English past progressive designates a time before the time of speaking but does not focus on the beginning or end points of that time. Can the progressive function as the head of a sequential clause? A number of cases like (11) indicate that this is a possibility. The progressive in (11) is simultaneous with (j,k) but appears to be sequenced after (b).[6]

(1.2.2) Implication: [In English], sequential clauses are headed by verbs in the preterit tense, past progressive, or the present tense with the semantic interpretation of a preterit (historical present).

Both the general definition of narrative and the definition of temporal juncture demand that the reports be reports of real events. It follows that modals, futures and negatives cannot serve as the heads of verb phrases which enter into temporal juncture. In English, this function is reserved for the indicative mood, which is our only reals mood.

(1.2.3) Implication: All sequential clauses are in the reals mood.

(1.3) Definition: A narrative clause consists of a sequential clause [the head] with all subordinate clauses that are dependent upon it.
A sequential clause is one that can be an element of temporal juncture.

Sequential clauses are headed by verbs in the

- Preterit tense (simple past), *He walked*
- Present tense with interpretation of historical present, *He walks*
- Past progressive, *He was walking*

It follows that modals, futures and negatives cannot serve as the heads of verb phrases which enter into temporal juncture.

All sequential clauses are in the ‘realis’ mood (indicative mood in English)
Indicative: There are three major moods in English: the indicative mood is used to make factual statements or pose questions, the imperative mood to express a request or command, and the (rarely used) subjunctive mood to show a wish, doubt, or anything else contrary to fact.

All sequential clauses are independent clauses

Valid narrative clauses contain a sequential clause

A narrative clause consists of a sequential clause (the head) with all the subordinate clauses that are dependent on it.
Labov 97: new category “Abstract”

- An ABSTRACT is an initial clause in a narrative that reports the entire sequence of events of the narrative.
- An ORIENTATION gives information on the time, place of events of the narrative, the identifies of the participations and their initial behavior.
- A CODA is a final clause which returns the narrative to the time of speaking, PRECLUDING a potential question “And what happened then?”
Orientation

- Formally: The group of free clauses that precede the first narrative clause.
- The beginning part of a narrative that "sets the scene" to help orient the audience.
- Used to describe who/where/when/why.
- Ex: "One afternoon, after finishing lunch, my friends and I were walking to our car when suddenly...".
- Thorne: Orientation (which orients the listener with respect to person, place, time, and situation) is formally defined as preceding the first action clause (p. 27), as in "It was a dark and stormy night, or “Last Friday,” or “remember that guy from back home, well last night when we were at the restaurant, he …” (p. 27). However, orientations can be scattered throughout the story. Orientation is not a crucial feature of a story. Temporal action and evaluation are crucial aspects.
Evaluation

- **SEEMS LIKE IT COULD OCCUR ANYWHERE**
- Highlights the significance of the result.
- May include the story's "moral" or the narrator's perspective.
- **SUBJECTIVITY? SENTIMENT?**
- Thorne: 5. Evaluation is crucial to a story because it tells the attitude of the teller, or the point of the story; stories are told for a reason (p. 28), to “establish some point of personal interest” (p. 29). Evaluations can be very brief. For example, at the end of a near-death story, the teller says “You’d have been dead.” This tells the listener that the experience was really dangerous; anyone could have died. (p. 30). Or the teller might say “It was cool man, I survived”, which conveys a very different attitude on the part of the teller. “The evaluation .. reveals the attitude of the narrator toward the story by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units relative to others.” (p. 32) the evaluation might serve the function of self-aggrandizement (as in “You’d have been dead, I survived, man!” (p. 34) At some point L & W say that evaluations suspend the action (sort of like stepping out of the action to express a point of view about the meaning of the action or experience to the teller or to other characters in the story).

- 6. Stories vary in the degree to which evaluations are stated directly as the teller’s attitude or point of view; “external” evaluations state the teller’s point of view directly (I thought it sucked”). Some evaluations are “internal” in that they are expressed through 3rd parties in the story (“he said it sucked”). evaluations are stated directly or more internalized. (pp. 34-35). page 35 shows a chart of evaluations that vary from internal to external.
Labov 97: Evaluation definitions

- An evaluative clause provides evaluation of a narrative event, i.e., provides information on the consequences of the event for human needs and desires.

- A narrative clause in an *irrealis* mood is an evaluative clause:
  - Emphasis, parallel structures, comparatives
  - Modals negatives futures.
  - Main point: References to events that did not occur, might have occurred or would occur serve an evaluative purpose.

- A narrator evaluates events by comparing them with events in an *alternative reality that was not in fact realized*. 
Quoted speech discussion

The application of this conception of evaluation to (1) is straightforward except for the problem of quotations. On the one hand, (1g) can be viewed as a simple action which is a bound event: Shambaugh said something to the Norwegian sailor. On the other hand, what was said represents two distinct speech actions: a bare imperative which represents an unmitigated command; and a negative scalar ("if I don't want to do a minimal action like fooling with you, it follows that I don't want to do any more important action.") From everything we know about the connectivity of speech acts, the analysis must ultimately rise to this more abstract level of action. Yet it is at the level of sentence grammar that we find our most direct clues to evaluation. When an actor in the narrative is animated to speak directly, no matter what the topic or the addressee, the current situation is open to evaluation. The use of negatives, comparatives, modals or futures is therefore to be read as a form of evaluation. In this sense, (1h) evaluates the narrative situation by comparing it with one in which Shambaugh would want to fool with the other, and in (1j) the other evaluates the situation in comparison with one where it would be safe for Shambaugh to move his head. The assignment of structural categories to the 12 clauses is accordingly that of (1").
OR \textsubscript{0}^{a_2} 
restricted Oh I w's settin' at a table drinkin'

CA \textsubscript{1}^{b_0} 
restricted And - this Norwegian sailor come over

CA \textsubscript{0}^{c_0} 
bound an' kep' givin' me a bunch o' junk
about I was sittin' with his woman.

OR \textsubscript{d} 
free An' everybody sittin' at the table with me were my shipmates

CA \textsubscript{0}^{e_0} 
bound So I jus' turn aroun'

CA \textsubscript{0}^{f_0} 
bound an' shoved `im,

CA \textsubscript{0}^{g_0} 
bound an' told `im, I said, "Go away,"

EV \textsubscript{0}^{h_0} 
bound [and I said,] " I don't even wanna fool with ya."

An' nex' thing I know

CA \textsubscript{0}^{i_2} 
restricted I 'm layin' on the floor, blood all over me,

EV \textsubscript{1}^{j_0} 
restricted An' a guy told me, says, "Don't move your head."

CA \textsubscript{0}^{k_0} 
bound [and he said], "Your throat's cut."
CODA

Occasionally present after the Resolution.

Returns the narrative perspective to the present.

  Deixis: Shifting narrative perspective to present and referencing the story as occurring in the past.

  Reference to the present state of some aspect of narrative.

  Reference the current effect of the narrative.

All codas are separated from the Resolution by a temporal junction.
Also Causality, praise and blame etc.

- See Labov 1997
L&W defined the coda as a the clause or clauses that bring the narrative back to the time of telling, so that the question "What happened then?" is no longer appropriate. This does not mean that the listener is automatically satisfied with all of the information given on the outcome of the most reportable event. If a resolution is not satisfactory in this respect, the listener will have the impression that the narrative is incomplete. I have probed a number of audiences for their reaction to narrative (1) on this point, and the consensus seems to be that the narrative does come to an end. Shambaugh paused at this point long enough for me to ask a question, and in a series of exchanges I learned that the Norwegian sailor's knife had cut his throat but missed the jugular vein; that Shambaugh in fact had the knife upstairs in his room; that one of his friends had hit the Norwegian sailor with a chair; and that the blow had killed him. These facts are interesting, and their absence from the narrative throws light on Shambaugh's approach to the matter. But they do not form part of the narrative as it is now constituted, and we must infer that (1j,k) is indeed its resolution.
Extra slides
Some other NLP work doing narrative annotation

Annotation of Children’s Oral Modeling Emergent Narrative Skills for Co

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Inferred NCUs
To capture the evaluative dimension (Labov & Waletzky 1967) of the narrations, we created five categories during our pilot study of narrations produced by older children; in addition we use a sixth none of the above category. Along with each definition, we give one or more examples from the narrations. Although we created the categories independently, they have a fairly direct correspondence with those created by (Tannen 1980) for the Pear stories and by (Donaldson 1986) for children’s explanations; we believe this coincidence of categorization schemes supports their validity.

1. Thematic (T): utterance refers to an overarching theme (e.g. the movie is about a boy), or describes a thematic pattern the balloon follows the boy everywhere

2. Psychological Inference (P): utterance that expresses an inference about the psychological state of a character (e.g. his nanny didn’t like having the balloon in the house)

3. Interpolated Event (I): utterance about an objective action that was not represented in the movie, but where commonsense knowledge supports the inference that the action occurred (e.g., he went to bed, he woke up at transition to a new day in the film)

4. Causation (C): utterance that explains why an action happened, whether it be a concrete action or an interpersonal one, such as teasing (e.g., the balloon followed the principal to get the key to unlock the door

5. Desire (D): inferring a character’s positive or negative desires (e.g., because they wanted to touch his balloon; he didn’t want him to go on (the bus))

Figure 2: The first six SEvents in the scene structure of The Red Balloon
Participant Subjectivity and Involvement as a Basis for Discourse Segmentation

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sage is determined by the type of situations described in the text (e.g., event, state, general stative, etc.) and the temporal progression of the situations in the discourse. Situation types are in turn organized according to the perspectival properties of aspect and temporal location. A narrative passage, for example, relates principally specific events and states, with dynamic temporal advancement of narrative time between sentences. On the other hand, an information passage relates primarily general statives with atemporal progression.

Dialogue 1: An example dialogue extract showing intentional segment boundaries.

PearStories-09 (Chafe, 1980)

21.2 okay.
22.1 Meanwhile,
22.2 there are three little boys,
22.3 up on the road a little bit,
22.4 and they see this little accident.
23.1 And u-h they come over,
23.2 and they help him,
23.3 and you know,
23.4 help him pick up the pears and everything.
24.1 A-n-d the one thing that struck me about the three little boys that were there,
24.2 is that one had ay uh I don’t know what you call them,
24.3 but it’s a paddle,
24.4 and a ball-
24.5 is attached to the paddle,
24.6 and you know you bounce it?
25.1 And that sound was really prominent.
26.1 Well anyway,
26.2 so- u-m tsk all the pears are picked up,
26.3 and he’s on his way again,
Event Extraction in a Plot Advice Agent

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first-person participation [1P] – helps to distinguish meta-discussion between the speaker and hearer (e.g., “Did I tell you that?”)

generic second-person [2P-GEN] – helps to distinguish narration told from the perspective of a generic participant (e.g., “You see a man picking pears”)

third-person stative/progressive [3P-STAT]  
– helps to distinguish narrative activities related to “setting the scene” (e.g., “[There is a man] a man is] picking pears”)

third-person event [3P-EVENT] – helps to distinguish event-driven third-person narrative activities (e.g. “The man drops the pears”)

past/non-past [PAST] – helps to distinguish narrative activities by temporal orientation (e.g. “The man drops the pears” vs. “The man dropped the pears”)
cant influence on the study of natural language narratives (see Dahlberg 1997, Herman 1999c; Labov 1997; Linde 1993; Polanyi 1985, 1989). Associating narrative with punctual or at least temporally determinate event types—indeed, in some cases making punctually coded events a criterion for stories—work in this field often assumes that achievements and accomplishments are the hallmarks of storytelling. In an early presentation of his model, Labov (1972a) argued that the skeleton of a narrative is a series of narrative clauses that are temporally ordered, that is, separate altering the interpretation of the story. In other words, to be processed as narrative versus free or restricted, clauses would preferentially code events as punctual in type, with the implication that “[c]lauses containing used to, would, and the general present [e.g., That really makes you feel alive] are not narrative clauses and cannot support a narrative” (362). Likewise, for Livia Polanyi (1985), a story is a fictional or non-fictional narrative account “involving specific past-time events in which the teller may or may not appear as a character” (183). Polanyi goes on to the story the narrative tells. By contrast, free clauses (something like, say, The sun shone steadily) are completely unrestricted as to ordering, whereas restricted clauses (I got a headache because of the driving) could occupy several (but not all) possible positions in the discourse without altering the interpretation of the story. In other words, to be processed as narrative versus free or restricted, clauses would preferentially code events as punctual in type, with the implication that “[c]lauses contain-
Vendler (106) developed the notion of “time-schemata” to highlight the distinctions at issue:

for activities: Joe was running at time t means that time instant t is on a time stretch throughout which Joe was running;

for accomplishments: Joe was drawing a circle at t means that t is on the time stretch in which Joe drew the circle;

for achievements: Joe won a race between $t_1$ and $t_2$ means that the time

Table 1. Time-Schemata for States, Processes, and Events (adapted from Vendler 1967)

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Evaluation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, a viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about...

According to them, evaluation in discourse performs three functions: (1) It expresses the speaker’s or writer’s opinion, and in doing so it reflects the value system of that person and their community; (2) it constructs and maintains relations between the speaker or writer and hearer or reader; and (3) it organizes the discourse.

Explaining the “expressing opinion” function, the authors say that every act of evaluation expresses a communal value-system, and every act of evaluation continues to build that value system. In turn that value system is a component of the ideology that lies behind every text. One example given to illustrate “expressing an opinion” within a communal value-system is an excerpt from a text in which a wife describes her husband as a “workaholic,” and then attaches negative events in their lives to that evaluation.
Table 1. Time-Schemata for States, Processes, and Events (adapted from Vendler 1967)

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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities/Processes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

altering the interpretation of the story. In other words, to be processed as narrative versus free or restricted, clauses would preferentially code events as punctual in type, with the implication that “[c]lauses containing used to, would, and the general present [e.g., That really makes you feel alive] are not narrative clauses and cannot support a narrative” (362). Likewise, for Livia Polanyi (1985), a story is a fictional or non-fictional narrative account “involving specific past-time events in which the teller may or may not appear as a character” (184). Polanvi goes on to argue that the basic narrative line in English language stories is “built up through simple past-time event clauses. These are main clauses that encode instantaneous, noniterative, positive, completer occurrences in the past. Morphologically, these clauses appear in the surface structure of conversational stories in the simple past tense or in a combination of simple past tense clauses and clauses that are morphologically present tense but receive a past-time semantic interpretation” (189–90).
Table 2. Event Types and a Preference-Based Typology of Narrative Genres (adapted from Vendler 1967)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Preference Rankings (by Event Type)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>Accomplishments &gt; achievements &gt; activities &gt; states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News reports</td>
<td>Achievements &gt; accomplishments &gt; activities &gt; states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological novels</td>
<td>States &gt; activities &gt; accomplishments &gt; achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost stories</td>
<td>Activities &gt; states &gt; accomplishments &gt; achievements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>