In society, people use language for different purposes. These purposes can be to ascertain information from an individual, or to inform someone of an issue or current affair, however, some people use this in their profession and due to their profession a power situation is created.

For example, a police officer at work will use questioning and because of the warrant of arrest they have, have power over an individual. They are an authority figure and have to use the authority wisely, or a situation can become unpleasant very quickly. Therefore, a police officer has to use power in their spoken language to ensure the situation is handled effectively and safely for everyone concerned.

The first transcript shows a range a spoken language features. It is a transcript of a police officer questioning and dealing with a traffic offence. The individual has been caught on a bike with a homemade dog trailer. Clearly the officer deems this unsafe and a hazard to the road user and other roads users alike.

Adjacency pairs are a predominant feature in the transcript. The officer must use these to question the offender and gain appropriate insight into the crime that has been committed. For example:

1:Where’s the break light?

MOB: Well...er....wasn’t working to well so well I ............(inaudiable)

Here the lead officer questions the road users. He uses standard English and the questioning is a closed question. By this he is gaining further information of the road worthiness of the dog trailer. Clearly, he understands the situation and what is expected of the trailer if it were to be road-worthy. Due to the nature of this adjacency pair, the man on the bike (MOB) has no other choice but to answer the question. He is required to by law, but that doesn't mean to say the answer has to be a truthful one. Therefore, the police officer must decipher whether this is true or not. The MOB pauses and uses filler in his response to the question, therefore the gives an indication to the officer if he is telling the truth or not. Also, due to the pauses and the fillers used in the adjacency pair response, the MOB clearly knows that this is a bad situation for him to be in and he tries, in a vain attempt, to make the situation more positive.

This use of questioning and adjacency pairs can also be used in a school situation. Teacher often used adjacency pairs to check a student's understanding but also if a student has been involved in an incident that deviates from the schools code of conduct. Here the same authority and power would be used in the situation. I have experienced this when seeing other students are being disciplined. It allows the individual to explain what they have done and in a fair and unoppressive manner, however, the main difference, generally, is that a student in school will not have committed a crime, therefore the risk to life and others is minimal. Also, teachers do not have the same powers as police officers, however, many people agree that they should, therefore the situation is somewhat less authoritive and fair to the student.