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A Systemic-Functional Approach to Communicative Course  
Design in English Language Teaching

by Robin Melrose

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Abstract

The communicative syllabus in English language teaching was developed in the 1970's as a reaction against the prevailing structuralist method. Inspired by the growing interest in semantics and speech acts, communicative syllabus designers saw language in terms of the meanings speakers need to express, that is, the functions (speech acts) and notions (semantic categories) of language. It is the contention of this thesis that the language taught in a functional-notional course may be meaningful, but it is not in any real sense communicative. The aim of the thesis, therefore, is to develop a new approach to communicative course design, through the application of the most communicative linguistic model, systemic-functional grammar.

The thesis begins by examining the theoretical background to the functional-notional syllabus, and its principles; it then discusses a criticism of the approach - that too little attention is paid to social factors and discourse structure constraints - and states its aim: to construct a linguistic model that can generate a communicative course sensitive to such factors and constraints. After the models of four systemic linguists have been examined, the thesis sets forth a new systemic model, capable of motivating a communicative course on the basis of social factors and discourse strategies. Part of a functional-notional coursebook is then analysed to determine the communicative value of the dialogues and exercises, following which a new, topical-interactive, approach is proposed, emphasising both the social ('topical') and discourse strategies ('interactive'). This approach is then illustrated with two units containing dialogues and exercises.

This research contributes to both language teaching and systemic-functional grammar. It presents an approach to communicative course design that incorporates the teaching of meaning negotiation skills: and it offers a systemic model that analyses social system choices and treats discourse as dynamic process.

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## Chapter 1

### The Communicative Syllabus

#### 1.0 Introduction

The communicative syllabus, also known as the notional syllabus, was first developed in the early 1970's, encouraged by the Council of Europe's research and development programme concerning the implementation of a European unit/credit system for modern language learning by adults. Its emergence dates from 1972 and the Third International Congress of Applied Linguists in Copenhagen (see Wilkins 1972), but it came to the attention of a wider public with the works of van Ek (1975), Wilkins (1976), Widdowson (1978) and Munby (1978). The communicative syllabus rests on a functional view of language, which Bell (1981:112) defines as 'a view of language as a dynamic, open system by means of which members of a community of exchange information'. Its growth was stimulated by a number of developments in linguistics, sociolinguistics and philosophy, which will be reviewed here (and see (Bell 1981:114-127).

#### 1.1 Linguistic Influences

Since modern linguistics began with the publication of Saussure's Cours de linguistique generale in 1916, linguists have tended to concentrate on phonology, morphology and syntax, and it was only in the 1960's that a growing number of linguists began to take an interest in semantics. Two of these linguists has a particular influence on the genesis of the communicative syllabus: Charles Fillmore and M.A.K. Halliday.

The American linguist Charles Fillmore, working within the framework of transformational-generative grammar, developed a model called Case Grammar (see Fillmore 1968), which defines a level of deep



structure more abstract and more 'semantic' than the standard deep structure level (see Chomsky 1957, 1965). Briefly, Fillmore proposed that in deep structure a sentence has two immediate constituents, Modality (tense, mood, aspect, and negative elements), and Proposition (the verb plus the cases). The cases, or underlying semantic roles, - which may or may not be marked in surface structure - proved difficult to determine, but the following list, taken from Fillmore (1971), is typical: Agent, Experiencer, Instrument, Source, Goal, Place, Time, Path and Object. These cases enabled Fillmore to show that elements with different surface forms could have the same underlying semantic role, as in these sentences:

- (1) John opened the door with the key
- (2) The key opened the door
- (3) The door opened

Thus in Fillmore's analysis "key" is Instrument in both (1) and (2), and "door" is Object in both (2) and (3).

At the same time, the British linguist M.A.K. Halliday, taking up ideas first put forward by J.R. Firth (see Firth 1957), was developing the linguistic model now known as systemic - functional linguistics. Halliday, then as now, was concerned with a 'semantically significant' grammar, with that part of the grammar which is 'closest to' the semantics (see Halliday 1966); and this concern is embodied in his work on transitivity - whose participants and circumstances resemble Fillmore's cases - and theme (see Halliday 1967-8), and on modality and mood (Halliday 1970b).

Like Firth and the anthropologist Malinowski (see Malinowski 1923), Halliday holds a functional view of language. In 1970 (see Kress 1976:19-24), he argued that although there are innumerable social purposes for which adults use language, these are reduced in the internal organisation of the language system to a small set of

functional components, or 'macro-functions' (later renamed 'meta-functions'). The ideational is the expression of experience - the phenomena of the external world and those of consciousness - and is realised by the processes, participants and circumstances of transitivity. The interpersonal component expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his/her personal commitment and his/her interaction with others; in the clause it is represented by mood and modality. The textual expresses the structure of information, and the relation of each part of the discourse to the whole and to the setting; it is realised in the grammar by theme and information focus.

The message from Fillmore and Halliday was that grammar need no longer be analysed exclusively 'bottom up', as rules of combination, but could be also approached 'top down', as reflecting speakers' meanings. In addition, Halliday showed how grammar reflects the broad functions which language is called upon to serve. But there is another linguistic concept that needs to be mentioned in relation to the communicative approach to language teaching, and that is context of situation.

This concept was first put forward by Malinowski (1923), and later taken up by Firth (see Firth 1957). In Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964), context of situation was characterised in terms of field of discourse (social situation and subject-matter), style of discourse (the relationship between the participants), and mode of discourse (the channel of communication). Later work by Gregory (1967) and Halliday (1972) established a link between field and transitivity, tenor (formerly style) and modality/mood, and between mode and theme/information focus. This insight was of obvious value to communicative syllabus designers, reinforced as it was by the contributions of sociolinguistics.

## 1.2 The Contribution of Sociolinguistics

The American sociolinguist Dell Hymes provided researchers into the communicative syllabus with the notion of 'communicative competence'. In transformational-generative grammar, sentences were said to be grammatical with respect to competence, and acceptable with respect to performance; but Hymes (1972b) maintained that a sentence must also be appropriate in relation to the context in which it is used, and must actually occur. Appropriacy to context is related to a number of situational factors, summed up in Hymes (1972a) by the acronym SPEAKING: setting, participants, ends (i.e. aims and results of the communication), acts (i.e. the form and sequence of the message), key (i.e. the manner of delivery), instrumentalities (i.e. channel), norms (i.e. conduct of the participants), and genre. This approach to situation appeared to offer a more detailed model than the one presented by Gregory or Halliday, without however indicating the ways in which situation could be reflected in grammar.

## 1.3 The Influence of Philosophy

A fundamental influence on the development of communicative language teaching was the British philosopher J.L. Austin and his work How to Do Things with Words (Austin 1962). Austin, starting from a division of utterances into constative (true or false statements) and performatives (utterances used to do things), ended up with the claim that all utterances simultaneously perform three kinds of acts: locutionary act (the propositional content), illocutionary act (the conventional force of an utterance, e.g. statement, offer, promise), and perlocutionary act (the effect of the utterance on the addressee). The most important of these was the illocutionary act (or speech act), of which Austin distinguished five general classes: verdictives (e.g. assess, estimate, describe, analyse); exercitives (e.g. order, warn,

urge, advise); commissives (e.g. promise, intend, agree); behabitives, (e.g. apologise, thank, congratulate); and expositives (e.g. affirm, deny, state, conclude, define).

The best-known treatment of speech acts after Austin was that of Searle (1969). In discussing performatives, Austin had spoken of felicity conditions which performatives must meet if they are to succeed. Searle suggested that felicity conditions are jointly constitutive of speech acts, that is, they are rules in accordance with which speech acts are created and comprehended. Felicity conditions are of four types, depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory preconditions, sincerity conditions and the essential condition, and can be used to compare different speech acts. Searle also offered a classification of speech acts supposedly based on felicity conditions: representatives (e.g. assert, conclude); directives (e.g. promise, threaten, offer); expressives (e.g. apologise, thank, congratulate); and declarations (e.g. excommunicate, declare war).

The concept that in uttering sentences one is also doing things is a cornerstone of the notional syllabus, as we shall see in the next section.

#### 1.4 Notional Syllabuses

To understand the nature of the communicative syllabus, we should first examine David Wilkins' pioneering work Notional Syllabuses (Wilkins 1976). The work opens with a critique of the two types of syllabus then currently in use, the grammatical and the situational. The grammatical syllabus, says Wilkins (1976:2) is 'one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built up'. His main criticism of the grammatical syllabus seems to be that language

learning is not complete when the content of a grammatical syllabus has been mastered: learning grammatical form does not guarantee the learning of grammatical meaning; and to describe the grammatical form of a sentence does not account for the way in which it is used as an utterance (Wilkins is presumably saying that a formal description does not account for 'semantically significant' grammar and illocutionary force).

Situational syllabuses, instead of being an inventory of grammatical forms, are a list of situations in which the learner may find him/herself, and a description of the linguistic content of each of these situations. The chief drawback of this approach, says Wilkins, is that situation does not necessarily predict language, and is irrelevant in the case of speech acts such as requesting or agreeing/disagreeing.

After his critique of grammatical and situational syllabuses, Wilkins goes on to discuss the notional syllabus. Its starting-point is 'the desired communicative capacity'; it does not ask how speakers of the language express themselves, but 'what it is they communicate through language'; it is organised 'in terms of the content rather than the form of the language' (Wilkins 1976:18). In a notional syllabus, it is assumed that speakers will need to express three kinds of meanings: semantico-grammatical categories (perceptions of events, processes, states and abstractions); modality (speaker attitude); and categories of communicative function (speech acts).

The semantico-grammatical categories (roughly corresponding to Fillmore's cases and Halliday's ideational component) consist of Time, Quantity, Space, Relational Meaning, and Deixis. Modality includes scale of certainty (impersonalised and personalised), and scale of commitment (intention and obligation). The categories of communicative function (inspired by Austin and Searle) include Judgement and

evaluation (e.g. assess, excuse, approve, blame, disapprove);  
Suasion (e.g. advise, order, warn, threaten, permit); Argument (e.g.  
inform, request, refuse, agree, disagree); Rational enquiry and ex-  
position (e.g. conclude, compare, define, explain); Personal emotions  
(e.g. pleasure, displeasure); and Emotional relations (e.g. greetings,  
sympathy, gratitude).

The first task of a notional syllabus designer, then, is to choose the types of meaning to be learned; once this has been accomplished, he/she must decide by what linguistic forms these meanings are to be expressed. Here, says Wilkins (1976:57), the situational syllabus has a contribution to make: the 'choice between the different grammatical structures by which one function may be realized will be largely determined by the exact sociolinguistic (or stylistic) conditions under which communication is taking place.'

Thus the notional syllabus will present an inventory of concepts (semantico-grammatical categories) and functions (categories of communicative function) to be learned, together with the linguistic forms by which each concept or function may be expressed, and a specification of the sociolinguistic conditions determining individual forms. Figure 1 is a representation of this model:

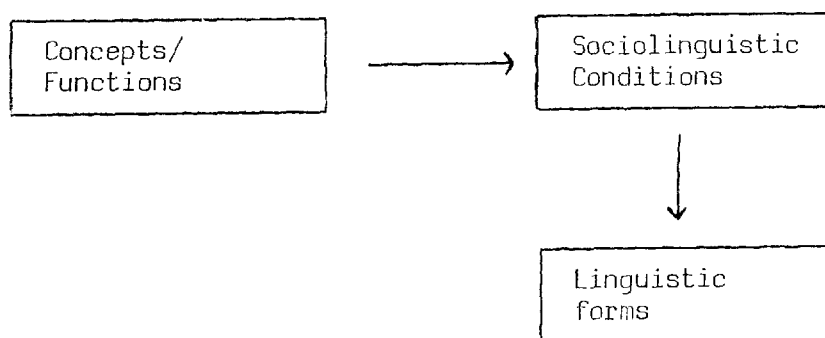


Figure 1.1: A notional syllabus model

Here concepts and functions are expressed in linguistic forms only after being filtered through sociolinguistic conditions. In

fact, Wilkins had little to say about sociolinguistic conditions, limiting himself mainly to degrees of formality and channel (1976: 62-64); and he was vague about how sociolinguistic conditions might determine grammatical structures. For a fuller treatment of sociolinguistic conditions, we need to turn to the work of another researcher into communicative language teaching.

### 1.5 Communicative Syllabus Design

Working within the same theoretical framework as Wilkins, Munby (1978:31) presents a model for specifying communicative competence (see Figure 2):

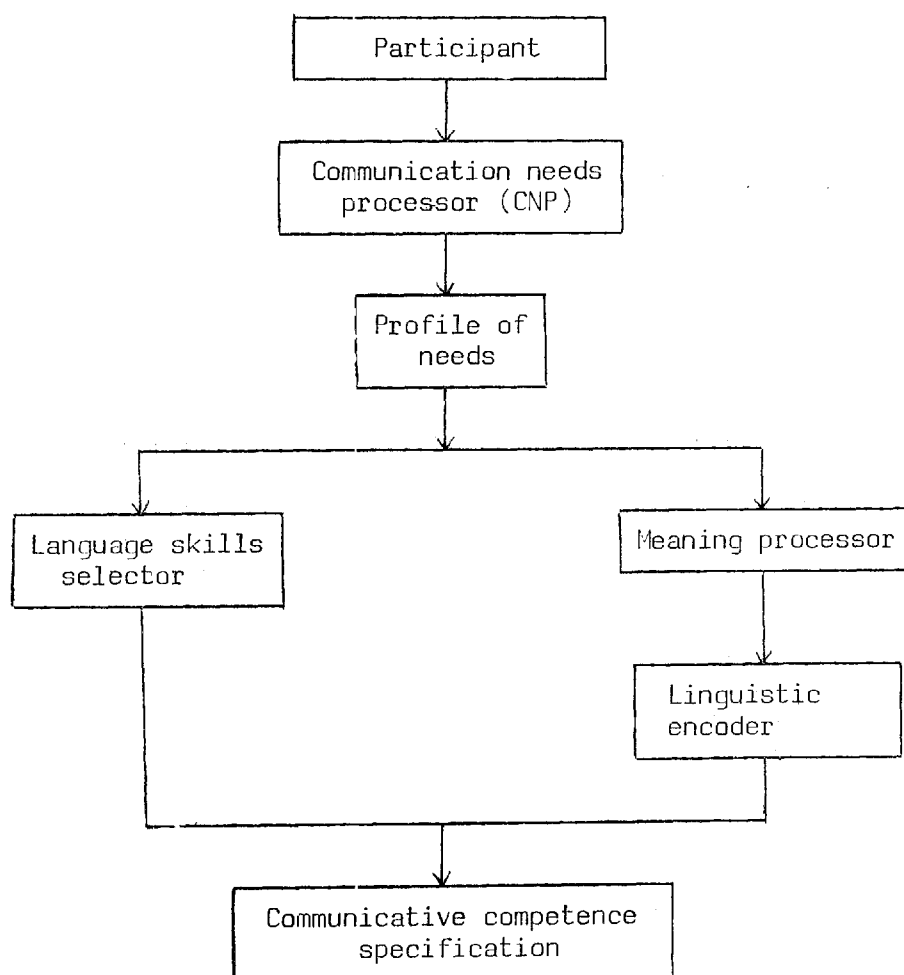


Figure 1.2: Model for specifying communicative competence (Munby 1978)

This model, it is claimed, enables a syllabus designer with all the relevant data at his disposal to produce a communicative syllabus appropriate to the needs of a specific learner or group of learners. It works like this. Relevant information about the identity and language of the participant (learner) is first collected and referred to the Communication Needs Processor. This takes account of the variables that affect communication needs (Wilkins' sociolinguistic conditions), by 'organising them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other' (Munby 1978:32) - dynamic because e.-h. depend on input from a.-d. before they can become operational. The parameters are as follows:

- (4) a. Purposive domain (the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is required)
- b. Setting (physical and psychosocial)
- c. Interaction (position, role-set, social relationships)
- d. Instrumentality (medium, mode and channel of communication)
- e. Dialect
- f. Target level
- g. Communicative event (what the participant has to do)
- h. Communicative key (attitude)

Once the participant's communication needs have been processed, a profile of needs emerges, which provides the input to the language skills selector and the meaning processor.

In the language skills selector, says Munby (1978:40), 'the profile of needs is interpreted in terms of the specific language skills that are required to realise the events or activities that have been identified in the CNP'. In his taxonomy of language skills, both receptive and productive (1976:123-131), Munby lists 54 skills. It is rather



difficult to summarise this list: broadly speaking it consists of Wilkins' concepts (semantico-grammatical categories); the cohesive relations discussed by Halliday and Hasan (1976); the rhetorical skills advocated by Widdowson (1978); discourse acts as outlined by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975); phonology (including stress and intonation) and graphology; skimming and scanning; and library skills.

In the meaning processor, communicative needs are converted into micro-functions (illocutionary acts, or in Wilkins terms, categories of communicative function plus modality). The micro-functions are as follows:

- (5) a. Scale of certainty (impersonalised, and personalised)
- b. Scale of commitment (intention and obligation)
- c. Judgement and evaluation (valuation, verdiction, approval, disapproval)
- d. Suasion (inducement, compulsion, prediction, tolerance)
- e. Argument (information, agreement, disagreement, concession)
- f. Rational enquiry and exposition
- g. Formulaic communication

A micro-function is then marked for attitudinal tone (using categories from the communicative key parameter of the CNP); at this point, selection of an appropriate linguistic form can proceed.

Before commenting on Munby's model, I would like to present a simplified version of it, reformulated in terms of Wilkins' categories (see Figure 3):

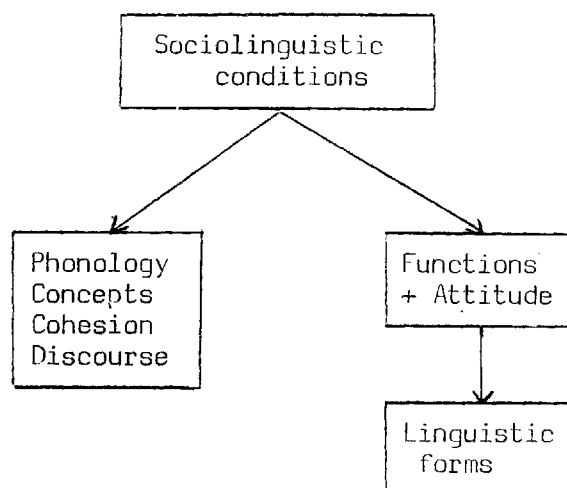


Figure 1.3: Munby's model (simplified and reformulated)

In his model, Munby has clearly filled a gap left by Wilkins, in specifying sociolinguistic conditions (the parameters of the Communicative Needs Processor). However, it cannot be said that Munby has shown, any more than Wilkins did, the link between sociolinguistic conditions, functions and linguistic forms - though his use of attitudinal-tone is an advance on Wilkins. In his language skills selector, Munby has also introduced two important elements lacking in Wilkins' notional syllabus, cohesion and discourse (rhetorical skills and discourse acts) - though Wilkins (1976:49) does make fleeting reference to discourse.

The most unsatisfactory aspect of Munby's model is perhaps the place of the language skills selector in the model. Obviously the selection of language skills is in some sense activated by the profile of needs; but the only output is general categories such as 'phonemes', 'reference', 'quantity and amount', 'using indicators in discourse for introducing an idea'. Moreover, it is not clear how the language skills selector is related to the meaning processor and linguistic forms. Presumably they are simultaneous, like Halliday's macro-

functions; but how then do concepts, cohesion, discourse and phonology feed into linguistic forms? In short, Munby's model provides valuable insights, but leaves two important questions unanswered.

### 1.6 Social Factors, Functions and Linguistic Forms

Since a basic principle of the communicative syllabus is that realisations of functions are determined by social factors (see Wilkins 1976:57, Munby 1978:50, and sections 1.4 and 1.5 above), we would expect to find this principle embodied in all communicative language courses. In his examination of language functions, social factors, and second language teaching and learning, Cook (1985) found that this was not always the case.

Cook begins with the observation that choice of functions and realisations is constrained not only by situation, but also by what he calls 'interaction sequence'. At a given moment in a conversation, 'the speaker or hearer has a choice of what to do next, a meaning potential from which to select the most appropriate next move to suit his or her goals [...] The language function has to fit not just within a structure of conversation in syntagmatic terms but into a sequence of moments of paradigmatic choice'. (Cook 1985:178) The influence of situation on the realisation of language functions can be demonstrated experimentally: Cook tested a group of native speakers and a group of language learners with the functions thanking, requesting, greeting and taking leave, and found that both groups varied realisations of the functions according to the age of the addressee - though the learners did not always use the most appropriate realisation to the young addressee.

The model implied by Cook's opening observation differs somewhat from Munby's model. (see Figure 4):

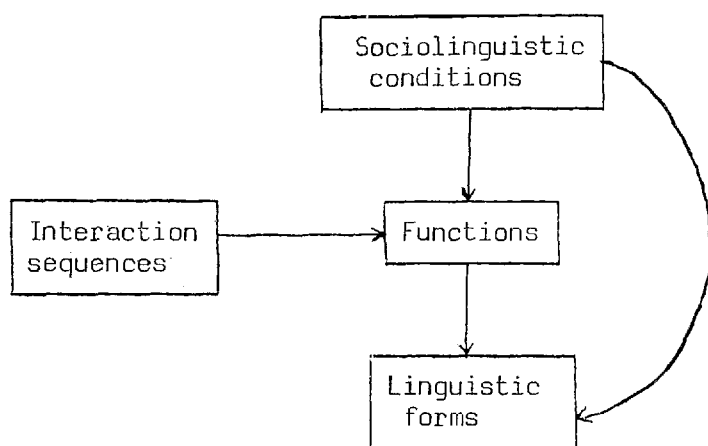


Figure 1.4: A representation of Cook's model

Choice of functions is influenced by both sociolinguistic conditions (situation) and interaction sequences; choice of linguistic forms (realisations) is influenced not only by functions, but also by situation.

Given the importance of interaction sequence and situation, Cook (1985:190-1) believes that a second language learner needs to acquire (a) a set of language functions for use in the second language (b) a set of ways of realising and interpreting language functions (c) a set of sequential and situational factors influencing the choice of function and realisation. All communicative courses, implies Cook, provide learners with a set of language functions and a set of ways of realising and interpreting these functions; but few specify situational factors influencing the choice of functions and realisations, and even fewer try to deal with the sequences of functions in interactions lasting more than two turns.

### 1.7 Conclusion

As Cook said (1985:192), a communicative syllabus should describe a set of language functions, a set of realisations for these functions, and a set of sequential and situational factors influencing the choice of functions and realisations. This thesis will be concerned with the

last requirement - the sequential and situational factors influencing the choice of functions and realisations. More specifically, it will present a linguistic model which, on the basis of situational factors, will be capable of generating interaction sequences, functions and realisations, both linguistic and paralinguistic. The elaboration of this linguistic model will form the subject of the next two chapters.

## Chapter 2

### Systemic-Functional Models

#### 2.0 Introduction

A linguistic model capable of generating interaction sequences, functions and realisations on the basis of situational factors must obviously be a model in which situation, interaction sequences and speech acts have, or can be found, a place. In other words, to use terms suggested by Halliday (1978:10), it must be a model with an inter-organism rather than intra-organism perspective, treating language not as knowledge but as behaviour. Transformational-generative grammar, despite attempts to incorporate speech acts into the model (see Ross 1970), treats language as knowledge, and is inappropriate to the task of generating a communicative syllabus. Halliday's own model, systemic-functional linguistics, does on the contrary treat language as behaviour, with particular stress being laid on the role of situation in determining choices in grammar. This model appears to answer at least one of the requirements set out above, and will now be examined in some detail.

#### 2.1. Halliday's Model

Michael Halliday, the British linguist whose work was one of the spurs to the development of the communicative syllabus, began elaborating his systemic-functional model in the early 1960's. Major influences on him were: J.R. Firth, who provided the basic concepts of system and structure; Malinowski who, through the mediation of Firth, furnished Halliday with the notions of context of situation and meaning as function in context; Hjelmslev, the Danish linguist, who, through the mediation of Lamb's stratificational linguistics, provided a 'systematic account of linguistic levels' (Kress 1976:26); and finally

the Prague School's Functional Sentence Perspective, which contributed insights into the structuring of information in an utterance. What follows is not an exhaustive analysis of this model; rather, it is an examination of those aspects relevant to the present work: situation, grammar, and their relationship.

### 2.1.1 Situation and Language

A fundamental principle of Halliday's model is to regard language as social behaviour, and this is apparent even in his earliest writings. In 'Categories of the theory of grammar', written in 1961, language is seen as having three levels, 'form', 'substance' and 'content': form is the 'organization of the substance into meaningful events', and content is the relation of the form to 'extratextual features' (Kress 1976:53). By 1969 (see Halliday 1973: 55) 'form' has been replaced by 'lexicogrammar', 'substance' by 'phonology', and 'content' by 'semantics' (or 'meaning potential'); 'extratextual features' has become 'context of situation' or 'behaviour potential'. Figure 2.1 represents the relation between context of situation and the three linguistic strata:

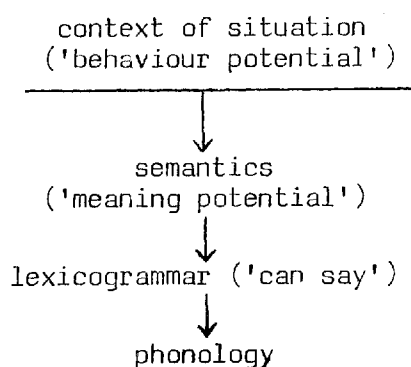


Figure 2.1: Context of situation and the linguistic system

Each level or stratum is the realisation of the higher stratum, as set forth in Halliday (1978:39):

If we take the grammatical [...] system, this is the system of what the speaker can say [...]. What the speaker can say, i.e., the lexico-grammatical system as a whole, operates as the realisation of the semantic system, which is what the speaker can mean - what I refer to as the 'meaning potential' [...]. Now, once we go outside the language, then we see that this semantic system is itself the realisation of something beyond, which is what the speaker can do - I have referred to that as the 'behaviour potential'.

### 2.1.2 System

A second basic principle - implied in the concept of 'meaning potential' is that at each level there are sets of options (systems) representing the speaker's potential at that level. At the level of language, the only system clearly described is intonation (Halliday 1970a); for the rest, it can only be assumed that Halliday subscribes to the views held by Firth (for a useful discussion of prosodic phonology, Sampson 1980:215-223). At the level of lexicogrammar, a number of systems have been described, including transitivity, mood, modality/modulation, theme, information, and the nominal and verbal groups; and these are all readily accessible (see in particular Kress 1976 and Halliday 1985). The two levels which are at once the least described and the most potentially significant in our quest to generate a communicative syllabus are semantics and context of situation. But before we consider these strata in detail, a third basic principle of Halliday's model needs to be mentioned.

### 2.1.3 Metafunctions

The metafunctions (the 'functional' side of systemic-functional linguistics) were described in section 1.2, where they were also called 'macro-functions', as the functional components of the grammar. Halliday has characterised them (1973:99) as 'relatively discrete areas of formalized meaning potential': the ideational is 'that part



of the grammar concerned with the expression of experience'; the interpersonal meta-function is the 'grammar of personal participation'; and the textual is 'concerned with the creation of text.' In the clause the ideational component is represented by transitivity, the interpersonal by mood and modality, and the textual by theme and information. The place of the meta-functions in Halliday's model is shown in Figure 2.2 (adapted from Halliday 1973:101):

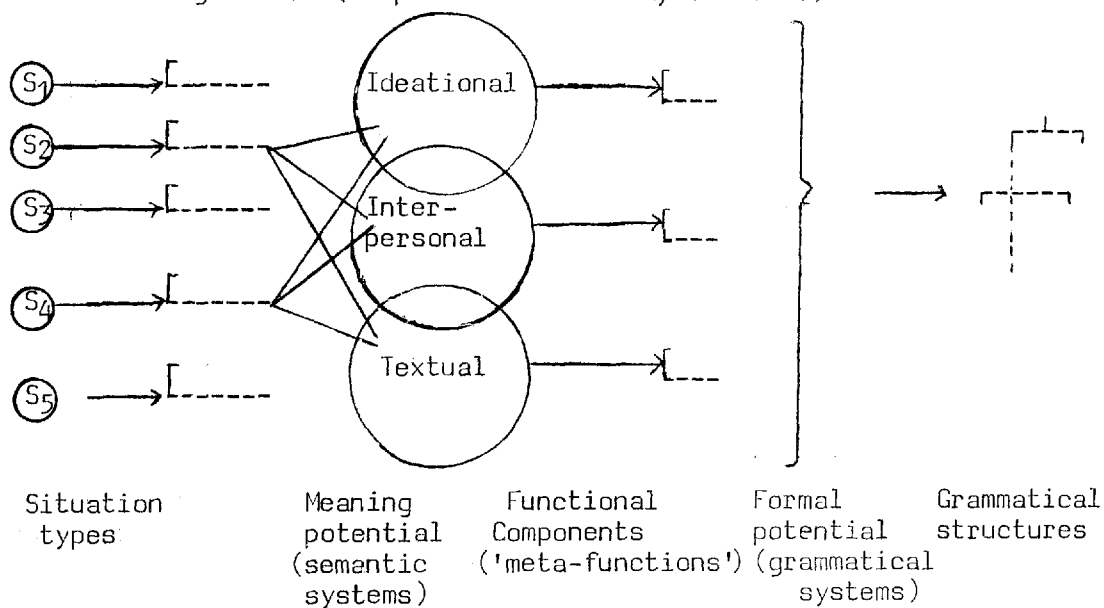


Figure 2.2: The place of the metafunctions in Halliday's model

For each situation type, a meaning potential is identified, and semantic networks are drawn. Options in the semantic networks 'determine the choice of linguistic forms by "pre-selection" of particular options in the functional components of the grammar. These grammatical options are realised in integrated structures formed by the mapping on to one another of configurations of elements derived from each of the "macro-functions".' (1973:101) (See below for the meaning of 'pre-selection')

This diagram appears to make a clear distinction between the semantic level, the metafunctions, and the level of lexicogrammar, but leaves the status of the meta-functions uncertain. At times

he refers to them as 'functional components of the semantic system' (1978:112). In a paper dating from 1970, the meta-functions seems to be equated with the semantic level (Kress 1976:30-1):

There must [...] be a level of organization of meaning: a semantic level [...] In Hjelmslevian terms, the 'content purport' has to be separated from, and organized into, a 'content substance' as a precondition of its encoding in 'content form'.

What we are calling the functions of language may be regarded as the generalized categories of 'content substance' that the adult use of language requires.

Compare this with the paper written two years later from which Figure 2.2 is drawn: here the metafunctions are associated much more closely with lexicogrammar, and 'content substance' is identified with semantic systems (1973:72). But what are the semantic systems?

#### 2.1.4 Semantics

A partial answer to this question is to be found in the paper just cited, 'Towards a sociological semantics' (Halliday 1973:72-102). Semantics is characterised (1973:72) as

'what the speaker can mean'. It is the strategy that is available for entering the language system. It is one form of, or rather one form of the realization of, behaviour potential.

As for the semantic networks they are said (1973:96) to

constitute a stratum that is intermediate between the social system and the grammatical system. The former is wholly outside language, the latter is wholly within language; the semantic networks, which describe the range of alternative meanings available to the speaker in given social contexts and settings, form a bridge between the two.

To illustrate this, Halliday, starting from the situation type 'parent exercising verbal control over child', drew a semantic network for 'threat' and 'warning', which is presented in Figure 2.3 in a

simplified version (adapted from Halliday 1973:89):

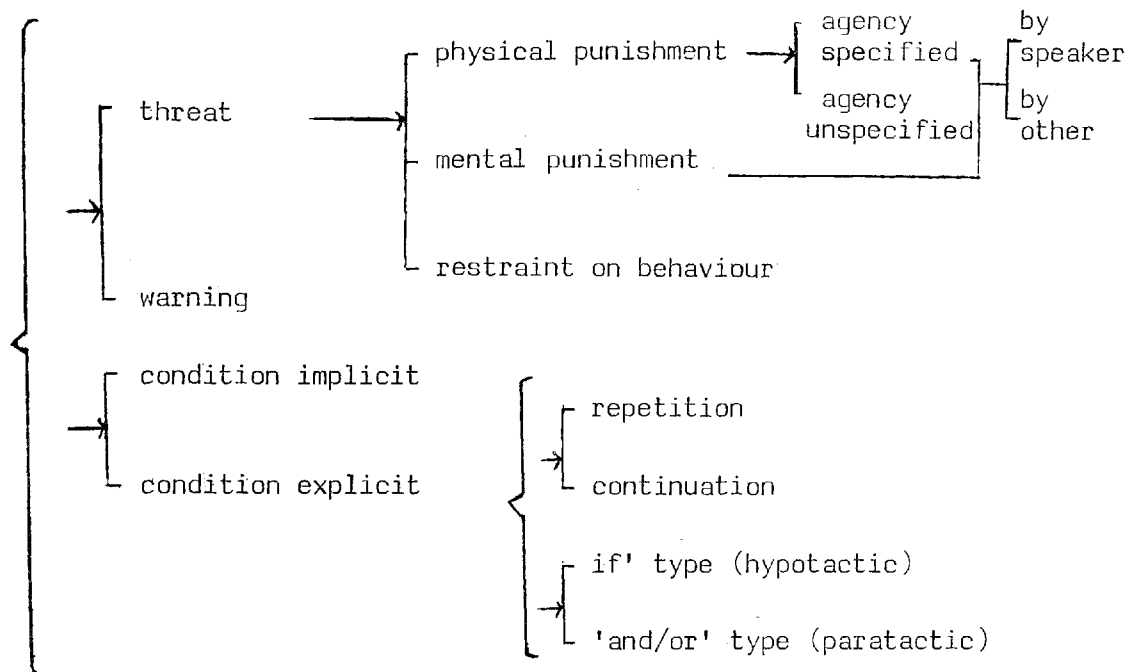


Figure 2.3: A partial network for 'threat' and 'warning'

He then proceeded to write out the realisation statements associated with the features in the network. There are 29 realisation statements in all; here, for example, are the realisation statements associated with the semantic option [threat: physical punishment: agency specified: by speaker] (1973:90):

[threat]	'clause: declarative
[physical punishment]	clause: action: voluntary
	( <u>do</u> type); effective
	(two-participant):
	Goal = <u>you</u> ; future
	tense; positive; verb
	from Roget 972
[agency specified]	voice: active
[by speaker]	Actor = <u>I</u>

Thus the semantic option is realised by choices in the grammatical

systems of mood, transitivity, tense, polarity, voice and person.

The semantic networks were seen as a bridge between the social system and the grammatical system, and this is clear in some of the options: [threat], for example, is close to the social system, while ['if' type] is close to the grammar. This was Halliday's view in 1972, and there is some evidence that this is still his view. In a more recent paper, 'Language as code and language as behaviour' (Halliday 1984). Halliday deals with the nature and ontogenesis of dialogue, taking a view of dialogue as a process of exchange. At the level of social context (the 'move') the speaker (as initiator) can choose between giving or demanding, and between goods-and-services or information. At the level of semantics (the 'speech function'), giving or demanding goods-and-services is realised as offer or command, giving or demanding information as statement or question. Finally, at the level of lexicogrammar (the 'mood'), these options are realised as imperative, declarative or interrogative.

In this sketch of a semantic network, offer or command, statement or question - referred to by Halliday (1985:70-1) as 'proposal' and 'proposition' respectively - form a bridge between social context and the grammar, with offer close to social context, and statement close to the grammar. But it is only a sketch, as is apparent in Halliday's brief discussion of speech acts as metaphors of mood (1985:342-3). Speech acts are here seen as 'a particular complex of semantic features; each feature being one out of a contrasting set'. So, to take an example, 'threat', and 'promise' represent the speech function 'offer' plus other semantic features, as set out in Figure 2.4:

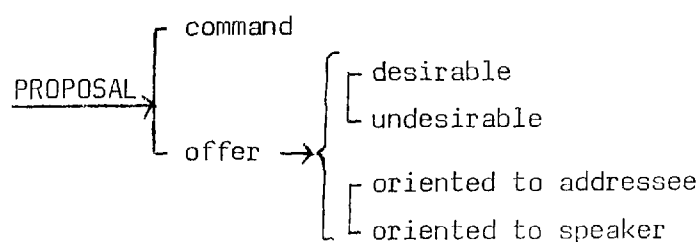


Figure 2.4: A semantic network for 'threat' and 'promise' (based on, Halliday 1985:342)

Thus 'threat' is [offer: undesirable; oriented to addressee], while 'promise' is [offer: desirable; oriented to addressee].

#### 2.1.5 Realisation

Our discussion of the semantic level and its relation to situation types (behaviour potential) and the lexicogrammatical stratum brings us to a fourth basic principle of Halliday's model, that of 'realisation'. As we saw above, semantic networks 'realise' choices in behaviour, and are in turn 'realised' by options in grammatical systems such as transitivity, mood and theme. The key to realisation is the notion of 'pre-selection'. This idea, says Halliday (1973:93), is clearest in the relation between grammar and phonology: for example, selection in the phonological system of tone is fully determined by the grammar, although there is no one-to-one correspondence between options in the grammar and options in the phonology - a large number of grammatical systems are realised by means of selection in the phonological system of tone. However, Halliday suggest that it also applies to the relationship between semantics and grammar, with the possible qualification that 'often more than one grammatical feature has to be pre-selected in order to realize one semantic choice'.

#### 2.1.6 Context of Situation

The extra-linguistic level in Halliday's model, context of situation - also referred to as situation types or behaviour potential - formed a basic part of the model even in his earliest writings (see Kress 1976:53); but it was not until the early 1970's that Halliday began exploring the nature of context of situation, and the relationship between this level, the metafunctions, and the grammar.

In the paper, 'Language as social semiotic', first published in, 1975 (see Halliday 1978), the situation type is characterised thus (1978:110):

The semiotic structure of a situation type can be represented as a complex of three dimensions: the ongoing social activity, the role relationships involved, and the symbolic or rhetorical channel. We refer to these respectively as 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode'.

Field, tenor and mode are defined more extensively in another paper, 'The sociosemantic nature of discourse' (Halliday 1978), and a strong claim is made about their relationship to the metafunctions and grammatical systems. The quotation that follows (1978:143-5) is a lengthy one, not only because its principles are central to Halliday's model and to systemic-functional linguistics, but also because the passage is a complex one and raises a number of issues which are still taxing systemic linguists:

The selection of options in experiential systems - that is, in transitivity, in the classes of things [...], in quality, quantity, time, place, and so on - tends to be determined by [field]. This includes everything from, at one end, types of action defined without reference to language [...]; through intermediate types in which language has some necessary but still ancillary function [...]; to types of interaction defined solely in linguistic terms [...]. At the latter end of the continuum the concept of 'subject-matter' intervenes [...]. In a discussion about a game of football [...] the game constitutes a second order of 'field', one that is brought into being by the first order, the discussion [...]. It is to this second-order field of discourse that we give the name 'subject-matter.'

[...] The selection of interpersonal options, those in the systems of mood, modality, person, key, intensity, evaluation, comment and the like tends to be determined by the role relationships in the situation [i.e. tenor]. Again there is a distinction to be drawn between a first and second order of such role relationships. Social roles of the first order are defined without reference to language [...]. Second order social roles are those which are defined by the linguistic system: [...] the discourse roles of questioner,

informer, responder, doubter, contradicter and the like. (Other types of symbolic action, warning, threatening, greeting and so on, which may be realized either verbally or non-verbally, or both, define roles which are in some way intermediate between the two) [...]

The selection of options in the textual systems, such as those of theme, information and voice, and also the selection of cohesive patterns [...] tends to be determined by the symbolic forms taken by the interaction [...] This includes the distinction of medium, written or spoken [...] But it extends to much more than this, to the particular semiotic function or range of functions the text is serving [...] The rhetorical concepts of expository, didactic, persuasive, descriptive and the like are examples of such semiotic functions [...]

The concept of genre [...] is an aspect of what we are calling the 'mode'. The various genres of discourse [...] are the specific semiotic functions of text that have social value in the culture. A genre may have implications for other components of meaning: there are often associations between a particular genre and particular semantic features of an ideational or interpersonal kind.

Three points stand out in this long quotation. The first point is that field, tenor and mode 'tend to determine' experiential, interpersonal and textual options respectively. Elsewhere Halliday states that the grammatical system operates as the 'realisation' of the semantic system, which is itself the 'realisation' of 'behaviour potential' (1978:39). It is interesting to speculate whether this statement is compatible with the first. If mood and modality choices, say, realise options in a semantic network which are themselves realisations of choices in behaviour, can we then say that mood and modality options realise certain role relationships in the situation? We will return to this point and the question of realisation below, when we examine the systemic - functional models of Fawcett and Martin.

The second point that stands out is the distinction drawn between first-order field of discourse (social action) and second-order field of discourse (subject-matter) on the one hand, and first-order tenor

of discourse (social roles) and second-order tenor of discourse (discourse roles) on the other. Social actions or roles are defined without reference to language; subject-matter and discourse roles are brought into being or defined by the linguistic system. Now this distinction has interesting implications for Halliday's concept of semantics and its relationship to context of situation. The discourse roles of questioner and informer mentioned in the quotation are, as noted earlier, assigned to the semantic stratum in 'Language as code and language as behaviour' (Halliday 1984), as realisations of choices at the level of social context (demanding and giving information). The intermediate roles of threatening and warning are also assigned to the semantic level (see Halliday 1973:89, 1985:342-3), with the implication that they are realisations of higher level choices. It is thus arguable that second-order and intermediate social-roles can be seen from two angles; a semantic one and a situational one, and that there is no clear line between semantics and situation (see 2.1.4 and Halliday 1973:96).

The third point that stands out is that genre is considered an aspect of mode, but at the same time may have implications for other components of meaning. It is difficult to see from this how genre fits into the model, and we shall return to this and the previous point in later discussion, particularly of Martin's model and my own.

### 2.1.7 Register

Linked to context of situation is the notion of register. Halliday characterises register as follows (1978:123):

The semiotic structure of a given situation type, its particular pattern of field, tenor and mode, can be thought of as resonating in the semantic system and so activating particular networks of semantic options, typically options from within the corresponding semantic components. This process specifies a range of meaning configuration



that is typically associated with the situation type in question.

Given that Halliday identifies register with meaning potential, it would appear that register is the semantic realisation of a particular pattern of field, tenor and mode. It may be recalled, however, that Halliday sometimes refers to the metafunctions as 'functional components of the semantic system'; so the 'semantic options' of which he speaks may be choices in transitivity, mood, modality, theme, and so on.

## 2.2 Other Models: Fawcett, Butler, Martin

The apparent uncertainties in Halliday's model with regard to the metafunctions, the semantic stratum, context of situation, the relationship between context of situation and semantics, and the nature of realisation, have led a number of systemic linguists to suggest modifications to Halliday's model. The most radical changes have been proposed by Robin Fawcett, whose model will be outlined here.

### 2.2.1 Fawcett's Model

The title of Fawcett's main work is Cognitive linguistics and social interaction, and it indicates clearly that Fawcett's orientation is different from Halliday's. Figure 2.5 presents a much simplified version of Fawcett's model (adapted from Fawcett 1980:58):

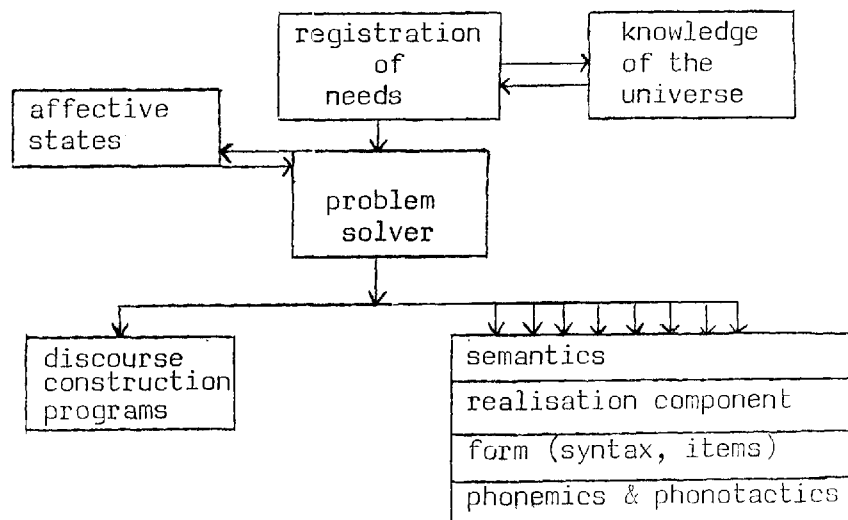


Figure 2.5: Fawcett's model (much simplified)

Turning first to the linguistic component of the model, we notice that there are not three levels (semantics, grammar and phonology) as in Halliday's model, but four adjoining boxes, one on top of the other, marked semantics, realisation component, form and phonemics/phonotactics. Semantics - as often appears to be the case in Halliday's writing (see 2.2.3 above) - is identified with the metafunctions, expanded from three to eight: experiential, logical relationships, negativity, interactional, affective, modality, thematic and informational. Semantics is realised as form-syntax, items, and intonation (not shown in Figure 2.5) - via the realisation component, which is a 'set of rules which state that if a particular feature is selected in a [semantic] network, there will be some specified reflex at the level of form or intonation' (1980:50). The realisation component makes reference to a 'starting structure' - a 'sequencing rule that states at one time the unmarked sequential relationship between ALL the elements in a unit, and that additionally provides the equipment to state marked sequential relationships, through the notion of "place".' (1980:52). There is no level of phonology as envisaged by Halliday; rather, phonemics and phonotactics are said to 'specify' items - a concept we shall return to shortly.

An examination of the non-linguistic component of Fawcett's model makes his cognitive orientation clear. As indicated in Figure 2.5, the problem solver registers needs and devises plans to solve the problems raised by these needs. If these plans include the code of language - the full model indicates that other semiotic codes or non-communicational behavioural programs may also be chosen - then the problem solver assembles a 'referent situation' (or 'proposition') which will solve a particular problem and, in the light of the relevant affective states and knowledge of the universe (knowledge of concepts, relationships, strategies, people, things, roles and so on) selects semantic options

in relation to this referent situation.

As the problem solver selects semantic options, it also consults discourse construction programs. These are of three types: basic situational choices, choices in the structure of discourse, and choices in the variety of language. There are six major situational factors: subject matter, situation, relationship, socio-psychological purposes, channel and code. Subject matter is too vast an area to be shown in a system network; social situation has not yet been adequately modelled in network form; and relationship may not lend itself to being modelled as a system network. Socio-psychological purposes is shown in Figure 2.6 (simplified):

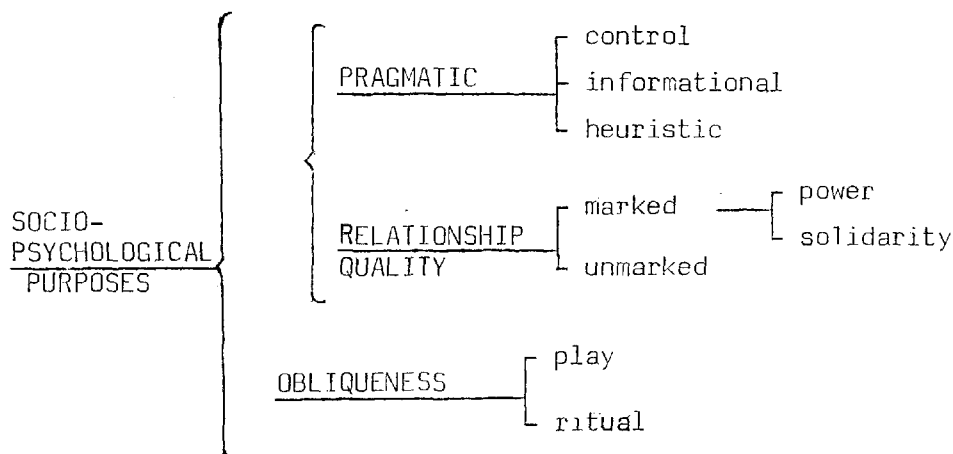


Figure 2.6: Socio-psychological purposes (simplified)

This network will be further discussed below, in Chapter 3. Channel and code are presented (in a simplified version) in Figure 2.7:

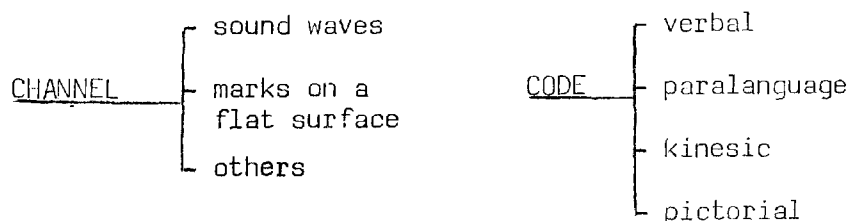


Figure 2.7 Channel and code (simplified)

Structure of discourse includes generic structure and discourse structure. Generic structure, says Fawcett, is linked to social

situation: the two, he hypothesises, are probably 'mutually constitutive' (Fawcett forthcoming) Among non-literary genres that have been studied are casual conversation (Ventola 1979), service encounters (Ventola 1984, Martin 1985) and spoken narratives (Labov 1972). Discourse structure is illustrated in the following systemic flowchart for local discourse structure (adapted from Fawcett, van der Mije and van Wissen forthcoming).

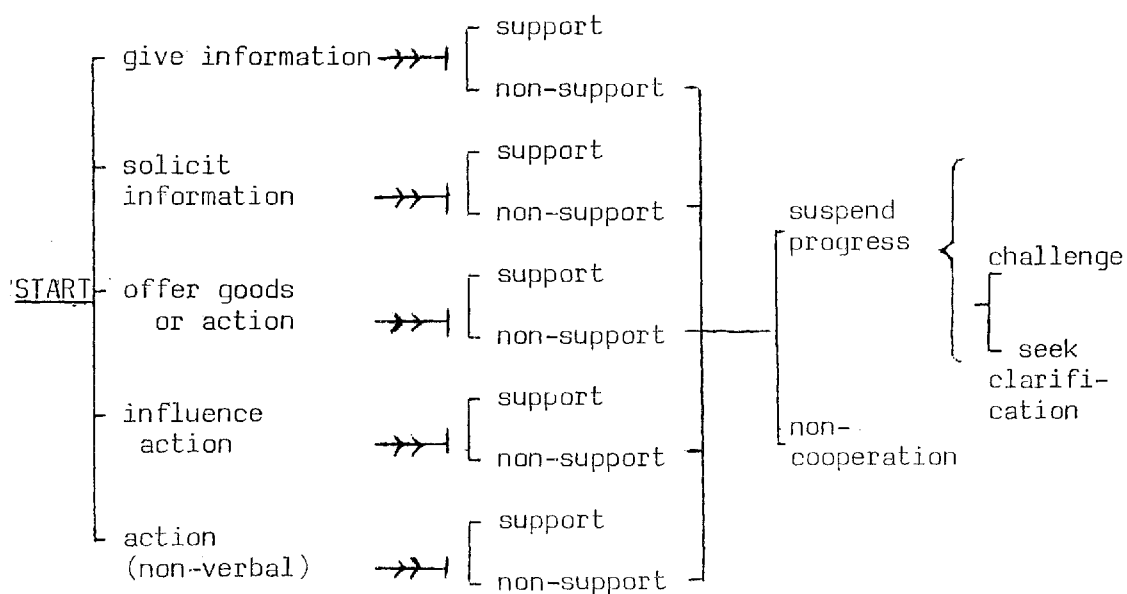


Figure 2.8: A systemic flow chart (→→ go to next move) for local discourse structure

Generic structure and discourse structure will be examined more fully below (Chapter 3).

In variety of language, the choices are of two types: dialect/accent and register. These are presented in Figures 2.9 and 2.10.

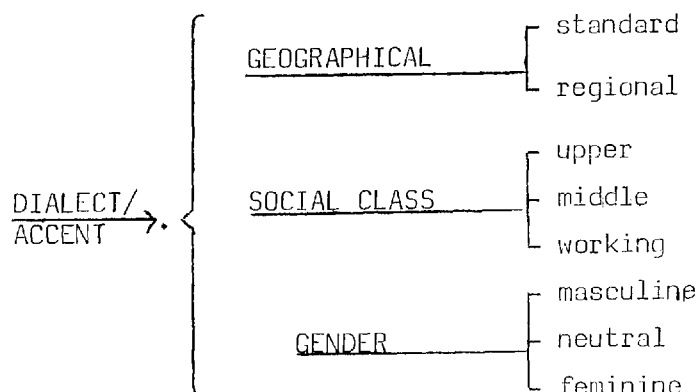


Figure 2.9: Dialect/accent (simplified)

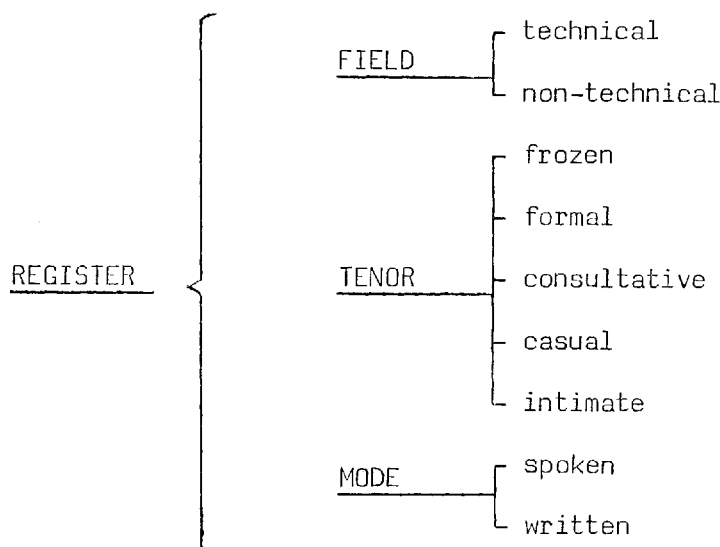


Figure 2.10: Register (adapted slightly)

As Fawcett notes (forthcoming) field, tenor and mode are categories of style which are determined by the situational categories of subject matter/social situation, relationship and channel respectively. Choices in field, tenor and mode will in turn 'narrow down', in 'probabilistic terms', the possible range of semantic features from which the speaker may select (Fawcett 1980:99). At least, this is one way of looking at register: it is also possible, says Fawcett (forthcoming), 'to see the options in the semantics [...] as chosen DIRECTLY, uninfluenced by any prior register decisions, and to see the notion of register as one that one becomes aware of typically in looking at the text as a whole'.

I would like to conclude this outline of Fawcett's model by examining his views on two issues central to systemic-functional linguistics - the number of levels, and the nature of realisation. Fawcett rejects Halliday's tri-stratal model of language (semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology) in favour of a bi-stratal model (semantics and form). His reason for doing so is set out most clearly in the paper 'Language as a Semiological System' (Fawcett 1983:99). The problem, he says, centres on the meaning of realisation:

First, it may be that the relationship between language and knowledge of the universe [...] is rather different from the intimate realisational relationship between semantics and form [...]. It may, for example, be essentially a consultative relationship [...]. Second, it may be that the relationship between form (in the sense of words and morphemes arranged in sequence) and phonemes, etc. is one in which the latter SPECIFY the internal organisation of those words and morphemes, at the level of form, rather than realising them at some lower level or levels.

Thus the semantics 'consults' knowledge of the world, while phonology 'specifies' form by assigning phonemes, syllable structure and inherent word stress to semantic features.

To appreciate Fawcett's position fully, it is necessary to understand Halliday's view of 'meaning potential'. In a paper entitled 'Structure' (in Halliday and Martin 1981), he says, following Firth, that 'meaning is function in context' both intra-stratal (the context of related elements at the same stratum), and inter-stratal (context in the sense of elements of the higher stratum that are expressed by a feature); and that consequently there is 'meaning potential' (that is, system networks) at each stratum.

It follows therefore that phonology, as characterised by Fawcett, is not a stratum, since it lacks system networks. In fact, Fawcett asserts (1983:118) that his model has only a single stratum of system networks (that is, the semantics), - at the level of form he prefers to talk of contrasts, which 'merely "carry" meaningful choices made at some logically prior stratum' (1980:40).

### 2.2.2 Butler's Model

Another systemic linguist to advance an alternative model is Chris Butler. In 'Communicative Function and Semantics' (Butler 1987), Butler appears to be adhering to an orthodox systemic model, with levels of lexicogrammar and semantics, and a 'supra-semantic level of

organisation' (1987: ). However, his semantic stratum differs from what we know of Halliday's (see 2.2.4 above): for Butler, the function of semantics is to specify the range of illocutionary forces of a given utterance, on the basis of certain context-independent properties of the utterance - which are related to mood and similar to Searle's 'sincerity conditions' - together with general conversational rules of a Gricean kind. This view of semantics, which Butler calls the 'surface-meaning approach' (1987: ) and which derives from proposals made by Hudson (1975), only partly explains the interpretation process (for Butler appears to be concerned with decoding rather than encoding). To explain the process more fully, Butler turns to discourse analysis - without unfortunately, assigning it in any clear way to the semantic stratum or to the supra-semantic level of organisation mentioned previously. By looking at the function of the utterance in the discourse structure - what type of 'act' the utterance is realising - it is possible to determine from the range of illocutionary forces specified in the semantics, the illocutionary force of the utterance in the ongoing interaction. Figure 2.11 is an attempt to present Butler's model in diagrammatic form:

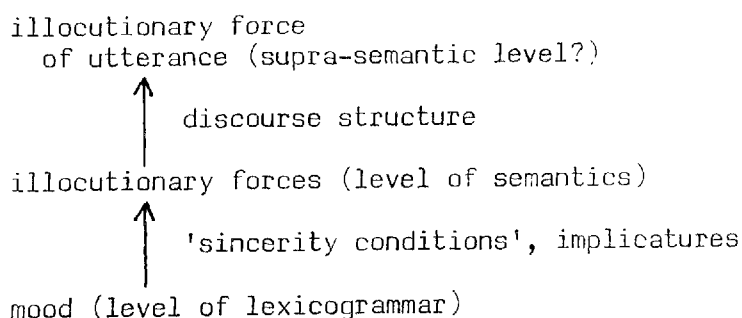


Figure 2.11: Butler's model (decoder perspective)

### 2.2.3 Martin's Model

The final systemic-functional model to be reviewed here is that proposed by Martin (1985). In this model, language is seen

as having three levels, phonology, lexicogrammar and discourse. Lexicogrammar includes the traditional systems of transitivity, mood, modality and theme, and requires no further discussion here. Of greater interest is the discourse stratum, which appears to have replaced Halliday's level of semantics. Discourse is concerned with inter-clause relations, and its key systems are reference, conjunction, lexical cohesion and conversational structure. Reference is illustrated in Figures 2.12 and 2.13 by systems of participant identification and retrieval.

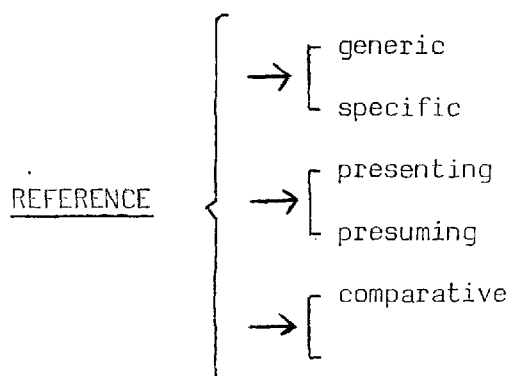


Figure 2.12: Participant identification systems (from Martin 1985, simplified)

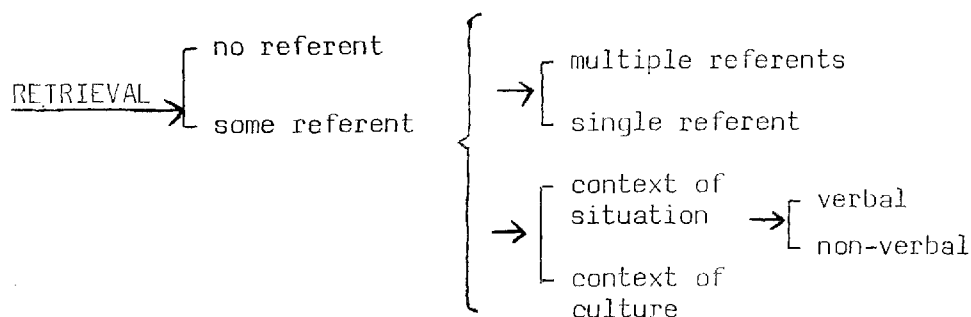


Figure 2.13: Retrieval systems (from Martin 1985, simplified)

Conversational structure is exemplified by Berry's network for exchange structure, presented in Figure 2.14 (see Berry 1981, Martin 1985).



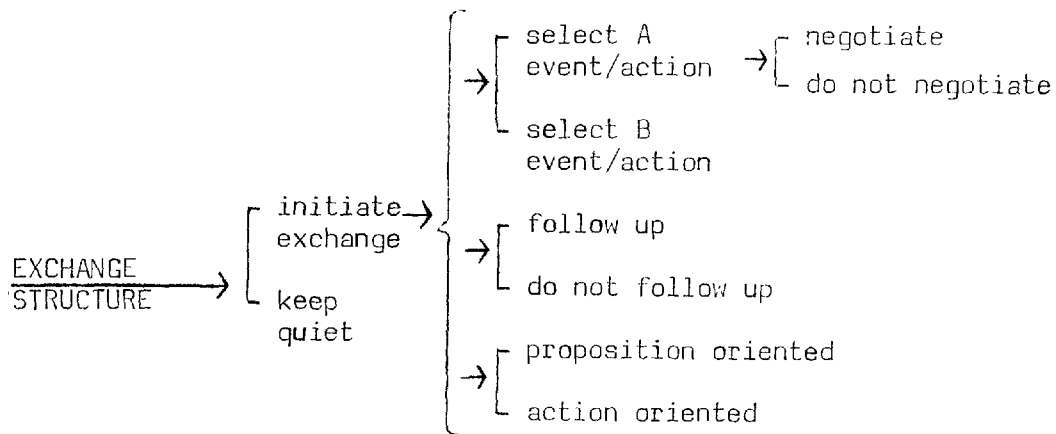


Figure 2.14: Berry's network for exchange structure

Conjunction and lexical cohesion will not be discussed here.

But language, of course, represents only part of the model, and, as in all systemic-functional models, the extra-linguistic dimension must be accounted for. Here Martin takes a novel approach (Martin forthcoming):

[...] the relation between language and context will be interpreted in terms of interacting semiotic systems. Language, a denotative system having its own expression-form anchors the semiosis considered by acting as the phonology of several dependent connotative semiotics: register, genre and ideology. These connotative semiotics are themselves stacked up in a similar way, with language and register acting as the expression-form of genre, and language, register and genre functioning as the realisation of ideology.

This Hjelmslevian interpretation is illustrated in Figure 2.15:

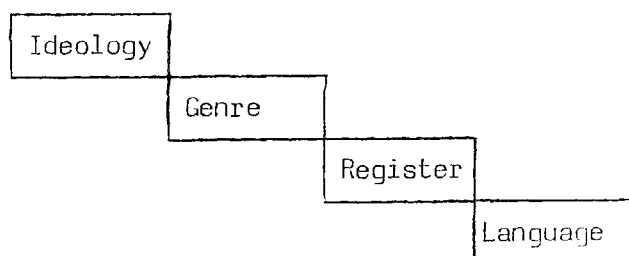


Figure 2.15: Martin's four semiotic planes

Note that in Martin (1985) there are only three semiotic planes, and the relations between them are not quite the same as in the later

version, since 'language is treated as the phonology of register and register the phonology of genre' (1985:249-50).

Register is seen in terms of the familiar triad of field, tenor and mode, but these dimensions of the semiotic structure of the situation, as characterised in Halliday (1978), have been slightly modified by Martin. Field is defined (Martin forthcoming) as a 'set of activity sequences oriented to some global institutional purpose'; tenor has three aspects - status of the participants, the frequency and basis of their contact, and affect (the hate, cool, neutral, warm, love disposition of speakers towards each other); and mode deals with both the 'distance between speaker and addressee as this conditions aural and visual feedback possibilities', and the 'distance between language and the activity sequence that is being encoded or talked over' (Martin forthcoming).

### 2.3 Systemic Critiques of Systemic Models

The point at which systemic linguists most obviously diverge is the nature of the semantic stratum, and how it can be related downward to other levels of language and upward to context of situation. As we saw above (2.2.1), the systemic linguist most openly skeptical of Halliday's view of semantics is Robin Fawcett. Not only does he equate the semantic stratum with the metafunctions and their corresponding grammatical systems; but he also, as Butler (1985) points out, criticises the semantic networks in Halliday (1973). For our purposes, Fawcett's two most important objections (Butler 1985:81-2) are, firstly, that the least delicate options in these networks - [threat], for example - are not necessarily mediated through language (neither is a question, counters Butler, but that does not exclude it from the linguist's investigations); and, secondly, that, since these sociosemantic networks are constructed only for those social contexts and settings which

are important in terms of a social theory, they embrace only a small fraction of our everyday language (a point which Butler appears to accept).

Moreover Fawcett (1980:249) is clearly not convinced by Halliday's statement that options in the semantic networks 'pre-select' options in the functional components of the grammar:

[...] where there is inevitable all-or-nothing, rule-governed pre-selection [...] there is no choice. And where there is no choice there is no meaning. So if features in the socio-semantic networks [...] are to pre-select features in the functional component networks, there will be no 'meaning' in these latter networks.

Halliday's later view of semantics and its links with context of situation, expressed in Halliday (1984) and discussed above (2.2.4), is examined by Butler in 'Communicative Function and Semantics' (Butler 1987: ). He raises several points which obviously trouble him: (1) it is not clear what the level of social context is, nor how it relates to the earlier semantic networks (Halliday 1973); (2) no definition is given of 'move'; (3) the semantic options 'offer', 'statement', 'command', 'question' are not defined; (4) since the semantic options are not defined, it is difficult to determine whether a realisation is congruent or non-congruent. Butler also questions the refinement of this model made by Martin (1981). In this article Martin proposes a revised and extended semantic network for speech function, and discusses criteria for recognising some of his categories. These include the kind of response elicited, and Butler takes Martin to task for here appealing to the way in which utterances fit into discourse structure while failing to recognise any level above the semantics. It should be noted that Martin (1985) later tackled the question of how utterances fit into discourse structure, although the link between the conversational structure component of his discourse stratum and the register

plane is not made clear.

Fawcett's belief that the semantic stratum is to be equated with the metafunctions and their corresponding grammatical systems is of course contested by other systemic linguists. At times this seems to be Halliday's position - see, for example, Halliday (1978:112) where the metafunctions are referred to as 'functional components of the semantic system' - but according to Martin (Halliday and Martin 1981:102), there is an explanation for this particular use of 'semantic':

Because Halliday conceives of the grammatical stratum as realising semantic options, he often speaks of the structures it generates as realizing semantic options without specifying that this realization is indirect, mediated by the grammatical networks, rather than direct.

This may be taken as an implicit rejection of Fawcett's position, but elsewhere (Martin 1981), Martin voices explicit objections to one aspect of Fawcett's model, the illocutionary force network. Figure 2.16 is a simplification of the network as represented in Fawcett (1980), with traditional systemic labels in parentheses:

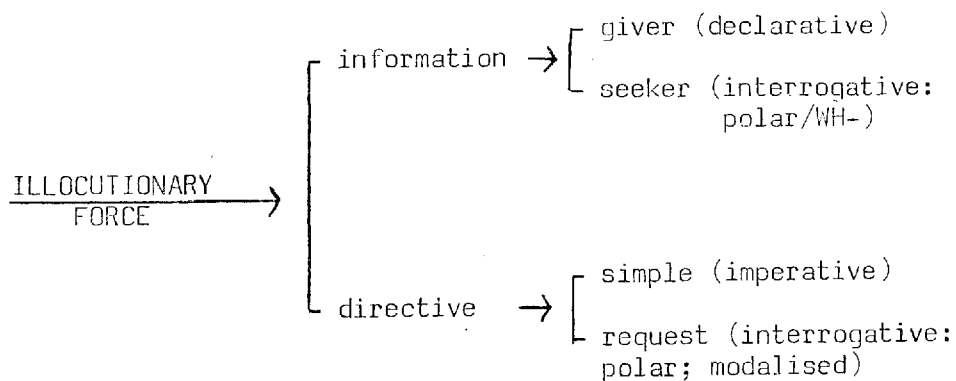


Figure 2.16: Fawcett's illocutionary force network (simplified)

This network represents a semanticisation of the mood network, and for Martin (1981:73-4) its great drawback is that, setting aside the modality, the realisation of the feature [directive:request] is the same as the realisation of [information seeker: polar]. This, he says,

'represents a loss of generalisation about the form of these utterances' (1981:73).

Butler also takes issue with Fawcett's illocutionary force network on slightly different grounds. Noting that, when confronted with the utterances "Could you open the window?" and "It's awfully stuffy in here", Fawcett codes the first as a [directive:request] and the second as an [information giver] from which an 'intended deduction' may be drawn, Butler asks why the first utterance cannot be coded as an [information seeker] from which a directive interpretation can be deduced. In fact, Fawcett answers this question (1980:110-112) in terms Butler (1987: ) finds unconvincing. There are, Fawcett claims, systematic semantic differences between a request such as "Could you read it?", and the same utterance coded as a [polarity information seeker]. The first difference is that in one case the addressee is actually being asked to read something, while in the other he/she is not. Butler notes that here Fawcett is appealing to 'purpose', even though his network is said to be based on linguistic criteria (but Fawcett's model permits a decoder to 'consult' situational factors). The second difference is that requests are said to have a low rise tone, whereas polarity information seekers have a high rising intonation - a claim Butler finds 'extremely dubious' (1987: ). The third difference is that polarity information seekers have truth value, but requests do not. The final difference is that a negative response to a request frustrates the speaker's expectations, but not a negative response to a polarity information seeker. In these last two differences, Butler remarks, Fawcett is again appealing to purpose - as, in fact, his model allows him to do.

#### 2.4 Conclusion

The linguistic model we are seeking must be capable of generating

interaction sequences, functions and realisations on the basis of situational factors. Our survey has shown that systemic-functional linguistics presents a strong analysis of grammar (semantics in Fawcett's model) and links grammar to situation. However, there is no agreement on whether situation is purely social or has a cognitive component; there is little work on interaction sequences (but see Fawcett, van de Mije and van Wissen forthcoming); and there is uncertainty as to the place of speech acts (functions) in a systemic-functional model. Plainly, a model adequate to our purposes will have to address these problems.

## Chapter 3

### A Holistic Model for Communicative Syllabus Design

#### 3.0 Introduction

The model I will be proposing here is one that is capable of generating (see below for a discussion of this term) interaction sequences, functions and realisations on the basis of situational factors. Its general framework owes much to Martin, and to three systemic linguists not yet mentioned, Threadgold, Lemke and Thibault; a number of important details, however, are drawn from Fawcett (and see Melrose 1987). I shall begin by recapitulating Martin's model (see 2.2.3) and suggesting certain modifications to it.

#### 3.1 The General Framework: Martin's Model

It will be recalled that Martin (forthcoming) sees the relation between language and context in terms of interacting semiotic systems, as in Figure 3.1.

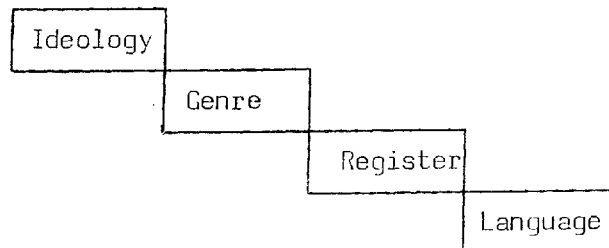


Figure 3.1: Martin's four semiotic planes

Language and register, he says, act as the expression - form of genre, while language, register and genre function as the realisation of ideology. He accepts Halliday's tri-stratal model of language, but for him the highest stratum is not semantics but discourse, which is concerned with inter-clause relations, and includes the systems of reference, conjunction, lexical cohesion and conversational structure.

Martin has thus included in his model three elements which are essential to a communicative course design model, register, genre and discourse, and suggested a possible link between these elements. Moreover, in Martin (1985) he makes a distinction which will permit us to approach interaction sequence, and the meaning potential from which a speaker selects the most appropriate next move to suit his/her goals (see section 1.6). Martin notes (1985:248) that Hjelmslev distinguishes between process (the realisation of a semiotic's meaning potential) and text (the realisation of a language's meaning potential). Process, says Martin, connotes an 'interactive dynamic perspective on manifestation', while text is 'static', and 'calls to mind a product, whole, complete'. Further on in his paper Martin (1985:259) elaborates this idea in the form of a diagram:

	potential	actual
static	synoptic system	text
active	dynamic system	process

Figure 3.2: Process and text in Martin's model

From a static perspective, potential is termed a synoptic system, while from an active perspective it is termed a dynamic system. Actual when viewed statically is termed text, when viewed dynamically it is referred as a process. Synoptic systems generate texts, whereas dynamic systems generate process. An example of a synoptic system is a system network such as transitivity or modality; an example of a dynamic system is the decision tree or flow chart used by Ventola (1984) to generate a well-formed schematic structure for a service encounter.

### 3.2 The General Framework: Martin's Model Reformulated

Martin's model has much to offer, but there are three points which require further discussion. The first is Martin's view of ideology,



which, according to Threadgold (1986:35) is 'too specifically production oriented'. In other words, implies Threadgold, Martin pays too little attention to what Lemke (1985a:283) calls the social action semiotic ('a semiotic system defining the meaning relations within and between the various recognized kinds of social practice in a community'); and does not take into account the way in which speaking subjects are positioned in and through discourse.

The second point concerns the problem of genre. Part of this problem arises from the fact that Martin (1985) assigns two not entirely compatible functions to genre. Firstly (1985:250) 'one of the principle descriptive responsibilities of genre is to constrain the possible combinations of field, mode and tenor variables used by a given culture'; secondly (1985:251), genre 'represents at an abstract level the verbal strategies used to accomplish social purposes on many kinds. These strategies can be thought of in terms of stages through which one moves in order to realise a genre'. Now, while it may be possible to conceive of genre in the first sense as semiotic plane 'below' ideology and 'above' register, it is difficult to see how genre in the second sense can be 'above' register. Indeed I would be more inclined to accept Fawcett's analysis of the place of generic structure in a systemic-functional model as providing a more plausible account of how genre-in-the-second-sense can be situated (Fawcett forthcoming).

There is a strong link between the interactants' perception of what type of social situation they are operating in and the generic structure which gets used. Indeed the two are probably mutually constitutive in many cases.

By this I understand that although social situation (the field dimension of register, in Martin's terms) and generic structure (genre) are mutually constitutive, social situation (i.e. register) is still 'above' genre.

The third point relates to the discourse stratum. Earlier (section 2.1.4) we saw that Halliday regards semantics as a bridge between the social system (which is wholly outside language), and the grammatical system (which is wholly within language) and it is probable that Martin has a similar conception of his discourse stratum. What is certain is that, as in Halliday's semantic networks, not all options in Martin's discourse networks are mediated through language: a glance at Figure 2.13, for example, will show that choices in the Retrieval system such as [nonverbal] or [context of culture] are outside language; and in the Exchange Structure networks (Figure 2.14), which deals only with initiations, if [action oriented] is chosen, then [follow up] could easily have a purely non-verbal realisation such as SMILE (if the network also dealt with responses, the possibility of non-verbal realisations would obviously be increased.) This suggests that there is at least an argument for treating discourse not as a level of language but as another semiotic plane, 'above' language but possibly 'below' register.

In view of the points just raised, I would like to present a modified version of Figure 3.1:

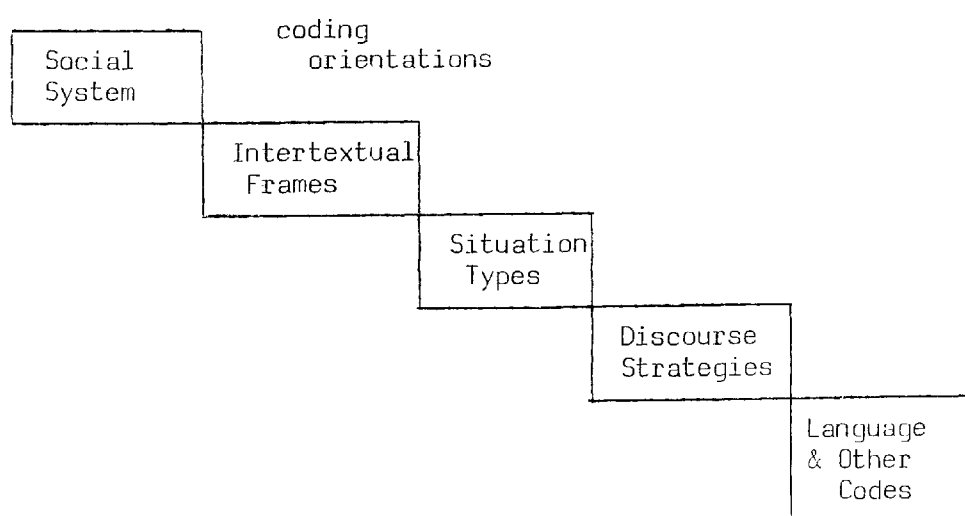


Figure 3.3: Martin's model revised

Figure 3.4 focuses on situation-type, discourse strategies and language and other codes, listing the components of these three planes:

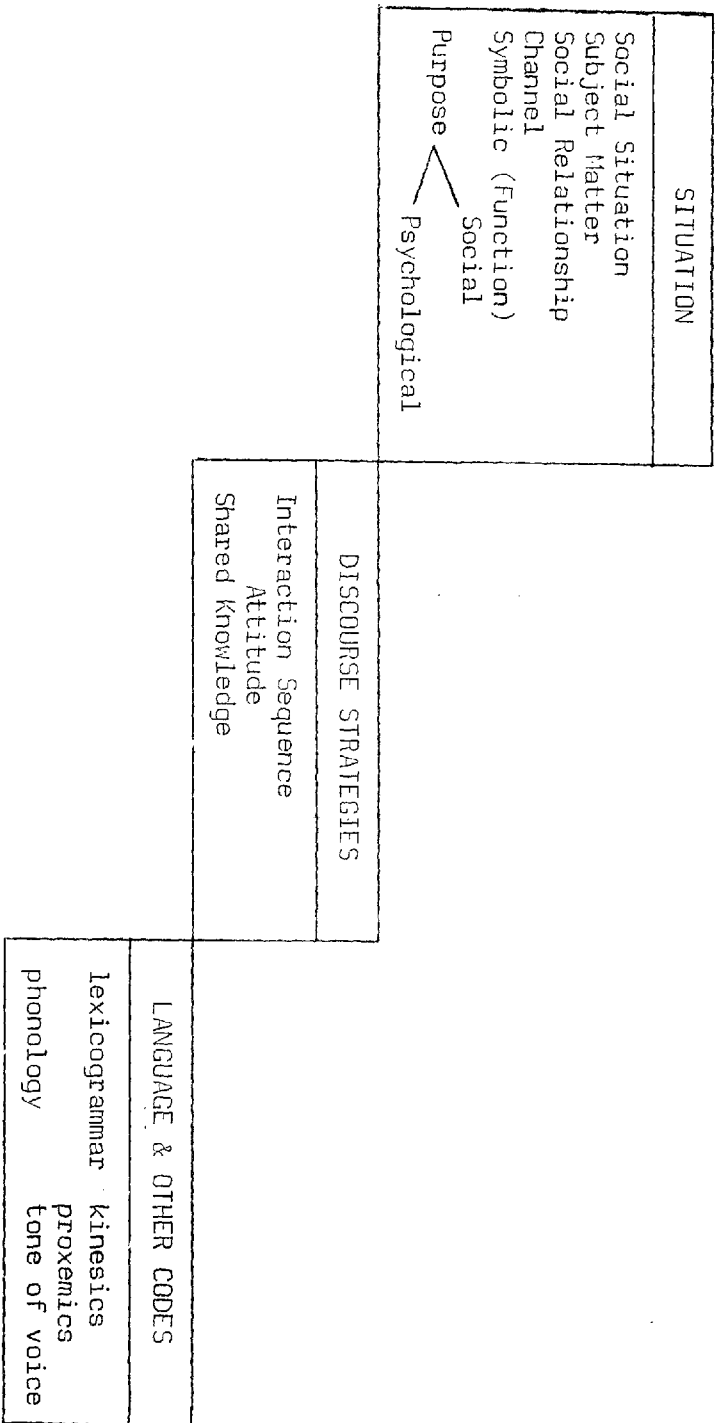


Figure 3.4: The components of Situation, Discourse Strategies, and Language & Other Codes

### 3.2.1 Social System and Intertextual Frame

The two 'highest' planes of the present model are social system and intertextual frame, roughly corresponding to Martin's ideology and to his genre in its register-constraining function. It is hypothesised that there are three interrelated and overlapping components of the social system plane, namely institutional discourse and practices, thematic system, and social action semiotic. It is these we shall look at here.

#### Institutional Discourse and Practices

Institutional discourse and practices, which is based on the Foucauldian notion of discursive formation ( see for example Foucault 1972) may be regarded for our purposes as the discourse of an established "institutionalized" discipline such as medicine, psychoanalysis, economics or education, which conforms to a specific "regime of truth" and is characterised by systems of relations among discursive objects (subject matter, in our terms), speaker-roles and subject positions (tenor), and principles of organisation of its statements (mode). Let us consider one of the disciplines most relevant to the present work - that is, education. Two objects of this discipline, at least insofar as it applies to second language education, could be termed authenticity and learnability, which stand in a specific relationship to each other and to other objects (linguistic difficulty, for example), a relationship which varies over time (compare the audio-lingual approach of 1955 and the communicative approach of 1985), and is not even stable at a given time (see section 4.4 for further discussion). Equally variable are the speaker-roles and subject positions of the discipline : the teacher as giver of information and as (a representative of) infallible authority, a role which may have been current in Victorian times and is still so in many societies has given way in others to the teacher as facilitator of learning and wise counsellor. As for the principles of organisation of the discipline's statements, genre ( a part of mode for Halliday) seems to play a role here : educational psychology is likely to be taught in a standard textbook while classroom management principles or teaching practice procedures are likely to appear in a "practical" handbook. Finally the discipline has its non-discursive practices which arise from its discourse : the way a classroom is arranged and decorated is one such practice.

#### Thematic System

A thematic system is defined by Jay Lemke (1985b:24) as 'the typical

ideational-semantic meaning relations constructed in some sets of texts [...] which are thematically relevant for one another's meaning constructions' (in Lemke 1983 it is implied that other relations constructed in a set of texts should also be considered, including interpersonal-grammatical, rhetorical and discourse structure relations).

As the definition shows, Lemke concentrates on the ideational-semantic meaning relations : these can be seen as the participant roles and process types with which an entity is associated typically in a particular set of texts, together with the other entities that enter into some lexical or grammatical relationship with the entity that is being examined. Thus, assuming a thematic system entitled 'traditional gender roles' it might be speculated that in a specific set of texts man would be Actor in material processes belonging to a number of fairly well-definable lexical sets, and Carrier in relational processes whose Attribute would belong to other equally clear - even stereotyped - lexical sets. By the same token woman would be Actor in a totally different set of material processes and Carrier in relational processes with attribute from entirely different lexical sets; and might in addition appear more frequently as Sayer in mental processes or Sayer in verbal processes or even Goal in material processes (I am thinking here of traditional romantic novels).

I can briefly discuss the other thematic system relations by imagining a thematic system entitled 'academic objectivity'. Thus in addition to the ideational-semantic meaning relations (a tendency to encode the relevant "objects" of one's discipline as participants in relational processes), there are interpersonal-grammatical relations (a preference for unmodalised statements or "rhetorical" questions or a certain type of modality), and 'discourse structure' relations, of which an obvious example is the nominalisation characteristic of academic writing which turns processes into objects. A final note : a thematic system is not a system in the usual sense, but a relational network (see section 5.2.1).

### Social Action Semiotic

This was defined (in section 3.2 above) as a 'semiotic system defining the meaning relations within and between the various recognized kinds of social practice in a community'. Perhaps the best way to think of the social action semiotic is as a performance. For example, we all perform being a man or being a woman and at any given time in a given society there are numerous choices open to us in our performance. Obviously these choices intersect when we perform man and woman interacting and are necessarily narrowed down ; just

as they are constrained when we have to perform employee or customer in addition to man or woman. These performances are not based solely on non-verbal models since we are constantly told how to perform man or woman, husband or wife, employee or employer and so on. The social action semiotic, then, is what Threadgold (1986:35) calls the 'sayings and doings of the community' (see section 7.5.1 for further discussion).

### Intertextual Frame

The intertextual frame may be regarded as an instantiation of a particular institutional discourse and practices, of particular relations in one or more thematic systems, and of (a) specific "performance(s)" in the social action semiotic. The intertextual frame has the same relation to social system as register has to field, tenor and mode. Code is defined by Halliday (1978:111) as 'the principle of semiotic organisation governing the choice of meanings by a speaker and their interpretation by a hearer', and as 'the grid, or subcultural angle on the social system'. Thus the coding orientation positions speaking subjects in differential ways in relation to the intertextual frame - with obvious implications for the foreign language learning process ( see section 3.4).

### 3.2.2 Situation-Type

The term 'situation-type', henceforth abbreviated to 'situation', is here preferred to 'register' ; the latter term is defined by Halliday (see 2.1.7 above) as 'the semantic configuration that is typically associated with the situation-type in question' (1978:123), which appears to equate a register with a set of semantic networks. In this model situation is constrained by the intertextual frame, just as field, tenor and mode combinations are constrained by the first meaning of genre in Martin's model ; in other words situation articulates social system (discursive formations, thematic systems, social action semiotic) via the intertextual frame which itself articulates social system, and in relation to which subjects are positioned by their coding orientations.

Situation is discussed in Halliday in his essay 'Language as social semiotic' (1978:109):

It will be necessary to represent the situation [...] not as situation but as situation type, in the sense of what Bernstein refers to as a 'social context'. This is, essentially, a semiotic structure. It is a constellation of meanings deriving from the semiotic system that constitutes the culture.

and in another essay (1978:198):

The linguistic system[...] is organised in such a way that the social context is predictive of the text. This is what makes it possible for a member to make the necessary predictions about the meanings that are being exchanged in any situation which he encounters. If we drop in on a gathering we are able to tune in very quickly because we size up the field, tenor and mode of the situation and at once form an idea of what is likely to be being meant. In this way we know what semantic configurations - what register - will probably be required if we are to take part. If we did not do this there would be no communication, since only a part of the meanings we have to understand are explicitly realized in the wordings. The rest are unrealized; they are left out - or rather[...] they are out of focus.

Situation thus has two characteristics : 1) It is a social phenomenon, deriving from the 'semiotic system that constitutes the culture' (from the discursive formations, thematic systems, and social action semiotic of the social system via the intertextual frame); 2) It forms part of a speaker-hearer's knowledge: assuming that subjects are positioned identically in relation to an intertextual frame, the field, tenor and mode of a situation can be 'sized up' by the member of a culture, even though some of the meanings are 'unrealized' or 'out of focus' (the implication being that knowledge of situation types permits these meanings to be "filled in").

The components of situation will therefore be viewed in terms of ~~these~~ two characteristics, situation-as-social-phenomenon and situation-as-knowledge. The definition of the first two components, social situation and subject matter, is close to that of Martin (see 2.2.3 above).

### Social Situation

Social situation is seen as an activity which is recognized (and therefore "named") by a given society and which consists of an ordered series of acts. The activity may be largely non-verbal (eg. 'preparing a meal') in which case the acts are "physical"; or it may be largely verbal (eg. 'socialising') in which case the acts are largely "abstract" (see section on discourse strategies); or it may be a mixture of the non-verbal and verbal ('renting accommodation' is an example here). The non-verbal aspect of social situation articulates some "performance" in the social action semiotic; the verbal side articulates relations in one (or more) thematic system. At this point, two clarifications should be made. First although thematic system relations are given lexicogrammatical labels, they should be considered as social rather than linguistic. Second, thematic system relations are available in a given social situation, but they are not obligatory.

Knowledge of social situations is organised into *frames* - first proposed by Minsky and defined by Metzger (1979:28-9) as -



packets of knowledge that provide descriptions of typical objects or events. These descriptions contain both an abstract template providing a skeleton for describing any instance and a set of defaults for typical members of the class. The defaults allow the information system to supply missing detail, maintain expectations, and notice anomalies

or into *scripts*, equally proposed by Minsky and defined (Metzing 1979:85) as follows:

In each culture there are a number of stereotypic situations in which human behaviour is highly predictable and narrowly defined. Behaviour in these situations is often described in terms of cultural conventions. These conventions are learned in childhood, adhered to throughout one's life and rarely questioned or analyzed. Scripts describe these conventional situations that are defined by a highly stereotypic sequence of events.

If some aspect of a recognized social situation becomes a topic of conversation then it is referred to as subject matter: preparing a meal is a social situation, but if I discuss it then it becomes subject matter. Social situation and subject matter may be completely unconnected - I can be preparing a meal and discussing a football match (though here it may be possible to say that the discussion is also a social situation).

It was previously noted that social situations may be represented as frames or scripts articulating relevant thematic system relations and social action semiotic "performances". If that is the case, then knowledge of subject matter must be similarly represented, with an emphasis on the dominant transitivity relations and major lexical sets of the thematic system in play.

#### Social relationship

The social action semiotic is a network of choices available to members of a cultural group when performing a wide range of social roles. Often these social roles are best defined relationally, in terms of symmetrical pairs (such as 'colleague-colleague') or asymmetrical pairs ('employer-employee', for example). These social relationships are mutually determining and carry with them certain behaviour patterns, rights, duties and obligations, which articulate relevant social action semiotic "performances", organised perhaps into social role frames. In the present work I shall be using the inventory of social relationships drawn up by John Munby (see 1978:72).

#### Channel

Channel includes the traditional division between spoken and written (which covers sub-types like spoken-to-be-written and written-to-be-spoken) on the one hand; and the distinction between face-to-face and via telephone, radio, television on the other hand. All channels have their "rules"

: thus the spoken face-to-face channel has rules relating, for instance, to kinesic and proxemic choices that are derived from relevant social action semiotic "performances"; while the rules of a channel such as spoken-on-radio derive from the discourses and practices of the media.

Symbolic Function

Symbolic function is the role played by language in the total situation. Language may be almost fully constitutive of the situation, as in the case of a text book on language teaching, for example; or it may only partly constitute the situation and shared knowledge (of the immediate environment, personal history, local geography and events etc.) may have an important part to play. Knowledge of "how much to say and when" is derived from the social action semiotic and may differ between cultures and subcultures (see Bernstein 1971 for a discussion of restricted and elaborated codes later interpreted by Ong 1982:106 as oral-based and text-based codes).

Purpose

It will be recalled that Martin sees field as a "set of activity sequences oriented to some global institutional purpose"; and accordingly he rejects the need for a separate category oriented to the short term goals of an activity sequence. Such a category however does have its uses. Firstly we need to recall Fawcett's socio-psychological purposes network :

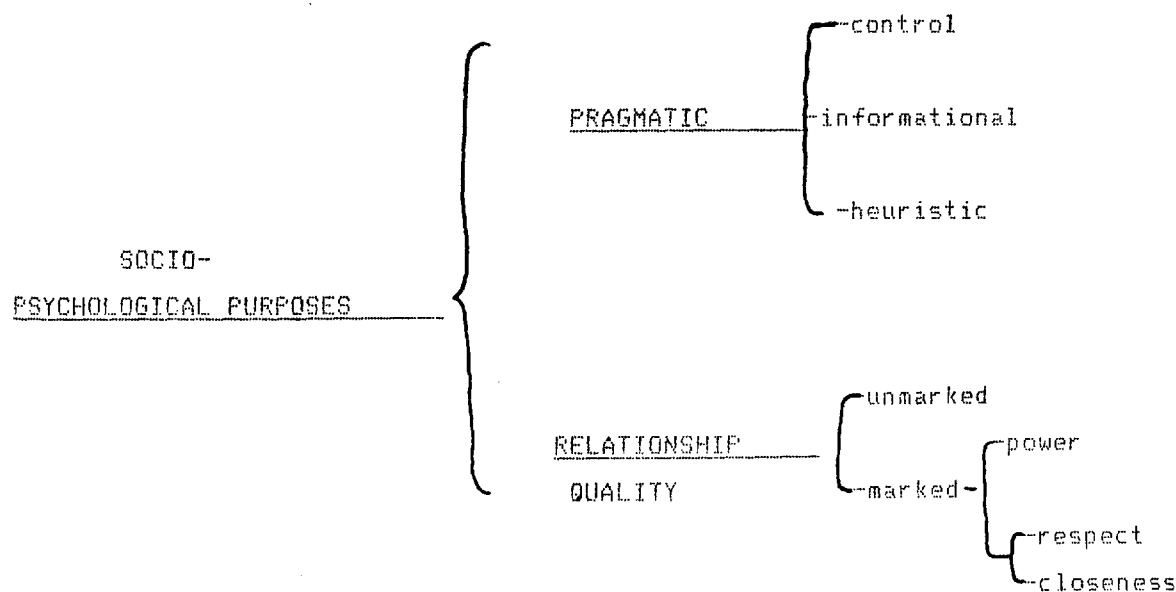


Fig.3.5: Modified version of Fawcett's Purposes Network

Purpose can be seen as the 'interactive' aspect of social situation, with pragmatic purpose deriving from the relevant thematic system and relationship quality from the social action semiotic where both influence choices in discourse strategies.

### 3.2.3 Discourse Strategies

In this model 'discourse' does not have the meaning that it has in the work of Foucault or post-Foucauldian scholars - where, says Threadgold (1986:54) it is similar in some respects to 'genre' as used by Martin or Hasan; nor does it have the meaning it has in the work of discourse analysts such as Sinclair and Coulthard. Discourse here is seen as a behavioural unit, a running to and fro (the literal meaning of the Latin root) which articulates situation and mediates between situation and language/other codes. Discourse strategies then are strategies which permit the articulation of a situation and its distribution between an emitter and a receiver in a form which can be readily re-articulated in language or other codes.

The first component of discourse strategies is interaction sequence which in terms of Martin (1985:251) is genre when it 'represents at an abstract level the verbal strategies used to accomplish social purposes of many kinds. These strategies can be thought of in terms of stages through which one moves in order to realise a genre'. Unlike genre, however, an interaction sequence shares the stages between an emitter and a receiver. The elements of situation that interaction sequence articulates above all - though not exclusively - are social situation and purpose. This claim is borne out not only by Fawcett (3.2 above) but also by Hasan (Halliday and Hasan 1985:108) who discusses the relationship between field, tenor and mode (called contextual configuration or CC) and genre:

Genre bears a logical relation to CC, being its verbal expression. If CC is a class of situation type, then genre is language doing the job appropriate to that class of social happenings.

At another point, (Halliday and Hasan 1985:56) Hasan is even more specific:

[...] the features of the CC can be used for making certain kinds of predictions about text structure [...]

More succinctly we would say that a CC can predict the OBLIGATORY [...] and the OPTIONAL [...] elements of a text's structure as well as their SEQUENCE [...] and the possibility of their INTERACTION.

With the qualification that interaction sequence (i.e. genre, text structure) is behavioural rather than verbal (since an element of interaction sequence may be realised non-verbally), I would see Hasan's position as close to mine.

Interaction sequence, we have said, is closely linked to social situation and subject matter, and may, at least in the spoken channel (and to a certain extent in the written), be seen as an activity sequence shared between an emitter and a receiver, and realised both verbally and non-verbally. This definition obviously needs to be clarified and expanded, and to do so we must explore three areas: the study of spoken genres, the approach to discourse analysis practised by scholars such as Sinclair and Coulthard, and conversation analysis as carried out by ethnomethodologists such as Sacks and Schlegloff.

The study of spoken genres may be exemplified by the work of Ventola (see Ventola 1979, 1984 and Martin 1985) on casual conversation and service encounters. In her research into casual conversation, Ventola has proposed that the elements of schematic structure for this genre are, in their unmarked order, as follows:

- (1) Greeting
- (2) Address
- (3) Approach, either Direct, relating to health, appearance, family members, everyday or professional life; or Indirect,

relating to weather, current news, etc.

- (4) Centering, an optional element in which one or more cognitive or informative topics is discussed
- (5) Leave-taking
- (6) Good-bye

The obvious question is: can casual conversation be regarded as an interaction sequence? Interaction sequences, we have said, are activity sequences, shared between an emitter and a receiver, and it could be argued that casual conversation articulates an activity sequence such as 'maintaining social contact'. Even if 'maintaining social contact' is rejected as a plausible activity sequence, it cannot be denied that it represents an extremely important activity-type in the social action semiotic, possibly articulated in the plane of situation as a 'social-activity sequence' called 'socialising'.

Also studied by Ventola are service encounters - here are the elements of schematic structure for this genre listed in their unmarked order of appearance:

- (1) Greeting
- (2) Turn Allocation (select next customer)
- (3) Service Bid (offer of service)
- (4) Service (statement of needs)
- (5) Resolution (decision to buy or not buy)
- (6) Pay
- (7) Goods Handover
- (8) Closing
- (9) Good-bye

Whereas the status of casual conversation as an interaction sequence might be disputable, that of a service encounter is clear: it shares between an emitter and a receiver a well recognised activity sequence,

of the type we will call 'physical-activity sequence', and thus constitutes a clearly-defined interaction sequence.

The study of spoken genres, then, represents a first step towards clarifying the meaning of interaction sequence; the next step is to examine the approach to discourse analysis practised by scholars such as Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) (see also Coulthard and Montgomery 1981). The largest units these analysts consider are the lesson (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) or the interaction (Burton in Coulthard and Montgomery 1981), which appear to correspond to spoken genres, but whose analysis is in fact markedly different from that of a genre theorist such as Ventola. These discourse analysts operate with a rank scale in which the lesson/interaction consists of transactions, which consist of exchanges, which consist of moves, which consist of acts. Acts, however, are not stages through which one moves to realise a lesson/interaction, but are speech acts—up to twenty-four, of which the most basic initiations and responses are:

- |             |   |              |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| informative | - | acknowledge  |
| elicitation | - | reply        |
| directive   | - | accept/react |
| accusation  | - | excuse       |

The three acts informative, elicitation and directive, obviously correspond to Halliday's statement, question and command, on the semantic level, and declarative, interrogative and imperative on the grammatical level; the fourth act, accusation, does not correspond to any clear semantic or grammatical category — perhaps it is what Halliday (1985: 340) calls a metaphor of mood, which means that it is only indirectly related to the first three, relying as it does on perlocutionary rather than illocutionary force.

A lesson/interaction, then, is not an interaction sequence in our

terms : rather than being an activity-sequence shared between two or more participants it is, from a semiotic viewpoint, a series of exchanges of goods-and-services or information. In the case of accusation, however - and of other acts not yet referred to, such as metastatement and conclusion (see Burton in Coulthard and Montgomery 1981:76-7) - something more complex seems to be at work, and it is here that the research of the American ethnomethodologists can shed some light.

In their analyses of conversation the ethnomethodologists have introduced the notion of pre-sequence, to refer to a certain kind of turn or the sequence containing that type of turn (see Levinson 1983:345 ff.). There are various types of pre-sequences noted, including pre-invitations, pre-requests, pre-arrangements, pre-announcements and pre-closings. All seem designed to orient the addressee toward what is to follow; and some such as pre-requests also seem designed to avoid what are called 'dispreferred' second turns in an adjacency pair (in the case of a request, a refusal would be 'dispreferred'). This concept of pre-sequence has considerable implications for our understanding of interaction sequence : it now seems plausible to re-interpret the discourse analysts' exchanges of goods-and-services or information as what we previously referred to, in the context of casual conversation, as 'social activity sequences'. The exchange accusation-excuse would then be seen as the two central elements in a potentially more complex interaction sequence starting with a pre-accusation, just as metastatement (a pre-sequence) and conclusion could be viewed as optional elements in a wide range of interaction sequences.

Thus in the present work the term interaction sequence will include not only genres such as casual conversation or service encounter as characterized by Ventola but also extended exchanges such as request sequences or invitation sequences. The interaction sequence therefore subsumes speech acts and exchange structure as viewed by Sinclair and Coulthard, Berry, and Fawcett. The reason for preferring the interaction sequence - greater analytic freedom - should become evident in the ensuing analysis.

Like interaction sequence, attitude, the second discourse strategy, can be seen as a range of options for "staging" and interaction. Just as interaction sequence provides different "pathways" through a social situation, so attitude allows a participant to achieve her/his goals through evaluation of the social situation and subject matter. Attitude mainly articulates social relationship and purpose and can be best thought of in terms of a set of features such as Munby's 'attitudinal-tone index' (1978:104-110) rather than as a system.

The third discourse strategy is shared knowledge, which may be likened to one of Martin's discourse stratum systems, Retrieval (see Fig.2.13 above). Shared knowledge is represented in Fig.3.6:

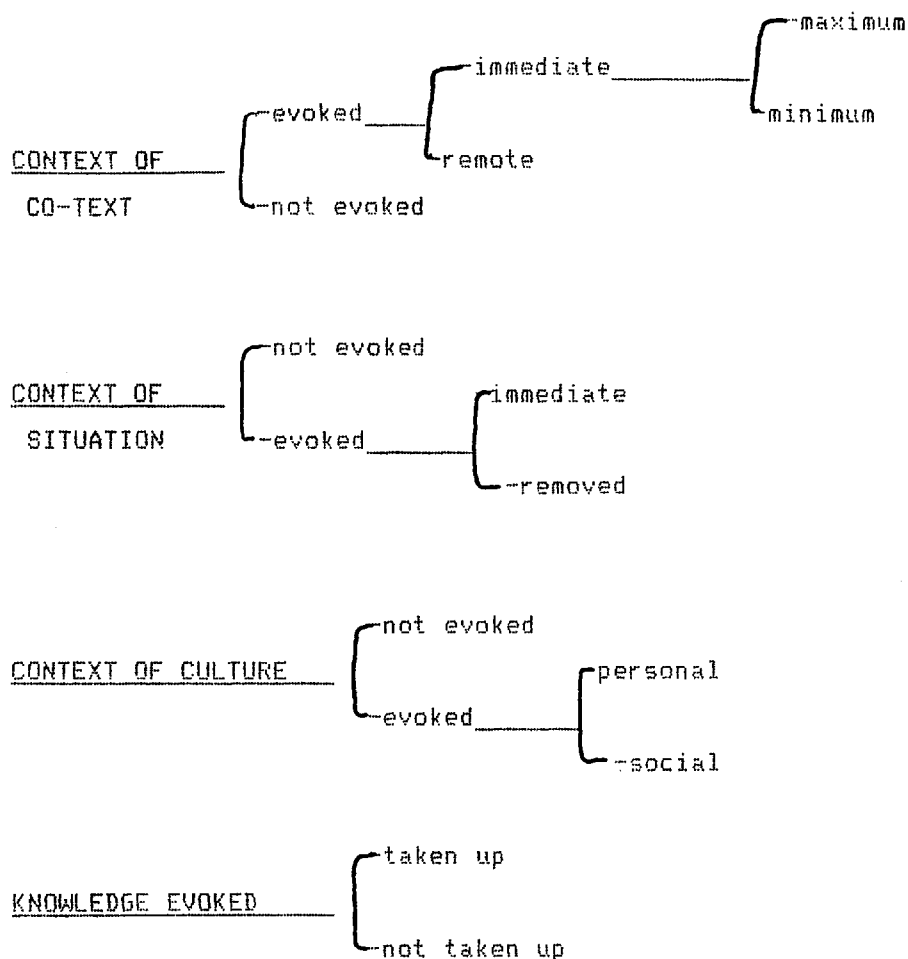


Figure 3.6 : Shared Knowledge.

Context of co-text is the (immediate or remote) textual environment of a move in the ongoing interaction; maximum represents a choice such as ellipsis, minimum a choice such as lexical collocation (maximum and minimum are actually two extremes of a cline rather than choices). Context of situation is the relevant non-verbal environment of the text, whether visible (immediate) or not (removed). Context of culture is social (relevant institutional discourse and practices, thematic systems and social action semiotic "performances" or personal (the idiosyncratic discourses, practices and experiences of small units such as families or groups of friends). The decision whether to evoke or not to evoke, take up or not take up a particular type of shared knowledge articulates social relationship, purpose and symbolic function. Shared knowledge, then, is not passive, but is an active strategy for achieving one's



goals.

One final note on discourse strategies : those I have discussed seem most useful for my project here, that is, relevant to everyday conversation. It is quite possible that in other types of discourse other strategies are brought into play (see Melrose 1988 for some possible strategies in a Wallace Stevens poem).

#### 3.2.4 Language and Other Codes

Thus mediated by the discourse strategies of interaction sequence, attitude and shared knowledge, the situation-type is realised not only by lexico-grammar but also (or alternatively) by non-verbal codes such as kinesics, proxemics and tone of voice. The mediation between situation-type and the metafunctions is complex but there is a tendency for interaction sequence to be linked to the experiential metafunction, attitude to the interpersonal and shared knowledge to the textual.

The link between discourse strategies and non-verbal codes is even more problematic : a smile may, given the appropriate context, realise a move in an interaction sequence, attitude to subject-matter or addressee, or evocation of shared knowledge. This no doubt stems from the fact that a code such as kinesics (here including gesture, facework and posture) does not appear to have a 'grammar'. Although researchers such as Birdwhistell (1970) or Hall (1966) have attempted to analyse kinesic or proxemic codes (see Pennycook 1985 for an account of the work of these and other scholars), their descriptions are often very technical. I shall limit myself here to a simple and impressionistic account of the most salient non-verbal features accompanying a verbal utterance or realising a non-verbal utterance. Note that the lexicogrammatical analysis will be based on Halliday (1985).

### 3.3 The Model in Operation

At the beginning of this chapter I claimed that the model just outlined would be 'capable of generating interaction sequences, functions and realisations on the basis of situational factors'. At this point the claim needs two qualifications and an explanation. The first and most important qualification is that 'functions' (in the sense of speech acts) is not a discrete category in the model having been subsumed by interaction sequence. Thus it would be more appropriate to replace 'functions' by 'moves in an interaction sequence', even though 'function' remains a category in my

analysis of functional-notional courses. The second qualification is that the model does not rely solely on situational factors since situation articulates intertextual frames which are configurations of thematic system relations, social action semiotic "performances" and any relevant institutional discourses and practices. The explanation concerns the term "generate". This term originates with Chomsky's generative grammar and Lyons explains the use of this mathematical term in linguistics in this way (Lyons 1979:156):

When we say that a grammar generates the sentences of a language we imply that it constitutes a system of rules (with an associated lexicon) which are formulated in such a way that they yield, in principle, a decision-procedure for any combination of the elements of the language

Can our model generate sentences in the manner just outlined? In other words can we derive from a set of discourse strategies a particular lexicogrammatical configuration? The answer must be no: it would be more correct to say that discourse strategies "pre-select" options in the lexicogrammar (see 2.1.5 above) and that discourse strategies thereby motivate grammatical options.

Could we then derive discourse strategies from a particular lexicogrammatical configuration? Again the answer must be no, for as we shall see the decoder's perspective in the ongoing speech event may be significantly different from that of the encoder.

### 3.3.1 The Encoder's Perspective

I am now going to show the model in action with a dialogue taken from Unit 10 of *Starting Strategies* (Abbs and Freebairn 1977:54). I shall produce it in full - the dialogue is accompanied by drawings which will be represented here by "stage directions" in parentheses.

- . (a) Neville: Jackie! it's coffee time!  
(head peeping round door)
- (b) Jackie: Coming! (seated at typewriter)
- 2. (c) Neville: Well, this is the cafeteria (they enter)
- (d) Jackie: It's nice and modern!
- 3. (e) Neville: Would you like a cup of coffee? (hand reaching to  
cup)
- (f) Jackie: Yes please.
- (g) Neville: And a biscuit? (hand reaching to biscuit)
- (h) Jackie: No thanks. Just a cup of coffee.

It is also pertinent to note that the dialogue takes place in a work-place (the office of a company that makes films), and that the two speakers (both young, good-looking and probably single) are colleagues, 'Neville' being a cameraman, and 'Jackie' a secretary only recently recruited.

According to our model, any text articulates the social system that enables it, so we shall begin by looking at the discursive formations, thematic systems and social action semiotic which inform this dialogue.

#### Social System

**Discursive Formation:** the discourse and non-discursive practices of (capitalist) economics and industrial relations (discourse is here understood to include the discursive objects, subject positions, and the principles of organisation of the statements of (capitalist) economics and industrial relations).

**Thematic Systems:** the lexical item 'coffee' obviously belongs to an extensive thematic system in which it typically realises certain participant roles (such as Phenomenon and Range) and collocates with a certain set of mental or material processes (including 'like', 'need', 'have',

'drink') and certain types of circumstance (Location, Time). This is the main thematic system, but conceivably there is also another one, discreetly articulated by the pronoun 'you', (= 'Jackie') here functioning as Senser in a mental process, and contrasted with the speaker (= 'Neville'), who is non-verbal 'Actor'. (I mean, of course, that of 'male-female relations').

Social Action Semiotic: the main systems of the social action semiotic are relations between colleagues, gender roles, and cafeteria behaviour.

### Intertextual Frame

This may be characterised as 'workplace coffee break shared by two colleagues of the opposite sex'. The coding orientation which positions subjects in relation to this intertextual frames is presumably 'British middle class'.

This is a description of the social system options and intertextual frame directly articulated by the dialogue. It should, of course, not be forgotten that the dialogue also indirectly articulates a larger intertextual frame - that of a communicative course book - which is informed by particular discursive formations, thematic systems, and social action semiotic (see 2.1 above).

Situation, which is constrained by the intertextual frame and articulates the social system, can be analysed as follows.

### Situation

Social Situation: socialising:coffee break/purchasing

Subject Matter: coffee, biscuits

Social situation and subject matter both articulate the discourse and non-discursive practices of industrial relations (which allow and even encourage socialising at certain fixed times), the thematic system of which the lexical item 'coffee' is a member, and the systems of the

social action semiotic mentioned above. Discourse, non-discursive practices, thematic system, and social action semiotic systems are available to both participants in the speech event in the forms of frames or scripts - provided of course that both participants are equally positioned in relation to the intertextual frames. (Presumably the fictional participants are, but we will consider below whether the same can be said of the authors of the text book and the learners using it).

Social Relationship: colleague-colleague; male-female

These social relationships are taken from Munby's inventory (1978:72) - the former is regarded as symmetrical, while the latter is considered asymmetrical. The relationships articulate systems in the social action semiotic, though the influence of industrial relations discourse and practices on relations between colleagues (especially hierarchically unequal ones) cannot be ruled out. Coding orientation is particularly crucial here in the male-female relationship, given differential positioning in relation to gender roles, both within and between societies.

Channel: spontaneous spoken; face-to-face (but for the learner: written-to be spoken-and-learnt; printed word)

The first channel articulates the social action semiotic; the second articulates the discourse of education, in particular of language teaching

Symbolic Function: ancillary

For the participants the verbal interaction is ancillary since actions such as leaning through the door or reaching for a cup also carry significant meaning. For the learner, too, the verbal interaction is ancillary, but in a different way: the dialogue itself plays only a small part in the teaching/learning process.

Purpose: regulatory; closeness

These social and psychological purposes articulate systems of the social action semiotic, and possibly industrial relations discourse and practices (regarding behaviour towards a new member of staff).

### Discourse Strategies

Interaction Sequence: Summons ^ Orient ^ Accept Invitation ^ Socialise  
^ Offer ^ Accept ^ Offer ^ Refuse

Interaction sequence here articulates social situation ('socialising: coffee break'), purpose ('regulatory; closeness'), and, perhaps, the asymmetrical social relationship 'male-female'. This is obviously an activity-sequence ('going to the cafeteria') shared between two people - indeed, it requires two people! - although it could be argued that it is actually three separate sequences (if we ignore Summons): Invite (in fact, a pre-invitation, here termed Orient) Accept; Socialise; and Offer ^ Accept/Refuse. Classifying the first exchange as Orient ^ Accept Invitation raises an important question, which will be posed and answered in later discussion of the decoder's perspective.

Attitude: friendly/tentative; casual/enthusiastic

Attitude to addressee and to social situation/subject-matter articulate social relationship ('colleague-colleague; male-female') and purpose ('closeness'), as well as social situation ('socialising').

Shared Knowledge:

- (1) social ^ immediate
- (2) immediate ^ minimum
- (3) social ^ maximum ^ maximum ^ maximum

The shared knowledge evoked (and taken up) differs in each micro-sequence. In the first micro-sequence the initiator evokes social knowledge (coffee-break is accepted institutional practice which takes

place in an area specially set aside for the purpose), while the responder evokes environmental knowledge (as shown by the Mood ellipsis). In the second, the initiator evokes environmental knowledge (indicated by the exophoric demonstrative), while the responder evokes minimum knowledge of co-text (through the anaphoric pronoun). In the third micro-sequence, 'Neville' at first evokes social shared knowledge (a thematic system related to offers and intersecting with the thematic system to which 'coffee' belongs, plus relevant choices in the social action semiotic), then maximum knowledge of co-text (ellipsis of Mood and Predicator), while 'Jackie' simply evokes maximum knowledge of co-text (clausal ellipsis, then ellipsis of Mood and Predicator).

#### Language and Other Codes

The linguistic and non-linguistic options articulating the discourse strategies will now be discussed in each micro-sequence.

#### Micro-sequence 1

(a) (i) [vocative]; [tone 4]

(ii) [relational: identifying]; [declarative]; unmarked theme and information focus; [tone 1]; [key: high]; STANDING AT DOOR LEANING IN

(b) [material]; [declarative] with Mood ellipsis; unmarked theme and information focus; [tone 1]; SEATED ---- RISING FROM SEAT

The grammatical options are all as described in experiential, interpersonal and textual systems, apart from [key: high], which is taken from Coulthard and Brazil (1981). Kinesic options are represented in upper-case letters. These grammatical and kinesic options articulate a combination of interaction sequence (Orient ^ Accept Invitation), shared knowledge (coffee-break is an accepted practice, and takes place in a separate area), and attitude (friendly; casual). Lexis is drawn from the 'coffee break' frame and, thus, indirectly, from the thematic system to which 'coffee' belongs; and gesture from the relevant system

of the social action semiotic.

### Micro-sequence 2

(c) [relational: identifying]; [declarative]; unmarked theme and information focus; exophoric demonstrative

(d) [relational: attributive]; [declarative]; [tone 5]; unmarked theme and information focus; anaphoric pronoun; WARM

The initiation articulates the Socialise element of 'going to the cafeteria (for the first time)' and shared knowledge of the immediate environment; the response articulates the Socialise element, the attitude to subject-matter 'enthusiastic', and minimum knowledge of co-text. Lexis is drawn from an 'enthusiastic' sub-set appropriate to the subject-matter (derivable from the 'coffee' thematic system).

### Micro-sequence 3

(e) [mental: affect]; [interrogative: modalised]; modal and topical theme, unmarked information focus; [tone 2]; HAND REACHING OUT FOR CUP

(f) [positive]; clausal ellipsis

(g) conjunction: additive; ellipsis of Mood and Predicator; [tone 2]; HAND REACHING OUT FOR BISCUIT

(h) (i) [negative]; clausal ellipsis  
(ii) ellipsis of Mood and Predicator

The first initiation (move (2)) articulates the element Offer, the attitude-to-addressee 'tentative', and social shared knowledge (that given the sequence element Offer and the attitude-to-addressee, 'tentative', then it is appropriate to choose from the intersecting thematic systems offers/coffee a form of offer that involves [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser, [interrogative], and [modulation: inclination: oblique]). The second initiation (move (g)) articulates Offer plus maximum knowledge of co-text, while the responses articulate Accept or



Refuse together with the attitude-to-addressee 'friendly'.

### 3.3.2 The Decoder's Perspective

What has been analysed so far are the social system choices, the intertextual frame, the components of situation, and discourse strategies that the encoder brings into play in producing his/her utterance, his/her meaning. But communication is a two-way process, and the question is: confronted with a configuration of grammatical and kinesic choices, how does the decoder 'interpret' the encoder's meaning? indeed, does the decoder always interpret 'correctly' the encoder's meaning? Or, to put it another way, does the decoder bring into play the same discourse strategies, components of situation, intertextual frame and social system choices as the encoder?

Micro-sequence 1 provides a good example of the flexibility the decoder has in negotiating meaning with the encoder. As a reminder:

Neville: Jackie! It's coffee time!

Jackie: Coming!

Dismissing the [vocative] with [tone 4] and kinesic option STANDING AT DOOR LEANING IN, which is readily interpretable as Summons, we may suppose that 'Jackie''s main problem lies with the relational process in the declarative mood. As previously noted, these grammatical choices articulate the element Orient (pre-invitation) only in the context of specific social shared knowledge and attitude to addressee and social situation. But suppose 'Jackie' does not share, or 'take up', the social knowledge that is evoked (perhaps as a new employee she does not know the procedure for coffee break in the organisation); or suppose her attitude to 'Neville' or to the social situation (possibly unclear) or subject-matter ('coffee break') articulates different choices in the social action semiotic systems 'gender roles' and 'relations between colleagues'. In that case, she may take note of the [key: high] and

kinesic option STANDING AT DOOR LEANING IN, and interpret the utterance as a pre-invitation (Orient), but await a possible invitation instead of proceeding to Accept Invitation; or she may choose to ignore the high key and kinesic choice, and interpret the utterance as, say, the Approach Indirect element in a casual conversation. Thus she will bring into play these discourse strategies:

Shared Knowledge: social; not taken up ---> minimum

Attitude: friendly ---> tentative

(the arrow indicates a response to an invitation)

Interaction Sequence: Orient ( ^ Invite?) or Approach Indirect  
and this component of situation:

Purpose: regulatory? informative? closeness? respect?

This combination of minimum evocation of co-text, 'tentative' attitude, and interpretation of interaction sequence is likely to result in an 'echo response' with nominal substitution, such as:

Jackie: Oh yes! So it is!

accompanied by the kinesic option LOOKING AT WATCH, and the tone-of-voice option SURPRISED. 'Neville' then has two choices. Firstly, he can move on to the element Invite, change his attitude to 'tentative', and stop evoking social shared knowledge relating to institutional discourse and practices, in order to evoke social shared knowledge relating to the intersecting thematic systems invite/coffee. He could thus say (and remember, this is Unit 10 in a beginners' course):

Neville: Would you like to come to the cafeteria?

(as in Micro-sequence 3, 'Neville' evokes knowledge of a thematic system in which the configuration addressee as Senser in a mental:affect process with modulation: inclination: oblique and interrogative mood is recognised, in conjunction with an appropriate interaction sequence element and attitude, as the prelude to an invitation).

The second choice he has is to reformulate his pre-invitation (Orient) strategy, and reinterpret the interaction sequence as Approach Indirect, while maintaining the same attitude ('friendly; casual'), but adopting a different shared knowledge strategy (evoking knowledge of the immediate environment). In this case, he might say:

Neville: See you in the cafeteria!

(where Subject in particular is recovered from the environment).

'Jackie's' likely response to 'Neville's' first choice is to adopt the element Accept, the attitude 'interested' and the shared knowledge option [maximum]:

Jackie: Yes, sure!

To the second choice she will in all probability maintain the interaction sequence element Approach Indirect, and the attitude 'friendly; casual', while evoking no shared knowledge:

Jackie: Right!

(perhaps with the kinesic option SMILE).

'Neville' may now terminate the dialogue by his departure, or he may seek to prolong the dialogue by choosing the kinesic option HESITATE, in preparation for moving from Approach Indirect to another interaction sequence (i.e. micro-sequence). He can make the move himself by adopting the element Offer, the attitude tentative', and shared knowledge [social]:

Neville: Shall I wait for you?

(the social shared knowledge evoked here is that of the thematic system offers (offer of services rather than goods): specifically the form of offer in which the speaker is Actor in a material process clause in the interrogative Mood and modulated (modulation: obligation).

A parallel move can also be made by 'Jackie':

Jackie: Shall I go with you?

By this time meaning should have been successfully negotiated, and, the participants should be ready to terminate the interaction or to proceed to Micro-sequence 2.

### 3.4 Conclusion

We began this chapter by claiming we would propose a model which would generate interaction sequences, functions and realisations on the basis of situational factors. As noted earlier (3.3), situational factors have been supplemented by social system and intertextual frames; functions have been incorporated into interaction sequences; and the validity of the term 'generate' has been called into question, particularly as regards the model's ability to yield a decision-procedure for interpreting any lexicogrammatical combination. We need, then, to reformulate our earlier proposal, in the light of these developments and of the dual (encoder/decoder) perspective in the speech event. The claim now being made is that this model can, on the basis of social system, intertextual frame, situation, and other discourse strategies, predict the encoder's projected interaction sequences and actual realisations (including non-verbal ones), and, provided the decoder has access to the same institutional discourses and practices, thematic systems and social action semiotic, specify the decoder's possible interpretations of these realisations (i.e. the decoder's 'reading' of the interaction sequences being brought into play), and subsequent discourse strategies/realisations, including strategies for negotiating meaning.

This model assigns great importance to the decoder - in the first instance, to the fictional decoder, but, by implication, also to the 'real' decoder that is, to the language learner'. And while the fictional decoder is assumed to have access to the same institutional discourses and practices, thematic systems, and social action semiotic, as

the encoder, no such assumption can be made in the case of the language learner, whose social system may be characterised by rather different discourses and practices, thematic systems and social action semiotic.

The model, in short, enables us to predict an encoder's intended interaction sequences and realisations, and <sup>a</sup>to specify a decoder's possible interpretation of these interaction sequences and subsequent discourse strategies/realisations - but only if we can determine the relevant components of social system and situation-type available to the participants. In the next chapter we are going to start with a set of realisations and ask the question: on the basis of these realisations, can we specify interaction sequences, situation-types and social system choices, and speak of negotiation of meaning. In the following chapter, we will test the model's power to produce a fragment of a communicative course.

## Chapter 4

### How Communicative is a Communicative Course?

#### An Analysis of Building Strategies

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I intend to take a set of realisations and attempt to specify interaction sequences, situation-types, and social system choices, and assess the extent to which meaning is negotiated in the ongoing communicative events. The set of realisations is taken from Building Strategies (Abbs and Freebairn 1979), a pre-intermediate functional course chosen because it was among the earliest functional courses, and is well-known and widely used. There are twelve units in this book (excluding an introductory unit and three consolidation units - 6, 11 and 16), and, of these, seven units<sup>1</sup> will be analysed, concentrating on the dialogues and 'sets' (functional exercises). The aim, in effect, will be to determine whether the realisations are predictable on the basis of the information supplied with regard to social system choices and situation-type, and whether they embody the negotiation of meaning that is so crucial in communication. To do this, we need to ask and answer four questions:

- (1) are the social system choices, situation-types, and discourse strategies specifiable from the dialogues presented in the units?
- (2) are the follow-up exercises linked to the dialogue that precedes them?
- (3) are the follow-up exercises genuinely communicative?
- (4) does negotiation of meaning occur in dialogues and follow-up exercises?

The seven units and their analyses will be grouped under three sections corresponding to questions (2) - (4) above - question (1) obviously can

be answered only by looking at the seven units globally. The analyses will be 'top-down' rather than 'bottom-up', even though we are in fact starting from the 'bottom' - the realisation. The following abbreviations will be used:

S. System	=	Social system
IDP	=	Institutional discourse and practices
TS	=	Thematic system
SAS	=	Social action semiotic
IF	=	Intertextual frame
Sit.	=	Situation-type
SS	=	Social situation
SM	=	Subject matter
SR	=	Social relationship
Ch.	=	Channel
SF	=	Symbolic function
P	=	Purpose: social; psychological
DS	=	Discourse strategies
IS	=	Interaction sequence
At	=	Attitude
SK	=	Shared knowledge
LR	=	Linguistic realisation
NVR	=	Non-verbal realisation

A question-mark (?) after a feature indicates that it cannot be determined from available data. Unless otherwise stated, channel, will be 'spoken: face-to-face'; and symbolic function will be 'ancillary'. Alphabetical letters signal moves, roman numerals clauses within a move.

A further note: with one exception (Unit 14), only those sections of the dialogue relating to functions taught in the 'sets' will be analysed. Thus the general procedure is that a key section of the dialogue will be analysed, following by an analysis of the relevant 'set'.

#### 4.1 The Link Between Dialogue and Follow-Up Exercises

##### Unit 2

Rod Nelson, a young electrical engineer from Canada has just taken up a job at Weston, Aeronautics in Bristol. One of his colleagues is Jack Cooper, who invites Rod to dinner. Before dinner he talks to Barbara, Jack's twenty-four year old daughter who is manageress of a shoe shop. The photo accompanying the dialogue shows the two chatting: Barbara is attractive, smiling, and - Muslim learners beware! - holding a dog; Rod has shoulder-length hair and is wearing a suit, but his head is turned away (to Barbara's mother?) so that his expression is not visible.

##### Micro-sequences 1 and 2

- (a) Barbara: Do you like working at Weston, Rod?  
(b) Rod: Yes, very much. The job's interesting and the people there are very friendly.  
(c) Barbara: And do you mind living in a hostel?  
(d) Rod: It's all right, but I want to find a flat of my own soon.

##### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'work'; 'living conditions'; 'likes'

SAS: 'relations between host and guest'; 'gender roles'; 'first meeting'

IF: 'host discussing work, etc. with guest'

##### Sit

SS: 'entertaining' SM: 'work'/'living conditions'

SR: 'host-guest'; 'male-female'

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness'



DS

IS: Approach Direct

At: 'friendly' → 'enthusiastic'/'unenthusiastic'

SK: [personal] → [maximum]^ [minimum] → [personal]  
→ [minimum]

LR

- (a) [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser and material process clause as Phenomenon: Fact; [interrogative: polar] + [vocative]; interpersonal and topical Theme + personal shared knowledge as Given
- (b) (i) [positive] + attitudinal submodifier + tone 5 + [quantifier: multal]; clausal ellipsis
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'work' lexical set, Attribute from 'enthusiastic' frame [declarative]; Theme as Given, synonym of 'working'
- (iii) as (b ii), but with [extension: addition]; anaphora, and Theme as collocate of 'working',
- (c) (as (a), but without [vocative], and with [extension: addition])
- (d) (i) [relational: attributive] with anaphoric pronoun as Carrier, and Attribute from 'unenthusiastic' frame; [declarative] + [tone 4]; Given as Theme, realised by anaphoric pronoun
- (ii) [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser and material process clause as Phenomenon, Fact; [declarative]; [extension: adversative] + co-hyponym of 'hostel' as minimum evocation of context

NVR

SMILE

Details of social system choices and situation-type are well supplied in this micro-sequence, apart from institutional discourse and practices

(or is there a very discreet articulation of the discourse of sexuality?). The interaction sequence is the Approach Direct element of casual conversation (see Ventola 1979), which here articulates social situation, subject matter, and purpose. The personal shared knowledge (that Rod works for Weston and lives in a hostel) articulates the ancillary nature of the symbolic exchange - ancillary, that is to a network of social relationships in which Rod is a colleague of Jack Cooper and talks to him, and Barbara is daughter to Jack, who talks to her. The mental process of (a) articulates the interaction sequence element Approach Direct (which permits discussion of personal details of a more 'public' kind), the subject matter 'work', and, indirectly, the relevant systems of the social action semiotic, and the thematic system to which the lexical item 'work' belongs - one of whose choices is to assign the role of Phenomenon in a mental process clause to 'work' or one of its synonyms/hyponyms. Both responses (b) and (d) have a similar form, in that both consist of a reply (defined as some equivalent of 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe' proffered in response to a demand for information), and a comment (a type of explanation, qualification, etc.): this form articulates the thematic system 'likes', in which there is strong pressure to justify a (dis)like in a following clause or clause complex - structurally related or unrelated to the clause that precedes - which (explicitly or implicitly) elaborates, extends or enhances the (dis)like (see Halliday 1985:196-7 for an explanation of these three terms).

In micro-sequence 1, then, it is possible to trace the relationship between social system, situation-type and realisation. There is, however, no negotiation of meaning between fictional decoder and encoder, though the learner may need to negotiate on 'hostel' if it belongs to a different, more positive thematic sub-system in his/her culture (otherwise 'all right' may be seen as articulating the attitude 'enthusiastic').

Set 1 Express likes and dislikes

- (a) Do you like cooking? (b1) Yes, very much?  
(b2) It's all right.  
(b3) Sometimes. It depends  
(b4) No, not much  
(b5) No. I hate it.

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'domestic activities'; 'likes'

SAS: ?

IF: ?

Sit

SS: ? SM: 'cooking'; 'housework'

SR: ? P: 'heuristic'; ?

DS

IS: ?

At: ? → 'enthusiastic'/'unenthusiastic'/'hostile'

SK: ? → [maximum]/[minimum]/[maximum]^ [social]/  
[maximum]/[maximum]^ [minimum]

LR

- (a) [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser and material process clause as Phenomenon: Fact; [interrogative: polar]; interpersonal and topical Theme
- (b1) [positive] + [tone 5] + attitudinal sub-modifier + [quantifier: multal]; clausal ellipsis
- (b2) [relational: attributive] with anaphoric pronoun as Carrier, and Attribute from 'unenthusiastic' frame; [declarative] + [tone 4]; Given as Theme, realised by anaphoric pronoun

- (b3) (i) [usuality: low]; clausal ellipsis  
 (ii) [relational: circumstantial]; [tone 4]; anaphoric pronoun as Theme/Given
- (b4) [negative] + [quantifier: multal]; clausal ellipsis
- (b5) (i) [negative]; clausal ellipsis  
 (ii) [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser, anaphoric pronoun as Phenomenon: Things; [declarative] + [tone 5]; speaker as Theme + Phenomenon/Complement as Given

NVR

?

In Set 1, a number of crucial components of the speech event cannot be specified, most notably systems in the social action semiotic, the on-going social situation, social relationship, interaction sequence, and non-verbal realisations. The result is that the grammatical realisations are unpredictable (or rather since they have already been supplied by the textbook writers, unjustifiable). There is not even any indication of the circumstances in which it would be appropriate or inappropriate to use a response like (b5). The response (b3), for example, articulates shared knowledge of the thematic system 'likes' - although a native speaker of English knows that there is an implicit Attribute, and knows the range of lexical items that could realise that particular function, a learner does not know and is not told. Nor is the learner warned that at this stage a decoder could well choose to negotiate meaning by asking: "On what?" Thus, explaining a thematic system choice is as important in some cases as specifying social situation or interaction sequence.

Set 2 Express personal opinions

1. (a) Do you like working at Weston, Rod?

- (b) Yes, very much. The job's interesting and the people there are very friendly.

This has already been analysed, and needs no further comment.

2. (a) What do you think of the new theatre?  
(b) I think it's awful.  
(c) Do you? I think it's quite attractive. What do you think Ann?  
(d) I don't like it. I think it's ugly.

(This dialogue is in the form of a photo of the National Theatre in London, with people standing outside it, out of whose mouths came speech 'balloons').

#### S. System

IDP: 'architecture'

TS: 'buildings'; 'opinions'

SAS: ?

IF: ?

#### Sit.

SS: ? SM: 'new theatre (building)'

SR: ? P: 'heuristic'; ?

#### DS

IS: ? or 'impolite'

At: 'friendly'; 'hostile' or 'impolite'/'approving'

SK: [immediate] → [minimum] →

[maximum]^[minumum]^[maximum] → [minimum]

#### LR

- (a) [mental: cognition] with addressee as Senser, subject matter as Circumstance: Matter; [interrogative: WH-]; immediate environment as Given

- (b) [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser, attitude as Phenomenon: Fact; [declarative] + [tone 5]; attitude as New
- (c) (i) [interrogative: polar]; Residue ellipsis
  - (ii) (similar to (b)) (iii) (similar to (a), but minus Circumstance: Matter and plus [vocative])
- (d) (i) [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser, subject matter as Phenomenon; [declarative] + [negative]; subject matter as Given, realised by anaphoric pronoun
  - (ii) (as (b))

This exchange is at least provided with a defineable environment, but otherwise the same crucial features are missing as in Set 1. It could be argued that the social situation ('socialising') and the interaction sequence (Approach Indirect) can be inferred from the choice of reference-demonstrative plus nominal group rather than pronoun - but this is neither obvious nor certain, in particular for a learner of English. Again, it is possible to speculate on the relationship between the participants, but all that is really certain is that at least two of the speakers know each other, and one speaker is female. No negotiation of meaning occurs, although the opportunity exists: the first reply is not followed by a comment, thereby inviting the decoder to seek clarification (the simplest form of meaning negotiation).

### Micro-sequence 3

- (a) Barbara: Do you know many people yet?
- (b) Rod: No, not many. Unfortunately.
- (c) Barbara: Well, would you like to come and have a look round the shoe shop one day? In fact, what about coming next Saturday at lunch time? We close at one o'clock.
- (d) Rod: Thanks. That's a great idea. Why don't we have lunch together?

(e) Barbara: Fine. I'm not so keen on big lunches, but we could have something light.

(f) Rod: Good. That's fixed, then.

### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: - 'getting to know people';

- 'suggestions'

SAS: - 'relations between host and guest'; 'gender roles'

IF: - 'new acquaintances making plans to know each other better'

### Sit.

SS: - 'entertaining' SM: 'friends'/'visiting a place of work'/'eating out'

SR: - 'host-guest'; 'male-female'

P: - 'regulatory'; 'closeness'

### DS

IS: Centring [Orient ^ Suggest ^ Accept\*Clarify]

At: - 'friendly'; 'regretful'/'enthusiastic'/'unenthusiastic'

SK: [maximum]/[social]/[personal]/[minimum]

(Note: the order of Accept and Clarify is not fixed)

### LR

(a) [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser; [interrogative: polar]; interpersonal and topical Theme

(b) [negative] + [quantifier: multal] + Comment Adjunct; verbal ellipsis

(c) (i) [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser + projected material process clause; [interrogative: polar] + modulation; continuative conjunction + interpersonal, topical Theme

- (ii) minor clause consisting of [demonstrative: interrogative] functioning as Head of nominal group, and Circumstance: Matter realised by a prepositional phrase (preposition + rankshifted material process clause); [elaboration: clarify] + repetition
- (iii) [material] + Time; [declarative]; Theme as Given
- (d) (i) [relational: attributive]; [declarative] + Epithet from 'enthusiastic' frame + [tone 5]; attitude as New/Epithet in NG + Given as Theme/ Carrier (pronoun) and as Head of NG (general noun) functioning as Attribute
- (ii) [material] + Range; [interrogative: WH-: Reason] + [negative]; WH - element as Theme
- (e) (i) minor clause realised by adjective from 'enthusiastic' frame + [tone 5]
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with speaker as Carrier, Attribute from 'unenthusiastic' lexical set; [declarative] + [negative] + [tone 4] + attitudinal sub-modifier; marked information focus
- (iii) [material] + Range; [declarative] + [modality: low]; [extension: adversative] + lexical cohesion (antonymy + cohesive element as New
- (f) (i) minor clause realised by adjective from 'enthusiastic' frame + [tone 5]
- (ii) [relational: attributive]; [declarative] + [tone 5]; anaphoric pronoun + [enhancement: condition]

NVR

SMILE

or ?

As was the case with micro-sequence 1, social system choices and components of situation-type are readily determinable. The interaction



sequence is the Centring element of casual conversation, in which is embedded (the square brackets) a Suggest interaction sequence, whose beginning is marked by the continuative conjunction 'Well'. Barbara's first move (to adapt the terminology used by discourse analysts like Sinclair, Coulthard and Burton) may seem like a continuation of the Approach Direct of micro-sequence 1, with the mental process having addressee as Senser plus the polar interrogative, but the decoder does not 'read' it that way. Move (a), in fact, appears to be articulating the thematic system 'getting to know people', and the interaction sequence element Orient ('pre-suggestion'), and the response in move (b) confirms this through the Comment Adjunct 'Unfortunately', which anticipates the subsequent Suggest (a fact which the language learner may not appreciate).

The first two clauses of move (c) articulate the Suggest and Clarify of the interaction sequence. Both evoke shared knowledge of the thematic system 'suggestions': the first, of the configuration in which addressee is Senser in a polar interrogative mental process clause modulated by [inclination: median] with the suggested activity as a projected material process clause; and the second, of the choice which assigns to the suggested activity the role of non-finite material process clause embedded in a prepositional phrase functioning as Circumstance: Matter in a minor clause whose only other element is 'What'. The second clause appears to be a suggestion (and is treated as such in Set 3) - but its status as Clarify is supported by the repetition ('come - coming'), and the fact that it is two temporal elements that provide the new information.

At this point Rod continues the micro-sequence with his own Suggest, evoking another choice in the 'suggestions' thematic system - a choice permitting speaker and addressee both to function as Actor in a material process clause with negative polarity and [interrogative:

WH-: Reason]. Barbara's Clarify is articulated by a complex configuration of polarity, tone, attitudinal sub-modification, conjunction and antonymy ('big-light'). The second clause of her Clarify also resembles a suggestion: another choice in the thematic system (speaker and addressee as Actor in material process clause, declarative, modalised [modality: low]).

### Set 3 Making suggestions and plans

#### Agree and disagree with suggestions

- (1) (a) What about coming next Sunday?  
(b) That's a good idea!
- (2) (a) How about meeting for lunch? (b) That's a great idea!
- (3) (a) Why don't we have lunch together?  
(b) Well, I'm not so keen on lunch. How about supper instead?

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: ?; 'suggestions'

SAS: ?

IF ?

Sit.

SS: ? SM: 'eating out'

SR: ?

P: 'regulatory'; ?

DS

IS: Suggest ^ Accept ^ Clarify

At: ?; 'enthusiastic'/'unenthusiastic'

SK: [social]/[minimum]

LR

The linguistic realisations have, for the most part, been discussed in micro-sequence 2. Two points, however, need mentioning. In (2)

Suggest and (3) Clarify, yet another choice from the thematic system 'suggestions' is selected - WH-: Manner + Circumstance: Matter. In (3) Clarify the antonymy is different ('lunch-supper'), and the conjunction is [extension: replacive].

#### NVR

?

The crucial elements that were not specifiable in Sets 1 and 2 are equally impossible to determine here. It could be argued that the set refers back to micro-sequence 2, but this is nowhere made clear, and the three exchanges are not even exactly the same as those in the dialogue.

To sum up Unit 2, the social system choices and components of the situation - type articulated by the linguistic and non-verbal realisations are quite explicit in the micro-sequences of the dialogue, but difficult, if not impossible, to determine in the three sets, whose link with the micro-sequences varies between tenuous and non-existent.

#### Unit 5

This differs from its predecessors in that there is no written dialogue - the main dialogue of the unit is on cassette only. On the assumption that recorded material is not universally available to learners, I will not analyse relevant sections of the dialogue in detail, only the sets. There is, however, an introductory reading passage which provides background to the sets. The interaction sequence is implied in the reading passage, but the actual elements are available only in the recorded dialogue.

#### Set 1 Ask for, give and refuse permission

Rod Nelson has moved into a large flat, and has decided to find someone to share it with him. He put an advertisement in the local

newsagent's window, and the same day a young student, Paul Blake, telephones Rod and asks permission to see the flat.

- (1) (a) May I come and see the flat?  
(b) Yes, of course./Yes, certainly.  
(marked 'formally')

- (2) (a) Can I come and see you?  
(b) Yes, sure./Yes, do.  
(marked 'informally')

### S. System

IDP: ?

IS: 'renting accommodation'; 'permission'

SAS: 'relations between buyer and seller'; 'relations between potential flatmates'

IF: 'negotiations over renting accommodation'

### Sit.

SS: 'telephoning to discuss business'

SM: 'renting a flat';

SR: 'buyer - seller'

Ch: 'spoken: telephone'

P: 'regulatory'; 'respect'

### DS

IS: (Greet ^ Orient ^ Service ^ ) Display

At: 'tentative'/'encouraging'; 'formal'/'informal'

SK: [social]/[minimum] → [maximum]

### LR

- (1) (a) (i) [material] with speaker as Actor + [obligation: allowed]; [interrogative: polar]; speaker as Theme

- (ii) [behavioural] with Range and process from 'renting a flat' frame; ellipsis of Mood + [extension: addition] + Range as Given
- (b) [positive] + [probability: high]; clausal ellipsis
- (2) (a) (as for (1a), except that [potentiality] replaces [obligation], addressee functions as Range, and process does not articulate any specifiable frame)
- (b1) [positive] + [probability: high]; clausal ellipsis
- (b2) [positive] + stressed Finite; ellipsis of Residue

If we leave aside the social system choices and situation-type, which are straightforward, the first feature to comment on is interaction sequence. This is a type of service encounter, which has two elements not mentioned explicitly in Ventola (1984) or Martin (1985). Orient is an element which is required when the customer (or potential customer) is calling in response to an advertisement, as is the case here. Display is the element permitting inspection of goods - as far as I know, Ventola and Martin do not consider this a discrete service encounter element (is it part of Service?), although Martin (1985:253) does use the term for a type of unappointed service encounter.

The textbook writers designate "May I" as formal and "Can I" as informal: the choice of one or the other evokes both the thematic-system 'permission', which gives the speaker the choice between obligation (modal) and potentiality (non-modal), and the two systems of the social action semiotic in play. Set 1 (1) obviously echoes the recorded dialogue, but Set 1 (2) appears detached from the dialogue, so in fact culturally and situationally unmotivated. This detachment, however, is obscured by its formal similarity to 1 (1), - a strategy likely to mislead the learner confronted with the same situation as Paul Blake.

Set 1 (continued)

- (3) (a) May I use your phone?  
(b) Well, actually, I'm expecting a phone call myself
- (4) (a) Can I use your phone?  
(b) Sorry, but I'm expecting a call.

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: - 'permission'; 'telephones'

SAS: ?

IF: ?

Sit.

SS: ? SM: 'telephoning'

SR: ?

P: - 'regulatory'; ?

OS

IS: ?

At: - 'tentative'; 'formal'/'informal'

SK: [social]

LR

- (3) (a) [material] with speaker as Actor + [obligation: allowed] +  
Range from 'telephoning' frame; [interrogative: polar];  
unmarked Theme, information focus
- (b) [behavioural] with speaker as Behaver, Range from 'tele-  
phoning' frame; [declarative]; Conjunctive Adjunct +  
continuative conjunction + contrastive 'myself' as New
- (4) (a) (as (3a), except that [potentiality], replaces [obligation])
- (b) [behavioural] with speaker as Behaver, Range from 'tele-  
phoning' frame; [declarative]; [extension: adversative]

Set 1 (3) and (4) abandon the recorded dialogue, with the result that the interaction sequence is indeterminate, and few social system choices or components of the situation can be specified. This lack is all the more crucial here because in neither case does the 'refuse permission' choose the negative polarity that the learner of English is almost certain to expect at this elementary/pre-intermediate stage. In 1 (3) the 'refuse permission' is signalled largely by resources of the textual metafunction: the continuative "Well", usually associated with a new move rather than the giving of a service demanded; the Conjunctive Adjunct "actually", which often prefigures something contrary to expectation; and the contrastive stress on the pronoun "myself". There is also an appeal to the thematic system 'telephones', and to the knowledge that ordinary telephones cannot handle two calls at once. Set 1 (4) expressed its 'refuse permission' somewhat more simply with the minor clause "Sorry", another indicator that a service will not be performed; and the adversative conjunction "but". If the cultural/situational variables and interaction sequence were specified more clearly, a dialogue and accompanying exercises could be built up in which a desperate/impatient/irritated decoder was forced/chose to negotiate the meaning of these 'refuse permissions'.

#### Set 2 Describe houses and furniture

(1) There are ... rooms.

There's a ..., a .... etc.

(2) The chair is made of leather.

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'renting accommodation'

SAS: 'relations between buyer and seller'; 'relations between potential flatmates'

IF: 'negotiations over renting accommodation'

Sit.

SS: (1) 'telephoning to discuss business'

(2) 'inspecting a flat'

SM: 'renting accommodation'

SR: 'buyer-seller'

Ch: (1) 'spoken: telephone' (2) 'spoken: face to face'

P: 'regulatory'; 'respect'

DS

IS: (1) Service (2) Display

At: 'formal'

SK: (1) [minimum] (2) [immediate]

LR

(1) [existential] with Existent from 'renting accommodation' frame;  
[declarative]; unmarked Theme, information focus

(2) [relational: attributive] with Carrier and Attribute from 'renting  
accommodation' frame; [declarative]; exophoric deictic

Set 2 (1) is derived from the recorded dialogue, and arises naturally from the Service element of this particular encounter. Set 2 (2) could be regarded as a plausible extension of the dialogue, articulating the Display element set in train by the 'ask for permission' of Set 1. There is, however, a complication: Set 2 (2) is part of an exercise devoted not only to material, but also to size, texture, colour, pattern and shape, which could easily produce an exchange such as the one from Oral Exercises 4:

(3) (a)-What colour's the kitchen?

(b)-Yellow. (c)-Mmm. That sounds nice.

At this point we have obviously left the recorded dialogue - in fact,



the background to the exchange is characterised thus: 'A friend is describing her new house to you'. The analysis for 2 (3), and, possibly, in retrospect, 2 (2) is:

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: · 'colour'

SAS: 'relations between friends'

IF: ?

Sit.

SS: · 'discussion' SM: 'house'

SR: · 'friend-friend'

P: 'informational'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Approach Direct

At: 'friendly'/'enthusiastic'

SK: [minimum] → [maximum] → [minimum]

LR

- (a) [relational: attributive] with Carrier, Attribute from 'house' frame; [interrogative: WH-]; Attribute as Theme + anaphoric deictic
- (b) ellipsis of Mood
- (c) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'enthusiastic' lexical set; [declarative]; anaphoric demonstrative as Theme and Given

In this way the textbook writers have motivated the Set 2 (2) exercise: the puzzling thing is that they have waited till the Oral Exercises to do so.

To briefly summarise Unit 5: with one exception, the exercises of the two sets arise out of clearly specifiable social system choices and situational variables. The one exception is a significant one: by failing to supply the components of culture and situation that motivate the two realisations of 'refuse permission', the writers have made it less likely that learners will ever use these incongruent realisations in an appropriate way. Here the dangers are clearly illustrated of failing to link follow-up exercises to the preceding dialogue.

#### 4.2 The Communicative Value of Exercises

##### Unit 3

Mrs Cross has fallen and broken her hip; her daughter, Joan Ingrams, is visiting her in hospital.

##### Micro-sequence 1

- (a) Joan: Hello, mum. How do you feel today?
- (b) Mrs. Cross: Not too good, I'm afraid.
- (c) Joan: Oh dear, I am sorry. What's the matter?
- (d) Mrs. Cross: I don't know, but I've got a pain in my back now.
- (e) Joan: Well, why don't you tell the nurse?
- (f) Mrs. Cross: Yes, I will.

##### S. System

IDP: 'medicine'

TS: 'health'

SAS: 'hospital visiting'; 'mother-daughter relations'

IF: 'visiting a sick parent in hospital'

##### Sit.

SS: 'socialising' SM: 'health'

SR: 'parent-offspring'

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Greet ^ Approach Direct ^ [Suggest ^ Accept]

At: 'concerned' → 'dissatisfied'

SK: [maximum]/[social]/[remote]

LR

- (a) [mental: cognition] with addressee as Senser + Circumstance:  
Manner + Time; [interrogative: WH-: Manner]; Circumstance:  
Manner as Theme, Time as New
- (b) [negative] + adjective from 'satisfied' frame + attitudinal  
submodifier + Comment Adjunct from 'dissatisfied'  
frame; clausal ellipsis
- (c) (i) [relational: attributive] with 'speaker' as Carrier,  
Attribute from 'concerned' frame, [declarative] + [tone 5]  
+ marked stress; marked information focus  
(ii) [relational: identifying] with WH interrogative as  
Identifier; [interrogative: WH-]; general noun as Identified/  
Given
- (d) (i) [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] +  
[negative]; unmarked Theme, information focus  
(ii) [relational: possessive] with speaker as Carrier, Attribute  
from 'health' frame; [declarative]; temporal as contrastive  
(new information) + [extension: adversative]
- (e) [verbal] with addressee as Sayer, Recipient from 'health' frame;  
[interrogative: WH-: Reason] + [negative]; continuative  
conjunction

(f) [declarative] + [positive] + [modulation: inclination]; ellipsis  
of Residue

NVR

?

The features of this exchange are all explicit, except that no indication is given of kinesic or proxemic options. The institutional discourse/practices of 'medicine' is articulated by Joan's deferring to the nurse's expertise; the thematic system 'health' is articulated by the Carrier-Attribute relationship between patient and complaint, and by the Sayer-Recipient relationship between patient and nurse (or doctor!). The main element of interaction sequence is Approach Direct (often realised by discussions of health matters), with an embedded Suggest. The evocation of shared knowledge of remote co-text is realised by contrastive "now", implying a temporally remote discussion of a previous condition. There seems little possibility of meaning negotiation between decoder and encoder in the micro-sequence (beyond, of course, Joan's request for elaboration - "What's the matter?" - which is already a mild form of meaning negotiation).

Discuss personal comfort & health

Set 1 Sympathise and make suggestions

- (1) (a) How's your back?  
(b) Not too good, I'm afraid  
(c) Oh dear, I am sorry.
- (a) How do you feel today?  
(b) Much better, thanks.  
(c) Oh, good!
- (a) How's your headache?  
(b) A little better, thanks.  
(c) Oh, I am glad.

An interesting feature of Set 1 (1) is that it is framed by photos of Joan and Mrs Cross, suggesting that the realisations articulate the same social system options, situation-type components, and interaction sequence element as the micro-sequence. For the first time in a set, the language is motivated by explicit cultural and situational variables.

- (2) (a) What's the matter?  
(b) I've got a pain in my back.  
(c) Oh dear, I am sorry. Why don't you see a doctor?
- (a) What's the matter?  
(b) I've got a headache.  
(c) Oh dear, I am sorry. Why don't you take an aspirin

Initially it would seem that this exercise follows the lead taken by Set 1 (1), but this is, in fact, not the case. The replacement of the specific deictic "the" (possibly anaphoric) by the non-specific "a" appears to remove the first dialogue of 1 (2) from the hospital and locate it in the setting of the second dialogue (at home? at work?). In short these dialogues have lost, the clear cultural/situational motivation of Set 1 (1).

#### Micro-sequence 2

- (a) Joan: Did you sleep well last night?  
(b) Mrs. Cross: No, I didn't, I'm afraid. Old Mrs. Grey in the next room snored all night.

#### S. System

IDP: 'medicine'

TS: 'health'

SAS: 'hospital visiting'; 'mother-daughter relations'

IF 'visiting a sick parent in hospital'

Sit

SS: 'socialising' SM: 'sleeping'

SR: 'parent-offspring'

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Approach Direct

At: 'concerned' → 'dissatisfied'

SK: [maximum]

LR

- (a) [material] from 'sleeping' frame with addressee as Actor + [past] + Manner + Time; [interrogative: polar]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (b) (i) [negative] + Comment Adjunct from 'dissatisfied' frame; ellipsis of Residue
- (ii) [material] with process from 'sleeping' frame + [past]; [declarative]; unmarked Theme, information focus

NVR

?

In social system choices, situational features and discourse strategies, micro-sequence 2 is largely a continuation of micro-sequence 1. One comment should be made about its linguistic realisation. Mrs. Cross' move consists of two clauses whose implicit relationship is one of result to reason. The absence of the second clause (the 'reason-clause') would, in many situations, be decidedly odd and lead to negotiating of meaning: this implies that the presence of the 'reason-clause' articulates certain social relationships and, indirectly, a system in the social action semiotic regulating the giving of

explanations after 'unexpected' responses.

Set 2 Ask and talk about the recent past

(a) Did you have more than two pieces of bread for breakfast?

(b1) Yes. I did. I had three (b2) No, I didn't. I had only one.

S. System

IDP: 'medicine'

TS: 'health'

SAS: 'filling out questionnaires'

IF: 'answering questions about health'

Sit

SS: 'answering questionnaire' SM: 'health: overeating'

SR: 'investigator - subject'

Ch: 'written' SF: 'constitutive'

P: 'heuristic'; 'dominance'

DS

IS: Question Answer

At: 'authoritative'

SK: [maximum]

LR

(a) [material] with addressee as Actor, process & Range from  
'overeating' frame + [past]; [interrogative: polar]; unmarked  
Theme, information focus

(b1) (i) [positive]; ellipsis of Residue

(ii) [material] with speaker as Actor, Range realised by  
Numerative as Head of NC; [declarative]; nominal ellipsis

(b2) (i) [negative]; ellipsis of Residue

(ii) [material] with speaker as Actor, Range realised by Nume-  
rative as Head of NC; nominal ellipsis

Set 2 is presented in the form of a health questionnaire, which provides all the cultural and situational variables overriding the linguistic realisations. Normally answering a questionnaire is an individual, silent, written activity, although, as is the case here (students are required to ask each other the questions), the channel can be seen not as 'written' but as 'written-to-be-spoken'. The language, then, is clearly motivated by social system choices and features of the situation; the only risk is that the language will be seen as spontaneous, face-to-face spoken language.

Thus, both sets in Unit 3 do attempt to specify the features of the social system and situation-type that give rise to the linguistic realisations. The communicative value of Set 2, however, must be called into question, given the rather forced nature of the interaction that learners are required to engage in.

### Unit 7

Rod Nelson and his new flatmate, Paul Blake have invited Barbara and Sue, Paul's girlfriend, to supper. They are in the kitchen getting supper ready.

#### Micro-sequence 1

- (a) Paul: What have we got in the fridge, Rod?
- (b) Rod: Nothing much. We've got some ham, eggs, cheese ...
- (c) Paul: Have we got any potatoes?
- (d) Ros: I think so. Yes, we have.

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'cooking'

SAS: 'relations between flatmates'; 'relations between cook and helper'



IF: 'flatmates cooking'

Sit

SS: 'cooking' SM: 'ingredients'

SR: 'friend-friend'

P: 'regulatory'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Orient (<sup>^</sup> Prepare)

At: 'casual'

SK: [maximum]

LR

- (a) [relational: possessive] + Location from 'cooking' frame;  
[interrogative: WH-] + [vocative]; Location as unmarked information focus
- (b) (i) [negative] + [quantifier: multal]; ellipsis of Mood  
(ii) [relational: possessive] with Attribute from 'ingredients' frame; [declarative]; Attribute as New
- (c) [relational: possessive] with Attribute from 'ingredients' frame;  
[interrogative: polar]; Attribute as New
- (d) (i) [probability: median]; clausal substitution  
(ii) [positive] + [declarative]; ellipsis of Residue

The interaction sequence, as the continuation of micro-sequence 1 reveals (Paul decides to make a potato salad), is one not previously encountered, which might be termed Following a Recipe. Many of its realisations are non-verbal, but here the Orient consists in verbal checking to see if the necessary ingredients are available - which is why the social purpose is analysed not as heuristic but as regulatory.

Set 1 Ask and say what you have and haven't got

- (1) (a) Have we got any milk?  
(b) Yes, we've got lots of milk.
- (2) (a) Have we got any meat?  
(b) No, we haven't.

Set 1 (1) and (2), although appearing to be an extension of micro-sequence 1, are actually supplied with a different context, namely a kitchen list, on which figure a number of items marked with a tick or a cross. So the analysis is:

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: ?

SAS: ?

IF: ?

Sit.

SS: 'shopping' SM: 'food'

SR: ?

Ch: 'written'

P: 'informational'; 'respect'

DS

IS: ?

At: 'informal'

SK: ?

LR

?

NVR

DRAWINGS OF FOOD (pictorial code)

Set 1, which could have simply been an extension of the dialogue, has been rendered almost impossible to analyse by this contextualisation. The problem is that it is partial - a list only, with no indication of possible use (e.g. Rod and Paul shopping in a supermarket). The only exercise to compare it with is Unit 3, Set 2, but whereas the 'health questionnaire' format had some validity even in spoken form, the written list and spoken exchange are not really reconcilable.

#### Micro-sequence 2

- (a) Paul: Where's the big red plastic bowl?
- (b) Rod: On the bottom shelf in the cupboard under-the sink.

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'cooking'

SAS: 'relations between flatmates'; 'relations between cook and helper'

IF: 'flatmates cooking'

#### Sit

SS: 'preparing a meal' SM: 'utensils'

SR: 'friend-friend'

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness'

#### DS

IS: (Orient ^) Prepare

At: 'casual'

SK: [minimum] → [maximum]

#### LR

(a) [relational: circumstantial] with Carrier from 'utensils' frame;

[interrogative: WH-: Location]; exophoric deictic

(b) Location; ellipsis of Mood

This exchange articulates the interaction sequence element Prepare, and the subject matter 'utensils' combined with the social purpose 'heuristic'. The accompanying photo shows Paul crouching in front of the sink holding up a bowl; if, however, the kinesic choice were something like NO MOVEMENT TO SINK, then the social purpose could be read as 'regulatory', and some sort of negotiation of meaning-possibly non-verbal - would ensue. But neither the dialogue nor the set exploits this possibility.

Set 2 Describe exactly where things are

- (a) Where's the mayonnaise?
- (b) In the cupboard.
- (c) Which one?
- (d) The small one.
- (e) Where exactly?
- (f) On the top shelf.

As this series of exchanges is apparently an extension of micro-sequence 2, social system, situation and discourse strategies are identical, except that subject matter is 'ingredients'.

LR

- (a) [relational: circumstantial] with Carrier from 'ingredients' frame; [interrogative: WH-: Location]; Carrier as unmarked information focus
- (b) Location; ellipsis of Mood
- (c) nominal group with substitute as Head, interrogative deictic as Premodifier
- (d) nominal group with substitute as Head, Deictic and Epithet as Premodifier
- (e) minor clause realised by [interrogative: WH-: Location] + Mood Adjunct

(f) Location; ellipsis of Mood

The coursebook writers have chosen here, for pedagogical reasons, no doubt, to split up the complex nominal group in the response in micro-sequence 2: the first embedded prepositional phrase of the NG's Post-modifier has become move (b); the equivalent of the second embedded prepositional phrase has become Epithet in the NG of (d); and the first NG has become (f). This may be pedagogically sound, but it articulates a very odd choice in the system of the social action semiotic regulating relations between cook and helper. In this sense, its social system motivation is questionable.

### Micro-sequence 3

#### Set 3 Ask people to do things

As the micro-sequence and the set are identical, they will require only one analysis.

(a) Rod: Could you get me the mayonnaise from the cupboard?

(b) Paul: Yes, sure.

### S. System

IDP: ?

IS: 'cooking'; 'requests'

SAS: 'relations between flatmates'; 'relations between cook and helper'

IF: 'flatmates cooking'

### Sit.

SS: 'preparing a meal' SM: 'ingredients'

SR: 'friend-friend'

P: 'regulatory'; 'closeness'

## DS

IS: (Orient ^) Prepare

At: 'casual'

SK: [social] → [maximum]

## LR

- (a) [material] with addressee as Actor, speaker as Beneficiary, Goal from 'ingredients' frame; [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: low]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (b) [positive] + [probability: high]; clausal ellipsis

## NVR

?

Set 3 (a) articulates verbally the Prepare element of the interaction sequences, since it involves obtaining an ingredient of the recipe. It also evokes knowledge of the thematic system 'requests': this particular option assigns the role of Actor to the addressee and assumes a low degree of inclination in the addressee (other options assign the Actor role but assume a higher degree of inclination, or assign the addressee the role of Senser with the action requested in a rankshifted clause functioning as Phenomenon: fact, or in a projected clause.)

### Set 4 Give instructions and advice

This set is based on a 'newspaper article' entitled A holiday in the sun? Lovely! But be careful?

Don't lie in the sun for hours on your first day. Sunbathe for just half an hour.

### S. System

IDP: ?

IS: 'holiday'; 'advice'

SAS: · 'relations between media and public'

IF: · 'newspaper article on holidays'

Sit.

SS: · 'giving advice' SM: 'sunbathing'

SR: · 'media-public'; 'adviser-advisee'

Ch: · 'written' SF: 'constitutive'

P: 'regulatory'; 'respect'

DS

IS: Advise

At: 'didactic'

SK: [minimum]

LR

(i) [material] + Location/Duration/Time from 'sunbathing' frame;  
[imperative] + [negative]; unmarked Theme, information focus +  
meronymy

(ii) [material] + Duration from 'sunbathing' frame; [imperative];  
Duration as New + synonymy + antonymy

NVR

?

The cultural, situational and discourse strategy variables are all readily recoverable, and the main interest here is the linguistic realisation. The first clause articulates the subject matter 'sunbathing' and through it the thematic system 'holidays' (as it is constituted in British society): when a holiday-maker is Actor and sun is Location, then Duration cannot be realised by a synonym of 'a long time'. In the same clause, meronymy refers to "first day", considered as a part of the previously mentioned "holiday". Also

articulating minimum knowledge of co-text, in the second clause, is synonymy ("sunbathe - lie in the sun"), and antonymy ("hours - half an hour").

The only further comment I could make about Set 4 is that the exercise ('instructions for tourists on holidays in your country') could be profitably recontextualised as a letter. But in general the language of Set 4, like that of Set 3, is well motivated by social system and situation-type-in contrast to Set 1, which is confused, and Set 2, whose extended question-answer form does not arise naturally from the relevant systems of the social action semiotic, and completely undermines the communicative value of the exercise.

#### Unit 15

Barbara Cooper's father, Jack, is taking up a job in France, with the European branch of his company. He receives a letter with the details of the travel arrangements.

#### Micro-sequence 1

A company car will arrive at your hour at 8 am to take you to the airport.

#### S. System

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'travelling'

SAS: 'letter-writing conventions'; 'relations between organiser and organised'

IF: 'letter detailing travel arrangements'

#### Sit.

SS: 'itinerary' SM: 'travel plans'

SR: 'adviser - advisee'

Ch: 'written' SF: 'constitutive'

P: 'informational'; 'respect'



DS

IS: Orient ^ Detail ^ Wish

AT: 'formal'

SK: [not evoked]

LR

- (i) [material] (Actor, Location & Time from 'travel plans' frame) +  
[future]; [declarative]
- (ii) [material] (process & Location from 'travel plans' frame); non-  
finite; [enhancement: purpose]

The interaction sequence is Detailing Arrangements, and the clause complex here articulates the Detail element and the subject matter 'travel plans'

Set 1 Ask and talk about travel arrangements

- (a) Peggy: How will we get to the airport?
- (b) Jack: A car will pick us up at 8 am.

S. System

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'travelling'

SAS: 'relations between husband and wife'

IF: 'husband and wife discussing trip'

Sit.

SS: ? SM: 'travel plans'

SR: 'spouse-spouse' (or 'husband-wife'?)

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness' (or 'subordination'?)

DS

IS: ?

At: 'interested' (or 'deferential'?)

SK: [social]

LR

- (a) [material] (process & Location from 'travel plans' frame) +  
[future]; [interrogative: WH-: Manner]
- (b) [material] (Actor; process & Time from 'travel plans' frame) +  
[future]; [declarative]

Set 1 is problematic. It is an information transfer (from written to spoken) exercise based on the letter from which micro-sequence 1 is taken. It thus has a partial context, but is indeterminate with regard to social situation and interaction sequence. Furthermore, by using a pure question-answer dialogue form, Set 1 appears to be articulating certain situation and discourse strategy choices which, it is assumed, the writers of the book would disown, at least publicly. Thus, in Munby's inventory of social relationships, 'spouse-spouse' is a symmetrical relationship, but here the asymmetrical 'husband-wife' seems more appropriate; 'closeness' is the obvious choice of psychological purpose, but 'subordination' appears more suitable and finally, Peggy's questions seem to articulate the attitude 'deferential' rather than the expected 'interested'. So the relationship between situation, discourse strategies and linguistic realisation is rather muddled. One last point: the social shared knowledge evoked by Jack is of the 'travel plans' frame and the thematic system 'travelling'.

Micro-sequence 2

(Rod Nelson and Barbara are having a farewell drink with the Coopers on the eve of their departure)

- (a) Barbara: By this time tomorrow, you'll both be in France!
- (b) Peggy: Yes. Oh dear! I'll miss all my friends.

(c) Barbara: No, you won't. I'm sure you won't [...]

(d) Jack: I think we'll be very happy.

### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'living abroad'

SAS: 'relations between parents and children'; 'having drinks'

IF: 'child discussing parents' living abroad'

### Sit.

SS: 'socialising' SM: 'travel plans'; 'living abroad'

SR: 'parent-offspring'

P: 'regulatory'; 'closeness'

### DS

IS: Prepare ^ Greet ^ Sociability ^ Offer Drinks ^ Toast

At: 'anxious' → 'soothing'

SK: [maximum]

### LR

- (a) [relational: circumstantial] with Time and Location from 'travel plans' frame + [future]; [declarative]; Time circumstantial as marked Theme
- (b) (i) [positive]; clausal ellipsis  
(ii) minor clause realised by exclamation articulating 'anxious'  
(iii) [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser (process & Phenomenon from 'living abroad' frame) + [future]; [declarative]
- (c) (i) [negative]; ellipsis of Residue  
(ii) [negative] + [probability: high]; ellipsis of Residue
- (d) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'living abroad' frame + [future]; [declarative] + [probability: median] metaphorically encoded as [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser,

Attribute as information focus

The interaction sequence is Having Guests, and micro-sequence 2 articulates the Sociability element, together with the attitudes 'anxious' and 'soothing', and the frames 'travel plans' and 'living abroad'. There may be some confusion here between 'living abroad' as subject matter (frame) and 'living abroad' as thematic system - in fact, the frame prescribes the typical sequence of actions, events and states which constitutes living abroad, while the thematic system assigns to living abroad typical types of processes, participants, circumstances, logico-semantic relations and lexical sets.

Set 2 Make and comment on predictions

- (1) (a) I'll miss all my friends.  
(b) No, you won't. I'm sure you won't.
- (2) I think we'll be very happy.

The two models come from the dialogue, and need no further comment. The follow-up exercise involves making predictions about Barbara, Rod and the Coopers - its cultural and situational motivation lies more in pedagogical discourse than in real-life interaction.

Micro-sequence 3

- (a) Rod: Right! The wine - sparkling French wine! Cheers!
- (b) Barbara: What do they say in France?
- (c) Rod: Salut!
- (d) Jack: We say 'Cheers!'

S. System

(as for micro-sequence 2)

IF: (as for micro-sequence 2)

Sit.

(as for micro-sequence 2)

DS

IS: Sociability<sup>o</sup> Offer Drinks ^ Toast

At: 'cheerful'

SK: [maximum]; [personal]?

LR

- (a) (i) minor clause realised by continuative + [tone 5]  
(ii) minor clause realised by nominal group complex (1=2)  
(iii) minor clause articulating Toast element of interaction sequence
- (b) [verbal], (process & Location from 'living abroad' frame);  
[interrogative: WH-]
- (c) Verbiage; ellipsis of Mood & Predicator
- (d) [verbal] (Verbiage articulates Toast element of interaction sequence); [declarative]

Micro-sequence 3 articulates Sociability (moves (b), (c) and (d), Offer Drinks (move (a ii) plus an unspecified but obviously selected sequence of kinesic options), and Toast (move (a iii)). Jack's move is slightly puzzling: presumably the 1st person plural pronoun functioning as Sayer is equivalent to "we British" and evokes the personal shared knowledge that Rod is Canadian; but the implication that Canadians don't say "Cheers!" is thrown into doubt by Rod's move (a iii).

Set 3 Talk about language and cultural difference

In France they say 'Salut', but here we say 'Cheers'.

The model is taken, with slight modifications, from the dialogue; the follow-up exercise, in the absence of any alternative contextualisation, must be assumed to be motivated by the same cultural and situational variables as the dialogue.

To sum up Unit 15: Set 3 is the only set in which social system choices, situation-type and discourse strategies can be specified with any confidence; Set 2 is vague in terms of authentic communication; and Set 1, by imposing a dialogue form on a pure question-answer exercise, sinks into situational and discourse strategy confusion, and cannot, except in the most elementary way, be regarded as a communicative exercise.

### 4.3 Negotiation of Meaning

#### Unit 8

Lynne, a secretary in Rod Nelson's office, is having family problems, and Rod has invited her round to his flat to talk about them. She is due to arrive at any moment when the phone rings.

#### Micro-sequence 1

- (a) Barbara: Hello, Rod! Barbara here.
- (b) Rod: Oh. Oh, hello, Barbara.
- (c) Barbara: Er ... are you busy?
- (d) Rod: Well, yes, actually. I'm just having a shower.

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: ? or 'excuses'

SAS: 'telephone behaviour'

IF:

Sit.

SS: 'telephoning' SM: 'availability'

SR: 'male-female'; 'intimate-intimate'

Ch: 'spoken: telephone'

P: 'heuristic'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Greet^ Identify^ Speaking Rights

At: 'friendly'/'tentative' → 'unwelcoming'/'surprised'

SK: [maximum]

LR

- (a) (i) minor clause realised by greeting + [vocative]  
(ii) minor clause realised by proper noun + demonstrative adverb
- (b) minor clause realised by greeting + [vocative] + repetition of continuative "Oh" (articulates 'surprised')
- (c) [relational: attributive] with addressee as Carrier, Attribute from 'availability' frame; [interrogative: polar]; continuative 'Er' as articulation of 'tentative'
- (d) (i) [positive]; clausal ellipsis + continuative & Conjunctive Adjunct (verifactive) as articulation of 'unwelcoming'  
(ii) [material] + [tense: present in present] + Range from 'availability' frame; [declarative] + Mood Adjunct (time); unmarked Theme, information focus

NVR

(c) SURPRISED

(d) UNWELCOMING (tone of voice code)

It is difficult to see what, if any thematic system is being articulated in this micro-sequence, unless it is 'excuses' (but is Rod really having a shower?). On the other hand, it is clear that the 'telephone behaviour' system of the social action semiotic is informing the dialogue. The interaction sequence Making a Telephone Call includes the optional element Speaking Rights - that is, a check to see if the person called is able to speak to the caller at that particular moment. The most interesting feature of the realisation is the way that attitude is articulated not only by Mood Adjunct & tone of voice, but also by continuatives ("oh", "er", "well") and the Conjunctive Adjunct of the verifactive type, "actually".

Set 1 Ask and talk about present actions

- (1) (a) Are you busy?  
(b) Well, yes, actually. I'm just having a shower.
- (2) (a) Am I ringing at a bad time?  
(b) No, I'm just watching TV, but that's all right.

Set 1 (1) is taken from micro-sequence 1, and needs no further comment.

Set 1 (2) belongs to the same context (the question, though not the reply, occurs in the continuation of micro-sequence 1), so neither social system nor situation-type will be analysed again.

DS

IS: Speaking Rights

AT: 'friendly' 1

SK: [maximum]/[minimum]

LR

- (2) (a) [material] with speaker as Actor + Time; [interrogative: polar]; Time as unmarked information focus
- (b) (i) [negative]; clausal ellipsis
- (ii) [behavioural] with speaker as Behaver + Range (process & Range from 'availability' frame) + [present in present]; [declarative] + Mood Adjunct; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (iii) [relational: attributive]; [declarative]; [extension: adversative] + anaphoric demonstrative

Although Set 1 (2) appears to be simply the 'welcoming version' of Set 1 (1) this is misleading: the reason for the denial of speaking rights may in this case be interpreted as a lie, whereas the reason for the acceptance will normally be regarded as truthful. The apparent parallelism between 1 (1) and 1 (2) - and, presumably, the desire for



pedagogical symmetry, encouraged by the discourse of language teaching- has led to an anomaly in the linguistic realisation of 1 (2). If "just" is a Mood Adjunct (time), as it is in 1 (1), then it seems more in keeping with the attitude 'unwelcoming' and a denial of speaking rights than with a 'permission to speak'. If, on the other hand, "just" is a Mood Adjunct (intensity), indicating that the speaker places little value on the activity, then the adversative "but" is inappropriate.

Set 1 (continued)

(3) Could you answer the phone?

I'm washing my hair.

(4) Could you ring back later?

We're having supper.

(5) Could you phone back tomorrow morning? We're in the middle of painting the bathroom.

(These exchanges are not related to micro-sequence 1, except perhaps distantly in the case of (4) and (5) and are contextualised by small drawings).

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: ?

SAS: 'telephone behaviour'

IF: ?

Sit.

SS: 'telephoning' SM: 'availability'

SR: ?

Ch: (3) spoken: face-to-face (4)/(5) spoken: telephone

P: 'regulatory'; ?

DS

IS: (3) (Summons^\*) Answer: Other (4)/(5) Speaking Rights

At: ?

SK: (3) [immediate]/[social] (4) (5) [social]

LR

- (3) (i) [material] with addressee as Actor (process & Goal from 'telephoning' frame); [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: low]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (4) (i) [material] with addressee as Actor (process & Time circumstantial from 'telephoning' frame); [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: low]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (ii) [material] with speaker and others as Actor (process & Range from 'availability' frame) + present in present; [declarative]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (5) (i) [material] with addressee as Actor (process + Time circumstantial from 'telephoning' frame); [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: low]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (ii) [relational: circumstantial] with speaker and others as Carrier, Attribute realised by abstract Location (minor clause with 'Range' realised by rankshifted material process clause from 'availability' frame); [declarative]; unmarked Theme, information focus

A number of cultural, situational and discourse strategy variables are not clear in these three exchanges, although obviously it would be possible to infer some of them. The 'telephone behaviour' system of the social action semiotic is articulated in (3) by the interaction sequence element Answer: Other - telephones must be answered, but in

the middle of a hair-wash the task must be delegated; and in (4) and (5) it is articulated by the perceived necessity to offer a reason for denial of speaking rights. As in Set 1 (1) and (2), the linking of these three moves is misleading: although (3) is formally similar to (4) and (5), it is in fact articulating a different channel and interaction sequence.

#### Micro-sequence 2

(Lynee has just arrived and Barbara rings again)

(a) Barbara: Rod? It's me, Barbara. Am I ringing at a bad time again?

(b) Rod: No, no. That's all right. Is it something important?

(c) Barbara: No, not really. It's just ... well, some American friends of mine are here for a few days and they wanted to go for a meal this evening. I thought maybe you'd like to come too.

(d) Rod: Well, that does sound fun, but ... er ... I'm afraid I've got a bad headache, to tell you the truth, and ...

#### S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'excuses'; 'invitations'

SAS: 'relations, between boyfriend and girlfriend'; 'telephone behaviour'

IF: 'female inviting boyfriend out - male making excuses to girlfriend'

#### Sit.

SS: 'telephoning' SM: 'eating out'; 'friends'

SR: 'male-female'; 'intimate-intimate'

Ch: 'spoken: telephone'

P: 'regulatory'; 'closeness'

DS

IS: Identify ^ Speaking Rights ^ Orient ^ Invite ^ Excuse

At: 'friendly'/'tentative' → 'unwelcoming'/'nervous'

SK: [maximum/[minimum]/[social]

LR

- (a) (i) minor clause realised by [vocative[ + [tone 2]  
(ii) [relational: identifying] with speaker as Identifier;  
[declarative]; unmarked Theme, information focus  
(iii) [material] with speaker as Actor (process & Time circum-  
stantial from 'telephoning' frame) + [present in present;  
[interrogative: polar]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (b) (i) [negative]; clausal ellipsis  
(ii) [relational: attributive] with Attribute articulating  
Speaking Rights: accept; [declarative]; anaphoric demon-  
strative as Theme  
(iii) [relational: attributive] + Attribute from 'telephoning'  
frame; [interrogative: polar]; Attribute as New (configu-  
ration of grammatical choices articulates Speaking Rights:  
accept + 'unwelcoming')
- (c) (i) [negative] + Comment Adjunct (assertive); clausal ellipsis  
(ii) [relational: identifying] with Identifier left unsaid;  
[declarative] + Mood Adjunct (intensity)  
(iii) [relational: circumstantial] with Carrier from 'friends'  
frame; [declarative]; Carrier as Theme + continuative  
(iv) [mental: affect] + 'projected' material process clause from  
'eating out' frame; [declarative]; unmarked Theme, infor-  
mation focus + [extension: addition]  
(v) [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser  
(vi) projected mental process clause + projected [material] from  
'eating'

(Note: [probability: low] and [inclination: median] in mental process clause)

- (d) (i) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'eating out' frame; [declarative] + [tone 4] + stressed Finite, Attribute as New + continuative
- (ii) [relational: possessive] with speaker as Carrier (process & Attribute articulate Excuse element of interaction sequence); [declarative] + Comment Adjunct (desiderative) realised by [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser + Comment Adjunct (admissive); [extension: adversative] + Continuative (Adjuncts and continuative articulate attitude 'nervous')

#### NVR

#### UNWELCOMING/TENTATIVE/NERVOUS

(tone of voice code)

Micro-sequence 2 is the most interesting fragment of dialogue presented so far in the coursebook. Of particular value to the learner is the articulation of the system in the social semiotic 'relations between boyfriend and girlfriend'; of the interaction sequence elements Speaking Rights: accept, Invite and Excuse; of the attitude choices 'tentative', 'unwelcoming' and 'nervous'. The articulation of these variables can best be appreciated by examining part of Rod's first move (b ii), part of Barbara second move (c v), and the whole of Rod's second move (d). In (b iii), Speaking Rights: accept and 'unwelcoming' produces a structural configuration (relational process and polar interrogative) which the student may only partly understand unless made aware of discourse strategies and tone of voice. In (c v), the interaction sequence element Invite (and so the thematic system

'invitations') combines with the attitude 'tentative' (itself an articulation here of the 'boyfriend/girlfriend' system of the social action semiotic) to produce a clause of some complexity: the invitation, in the form of [mental: affect] plus projected clause, with [modality: low] and [inclination: median], is itself projected by a [mental: cognition] clause. Finally, (d) articulates the interaction sequence element Excuse (actually a conflation of Refuse and Excuse) and through it the thematic system 'excuses', in combination with the attitude 'nervous' (and so the 'boyfriend/girlfriend' system of the social action semiotic, or at least the 'seeing other women' subsystem): the main realisations of this are tone of voice, the stressed Finite, intonation and the continuative in (d i), and the adversative, continuative and Comment Adjuncts in (d ii).

Set 2 Invite people to do things

Refuse invitations politely and make excuses

- (a) Would you like to go out for a meal?
- (b) Thanks very much. I'd love to but I'm afraid I've got a headache.

S. System

IDP: ?

TS: 'invitations'; 'excuses'

SAS: 'polite behaviour'

IF: ?

Sit.

SS: ? SM: 'eating out'; 'unavailability'

SR: ?

Ch: ?

P: 'regulatory'; ?

DS:

IS: Invite ^ Refuse ^ Excuse

At: 'courteous'

SK: [maximum]/[social]

LR

- (a) [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser, plus projected material process clause (process & Purpose circumstantial from 'eating out' frame); [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: median]; unmarked Theme, information focus
- (b) (i) minor clause articulating attitude 'courteous' and Refuse element of interaction sequence
- (ii) [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] + [inclination: median]; verbal ellipsis
- (iii) [relational: possessive] with speaker as Carrier, Attribute from 'unavailability' frame; [declarative] + Comment Adjunct (desiderative) realised by [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser; [extension: adversative]

There is no certainty that the exchange in Set 2 is related to the previous dialogue, so the components of the situation are difficult to specify. The initiation evokes knowledge of the thematic system 'invitations': it is assumed that the encoding of addressee as Senser and action as projected clause in a polar interrogative, modulated, mental process clause will be recognised as an unmarked form of invitation (just as modalising this form and making it the projection of a [mental: cognition] clause would be recognised as marked). As for the response, the minor clause and the elliptical mental process clause articulate the 'polite behaviour' system of the social action semiotic and the 'invitations' thematic system (note that "love" implies a slightly higher degree of commitment than "like"). The 'polite behaviour' system is articulated again, along with the excuses' thematic system, by the adversative "but" and the Comment Adjunct

"I'm afraid" (which could also be analysed congruently here as a mental process clause with speaker as Senser, projecting a clause encoding 'unavailability' an analysis more consistent with patterns in certain of the thematic systems so far observed).

The final impression of Unit 8 is that the writers have created a dialogue which is culturally and situationally of great value to the learner, with considerable potential for negotiation of meaning, but have followed up the dialogue with exercises of relatively little interest. The path to real communication has been laid, but the students have been led along crude stepping-stones!

#### Unit 14

Mike, a journalist, is interviewing Laura, a folk singer.

#### Micro-sequences 1 and 2

- (a) Laura: Now, your questions. Oh, good, you've got my press release.
- (b) Mike: Yes. You were born here in Bristol, weren't you, in 1955?
- (c) Laura: That's right. I was born not far from this theatre, actually. But I grew up in the suburbs. [...]
- (d) Mike: Have you got any brothers or sisters?
- (e) Laura: No, I'm an only child.
- (f) Mike: Mmm. And then you went to university?
- (g) Laura: Yes, for three years.  
[...]
- (h) Mike: How long have you been singing professionally?
- (j) Laura: Oh, quite a long time! Actually, I've been singing professionally since 1978 [...]

#### S. System

IDP: ? or 'journalism'

TS: 'biography'



SAS: 'relations between reporter and interviewee'; 'behaviour of public performer'

IF: 'reporter conducting interview with public performer'

Sit.

SS: 'interviewing'; 'seeking publicity' SII: 'personal details'

SR: 'investigator - subject'

P: 'heuristic'; 'respect'

DS

IS: (Greet ^) Orient ^ Question ^ (Clarify ^) Answer

At: 'friendly'

SK: [immediate]/[minimum]/[maximum]

LR

- (a) (i) minor clause realised by continuative & nominal group  
(articulates Orient element)
- (ii) minor clause realised by continuative & adjective
- (iii) [relational: possessive] with addressee as Possessor,  
Possessed from 'seeking publicity' frame
- (b) (i) [positive]; clausal ellipsis
- (ii) [material] (process & Location/Time circumstantials from  
'personal details' frame); [declarative] + Mood Tag
- (c) (i) [relational: attributive]; [declarative]; anaphoric demonstrative
- (ii) [material] (process & Location from 'personal details'  
frame); [declarative]; Conjunctive Adjunct (verifactive)
- (iii) [material] (process & Location from 'personal details'  
frame); [declarative]; [extension: adversative]
- (d) [relational: possessive] with addressee as Possessor, Possessed  
from 'personal details' frame; [interrogative: polar]

- (e) (i) [negative]; clausal ellipsis
  - (ii) [relational: attributive] from 'personal details' frame;
    - [declarative]
- (f) [material] (process & Location from 'personal details' frame;
  - [declarative] + [tone 2]; [extension: addition] + [enhancement: temporal]
- (g) Duration; ellipsis of Mood & Predicator
- (h) [material] (process, Duration & Manner from 'personal details' frame) + [present in past in present]; [interrogative: WH-]; Manner as information focus
- (j) (i) Duration, ellipsis of Mood & Predicator + Continuative
  - (ii) [material] (process, Duration & Manner from 'personal details' frame) + [present in past in present]; [declarative]; Manner as marked information focus (contrastive stress)

The interaction sequence in operation here is Conducting an Interview, whose Orient element is articulated by Laura's "Now, your questions", in which the Head of the nominal group is a general noun pointing to the Question element. Obviously the grammatical option most at risk here is the interrogative Mood, but there are also instances of declarative with Mood tag, and declarative with tone 2, articulating in this case shared knowledge of the immediate environment (that is, Laura's press release).

Set 1: Talk about events in people's lives

- (1) I was born in 1955.
- (2) He died three years ago.
- (3) I went to university for three years.
- (4) I have been singing professionally since 1978.

Initially Set 1 is contextualised as 'asking and answering questions about Laura's life', which links it to the dialogue in a confused way; subsequently, students ask each other questions about their lives, an exercise which could certainly be contextualised (e.g. the Approach Direct element of a casual conversation), but unfortunately is not at this point.

### Set 2 Ask and talk about people's background

- (1) (a) Where were you born?  
(b) I was born in Bristol
- (2) (a) Where did you grow up?  
(b) I grew up in Bristol.
- (3) (a) Where did you go to school?  
(b) I went to a comprehensive school.
- (4) (a) What did you do after that?  
(b) I went to university.

The models for Set 2 are presumably an extension of the dialogue; the follow-up exercise involves students asking each other questions and completing a chart, in no obvious context except a pedagogical one.

### Micro-sequence 3

Before concluding the discussion of Unit 14, I would like to analyse a further fragment of the dialogue which although (or because!) it is not followed by an exercise, is of particular interest. The analysis will be only a partial one.

- (a) Mike: And now you're a world famous star, a composer and a mother. How do you manage to do it?
- (b) Laura: Do what?
- (c) Mike: Combine a career with a family?
- (d) Laura: Are you married with a family, Mr. Sanders?

- (e) Mike: Yes, but ...
- (f) Laura: Well, do you find it difficult to be a journalist and a father?
- (g) Mike: But ...
- (h) Laura: Think about it, Mr. Sanders. Goodbye!

S. System

IDP: 'journalism'

TS: 'biography'; 'gender roles'

SAS: 'relations 'between reporter and interviewee'; 'relations between male and female'

IF : 'reporter conducting interview with public performer'

Sit.

SS: 'interviewing' SM: 'personal details'

P: 'heuristic'/'regulatory'; 'respect'/'dominance'

DS

IS: Sum Up ^ Question ^ Clarify ^ [Question ^ Answer ^ Conclude ^ Goodbye]

At: 'friendly'/'angry'

SK: [maximum]/[social]

There is a fairly complex negotiation of meaning occurring in this fragment of dialogue. The fragment begins as if it were a continuation of the interaction sequence Conducting an Interview of micro-sequences 1 and 2, with the elements Sum Up (a mid-sequence version of Orient) and Question apparently motivated by the institutional discourse and practices of 'journalism', the thematic system 'biography', and the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between reporter and interviewee' (I say 'apparently' because it becomes clear that other social system choices are also motivating these initial elements of the interaction sequence). The Clarify element appears to continue

the same interaction sequence, although here it depends very much on non-verbal codes: tone of voice PUZZLED versus COLD or HOSTILE, facial expression SMILE versus SCOWL in "Do what?" What follows, however, shows the interaction sequence breaking down, and meaning being negotiated, successfully from the interviewee's point of view, unsuccessfully from the reporter's perspective (the interviewee's 'answer', which consists of the embedded interaction sequence Question^ Answer^ Conclude Goodbye (Conclude is the sequence-final version of Orient) is obviously motivated by the thematic system 'gender roles' and the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between male and female', articulated by the social relationship 'male-female' and the purpose 'regulatory; dominance', and realised linguistically by assigning marked information focus twice to "you", and non-verbally by tone of voice COLD or HOSTILE: It becomes clear that the initial Sum Up and Question were also partly motivated by these social system and situation choices when the Answer element in the embedded interaction sequence is twice realised by the adversative but, implying that the reporter is aware of the social shared knowledge evoked by 'Laura' (working men and working women are equal in all respects), but does not agree with it.

This dialogue obviously provides a splendid opportunity for meaning negotiation exercises - especially for students who do not share the social knowledge evoked by 'Laura' - but unfortunately the opportunity is not seized.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The question was asked in the title of this Chapter: 'How communicative is the communicative course Building Strategies?' During the analysis of seven units of this coursebook, a partial answer was given, which I would now like to sum up. I say partial, because the full meaning of the word 'communicative' will only emerge in the next chapter

- until then 'communicativeness' will be viewed more in terms of failed aspirations than positive achievements.

The question in the title was, it will be recalled, split into four questions, which can now be answered. The first question was: are social system choices, situation-type, and discourse strategies specifiable from the dialogues presented in the units? It is to the credit of the authors of Building Strategies that the answer to this question is a resounding yes. Cultural and situational variables, interaction sequence, attitude and shared knowledge are all readily specifiable, and are at times articulated by lively dialogues with great potential for negotiation of meaning: Unit 8, for example (the invitation-excuses dialogue between Barbara and Rod with Lynne the secretary hovering in the background) or Unit 14 (the sharp reply from 'Laura' to the reporter interviewing her, in response to a question presumed sexist).

The second question posed in the introduction was: are the follow up exercises linked to the dialogue that precedes them? The answer to this, as indicated in section 4.1, is that although the models for each set are generally linked to the dialogue, all too often the follow-up exercises are neither linked to the dialogue, in any but the most tenuous way, nor contextualised in any but the most perfunctory way. These exercises may be communicative in that they usually permit students to communicate with each other (and, in the case of an exercise like Unit 2, Set 1, ask and answer questions that may even be of passing interest to them), but their value in a wider context - communicating in society - is debateable. This is underlined by the two exchanges in Unit 5, Set 1 in which the 'refuse permission' is articulated without negative polarity: thanks to the absence of motivating context, the learner is given no indications as to situations in which

a response of this form is appropriate.

The third question, addressed in section 4.2, was: are the follow-up exercises genuinely communicative, that is (since we have not yet fully defined 'communicative'), are they examples, albeit artificial and stylised, of everyday communication between typical speakers of standard British English? To answer this question, we must be aware that Building Strategies, like any EFL coursebook articulates the pedagogical discourse of the time and place that gave birth to it, and thus articulates two objects (in the Foucauldian sense) of the discourse formation, that we might term authenticity and learnability, which are in constant tension, and therefore difficult to reconcile. The reasons why authenticity and learnability are difficult to reconcile, and the effect this has on language learning exercises, can be illustrated by examining three unrelated sets in the coursebook. Set 2 of Unit 3 (entitled 'Ask and talk about the recent past') consists of a 'health questionnaire' which students are invited to complete for themselves and a partner. Now for the student to fill out a questionnaire for him/herself articulates the discourse of authenticity, while to fill out the questionnaire for a partner articulates the discourse of learnability, which advocates oral pairwork as a highly valued non-discursive practice. From the point of view of everyday communication, the resulting hybrid is not very satisfactory.

In Set 2 of Unit 7 ('Describe exactly where things are'), authenticity is articulated by the 'preparing a meal' dialogue to which the set is linked, while learnability is articulated by the coursebook writers' decision to share the components of a hypotactically complex nominal group occurring in the dialogue among the three responses of the mini-dialogue in the set. The language that results

from this decision may well be easier for learners to cope with, but it is arguably language that is not worth learning, since at the very least it offends the system of the social action semiotic 'relations between cook and helper', and, more broadly, perhaps, a number of systems of the social action semiotic relating to 'assistance in finding things'.

The last example concerns Set 1 of Unit 15 ('Ask and talk about travel arrangements'). Its authenticity is articulated by the 'travel arrangements' letter to which it is linked (through in this case, with social situation and interaction sequence unclear, the articulation of authenticity remains incomplete), while learnability is articulated by the question-answer form of the dialogue which, despite the interspersed comments of Peggy, is actually a disguised variant of the pattern practice drill, a non-discursive practice motivated by the prevailing discourse on learnability of the 1950's and 1960's, and obviously still alive (albeit leading a secret life!) in the 1970's. The result of this tension between authenticity and learnability is a dialogue which represents relations between men and women in a way which many people would find offensive, and probably nobody would regard an example of everyday communication between typical speakers of standard British English. It is inevitable that learnability will always interfere to some extent with authenticity; but it is not inevitable that authenticity should be sacrificed to the extent it has been in this and the other two sets examined above.

The fourth question to be asked in the introduction was: does negotiation of meaning occur in dialogues and follow-up exercises? As the analysis of the coursebook showed, the authors did not see the teaching or learning of meaning negotiation skills as one of their goals, to the point where they failed to make students aware of the phenomenon even when meaning was being negotiated in dialogues.



It will be recalled that meaning must be negotiated when a decoder does not 'read' one or more cultural/situational variables or discourse strategies in the way they were 'intended' by an encoder, leading to a further move (or moves) to harmonise 'readings'. Thus, in the dialogue in Unit 8 in which Barbara is inviting Rod to go out for a meal, and Rod is making excuses while Lynne the secretary hovers in the background, it takes Barbara several moves to realise that Rod is not interpreting the 'boyfriend-girlfriend' system of the social action semiotic in the way she intended and expected him to. A similar problem occurs in micro-sequence 3 of Unit 14. In this fragment of dialogue, the folksinger Laura and the reporter Mike obviously do not interpret the thematic system 'gender roles' in the same way, and Laura's attempts to negotiate these conflicting readings meet considerable resistance from the reporter. These two dialogues (in Units 8 and 14) provide an excellent opportunity to sensitise learners to negotiation of meaning and even to develop exercises in meaning negotiation skills, but unfortunately the dialogues remain unexploited.

Four points have been made in this final section: that cultural and situational variables and discourse strategies are readily specifiable in the dialogues; that the exercises in many sets are not linked to the dialogues or sufficiently contextualised; that a number of exercises are sufficiently contextualised but are undermined by tension between authenticity and learnability; and that meaning negotiation skills are ignored, even when negotiation of meaning occurs in the dialogue. What we can learn from these four points, and the direction such knowledge can take us in, will be the subject of the next chapter.

#### Note

1. These units - 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 14, 15 - have been chosen as

representative of the coursebook. Analysis of the remaining five units - 4, 9, 10, 12, 13 - could not, it was felt, add anything of significance to the argument to be developed in this chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Towards 'Authentic' Communication:

#### A Topical-Interactional Approach to Language Learning

##### 5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 begins by posing two questions. The coursebook Building Strategies is based in part on language functions (more formally, the illocutionary forces of speech act theory); the approach to communicative language learning that I am proposing is based in part on social system choices and interaction sequences. The two questions are these: what precisely is a language function in our model? and what are social system choices and interaction sequences in pedagogical terms? The answers to these questions should go some way towards showing how a theoretical model can give birth to a communicative language course.

##### 5.1 Social System, Interaction Sequence and 'Function' in Building Strategies

Table 5.1 shows social system choices and interaction sequences in Building Strategies. Institutional discourses/practices are not listed separately, but are included with thematic systems; where the social system choices and interaction sequence of a micro-sequence or set are identical to those of a preceding micro-sequence or set, they are not listed. Note that the five units not analysed in Chapter 4 are included here.

Table 5.1

##### Social System Choices and Interaction Sequences in Building Strategies

MS = micro-sequence

S = set

Thematic Systems	Social Action Semiotic	Interaction Sequences
<u>Unit 2</u>		
MS1, 2 'work'; 'living conditions'; 'likes'	MS1, 2 'relations between host & guest'; 'gender roles'; 'first meeting behaviour'	MS1, 2 Approach Direct
'likes'; S1 'domestic activities'	S1?	S1?
S2 'buildings'; 'opinions'	S2?	S2?
MS 3 'getting to know people'; 'suggestions'	MS 3 'relations between host & guest'; 'gender roles'	MS 3 Centring [Orient ^ Suggest ^ Accept ° Clarify]
S3 'suggestions'	S3?	S3 Suggest ^ Accept Clarify
<u>Unit 3</u>		
MS1 'health' (+IDP 'medicine')	MS1 'hospital visiting 'mother-daughter relations'	MS 1 Greet ^ Approach Direct [Suggest ^ Accept]
S2 'health'	S2 'filling out questionnaires'	S2 Question ^ Answer
<u>Unit 4</u>		
MS1 'directions'	MS1 'relations between strangers'	MS1 Summons ^ Orient ^ Enquire Directions ^ Direct
MS 3, 4 'community facilities' (+ IDP 'town planning')	MS 3, 4 'relations between media & public'	MS 3, 4 Introduce ^ Orient ^ Analyse ^ Conclude
<u>Unit 5</u>		
S1 'renting accommodation'; permission'	S1 'relations between buyer & seller'; 'relations between potential flatmates'	S1 Greet ^ Orient ^ Service ^ Display
S1 (cont.) 'permission'; 'telephones'	S1 (cont.) ?	S1 (cont.) ?
S2 (c) 'colour'	S2 (c) 'relations between friends'	S2 (c) Approach Direct
<u>Unit 7</u>		
MS1 'cooking'	MS1 'relations between flatmates'; 'relations between cook & helper'	MS1 Orient Prepare
S1 ?	S1 ?	S1 ?
MS3 'cooking'; 'requests'	MS3 'relations between flatmates'; 'relations between cook & helper'	MS3 Orient Prepare
S4 'holidays'; 'advice'	S4 'relations between media & public'	S4 Advise

Thematic Systems	Social Action Semiotic	Interaction Sequences
<u>Unit 8</u>		
MS1 'excuses'	MS1 'telephone behaviour'	MS1 Greet ^ Identify ^ Speaking Rights
S1 (cont.) ?	S1 (cont.) 'telephone behaviour'	S1 (cont.) Summons ^ Answer: Other
MS2 'excuses';	MS2 'relations between boyfriend & girlfriend'; 'telephone behaviour'	MS2 Identify ^ Speaking Rights ^ Orient ^ Invite ^ Excuse
S2 'invitations; excuses'	S2 'polite behaviour'	S2 Invite ^ Excuse
<u>Unit 9</u>		
MS1 'travelling' (+ IDP 'business')	MS1 'relations between manager & assistant'	MS1 Orient ^ Arrange Sociability
S1 'travelling'	S1 ?	S1 ?
<u>Unit 10</u>		
MS1 'travelling'	MS1 'relations between old school friends'; 'chance encounter behaviour'	MS1 Greet ^ Approach Direct ^ Leave-taking Goodbye
S2 ?	S2 'relations between reporter & interviewee'	S2 Question ^ Answer
<u>Unit 12</u>		
MS1 'travelling'	MS1 'relations between boyfriend & girlfriend'; 'airport meeting behaviour'	MS1 Greet ^ Praise ^ ^ Regret ^ Evaluate
<u>Unit 13</u>		
MS1 'missing persons' (+ IDP 'the law')	MS1 'relations between police & public'	MS1 Identify ^ Service Bid ^ Service { Orient ^ Recount ^ Describe ^ Goodbye
<u>Unit 14</u>		
MS1, 2 'biography'	MS1, 2 'relations between reporter & interviewee'; 'behaviour of public performer'	MS1, 2 Greet ^ Orient ^ Question ^ (Clarify ^) Answer
<u>Unit 15</u>		
MS1 'travelling' (+ IDP 'business')	MS1 'letter-writing conventions'; 'relations between organiser & organised'	MS1 Orient ^ Detail ^ Wish
S1 'travelling'	S1 'relations between husband & wife'	S1 ?

Thematic Systems	Social Action Semiotic	Interaction Sequences
MS2 'living abroad'	MS2 'relations between parents & children'; 'having drinks'	MS2 Prepare ^ Greet ^ Sociability ° Offer Drinks ^ Toast

### 5.1.1 Language Functions

Turning first to the question of what a language function is in terms of our model, we notice that functions are listed under two categories: thematic systems and interaction sequences (it will be recalled that in section 3.4 above it was said that function would be incorporated into interaction sequence, but that was a simplification of the matter). Table 5.2 lists functions by thematic system and interaction sequence:

Table 5.2  
Language Functions By Thematic System  
and Interaction Sequence

#### Unit 2

MS1, 2 'likes'; Approach Direct

MS3 'suggestions'; Orient ^ Suggest ^ Accept ° Clarify

S3 'suggestions'; Suggest ^ Accept ° Clarify

#### Unit 4

MS1 'directions'; Summons ^ Orient ^ Enquire Directions ^ Direct

#### Unit 5

S1 'permission'; Greet ^ Orient ^ Service ^ Display

#### Unit 7

MS3 'requests'; Orient ^ Prepare

S4 'advice'; Advise

## Unit 8

MS1 'excuses'; Greet ^ Identify ^ Speaking Rights

MS 2 'invitations/excuses'; Identify ^ Speaking Rights ^ Orient ^  
Invite ^ Excuse

S2 'invitations/excuses'; Invite Excuse

Note: The term 'language functions' here includes not only obvious illocutionary forces like suggest or request, but also semantico-grammatical categories (notions) such as likes, and hybrids such as directions (part function, part notion).

I would now like to look at each individual listing of the so-called functions. In micro-sequences 1 and 2 of Unit 2, and in Set 1 (not listed here due to the absence of a specifiable interaction sequence), the function 'Express likes and dislikes' appears as the thematic system 'likes', but does not in fact figure overtly in the interaction sequence element, analysed as Approach Direct. Two proofs were given for the existence of a thematic system relating to 'likes': firstly, an expression of like or dislikes tends to be followed by a clause structurally related or unrelated, which explicitly or implicitly, elaborates, extends or enhances the expression of like or dislike; and secondly, in the non-committal response "It depends", native speakers of English are aware of an unexpressed circumstantial Attribute and of the set of lexico-grammatical items which could realise the 'Range' in the 'minor process' functioning as Attribute. As for the fact that the function does not figure overtly in the interaction sequence, this can be explained by saying that it is not necessary, since the thematic system 'likes' is regularly articulated by Approach Direct.

Moving on to micro-sequence 3 and Set 3 of the same unit, the functions 'Make suggestions and plans Agree and disagree with suggestions' appear as the interaction sequence Orient ^ Suggest ^ Accept

• Clarify. The question immediately arises: why the duplication, especially since it was deemed unnecessary in the case of 'Express likes and dislikes'? The answer lies in the difference between the thematic system and the interaction sequence. A suggestion involves a performer and a performance and the thematic system sets out the possible roles that may be played by each. An addressee - performer may be **Senser** in an interrogative mental process clause with modulation: inclination, in which case the performance is encoded as a projected clause; or an addressee - performer may be implicit ('ellipsed') in a WH- interrogative minor clause in which the performance is encoded as a **Circumstance: Matter**. A speaker - & - Addressee performer may be **Actor** in a WH- interrogative clause with negative polarity in which the material process encodes the performance; or **Actor** in a declarative clause with modality: possibility in which the performance is likewise encoded by the material process.

The thematic system 'suggestions' is, in short, the set of patterns used in making suggestions in present-day standard British English, together with certain conventions relating to appropriate usage - for example, there are clearly situations in which the ellipsed - performer pattern would be avoided by speakers of standard British English. What then is the interaction sequence element Suggest, or rather, more accurately, what is the interaction sequence Orient<sup>^</sup> Suggest<sup>^</sup> Accept • Clarify? An interaction sequence is motivated to some extent by social system choices, and in micro-sequence 3 the thematic system 'getting to know people', and the system of the social action semiotic 'relations between host and guest' deserve close attention. The system of the social action semiotic describes the range of duties that a host must perform, including befriending a guest newly arrived in the host's home town; the thematic system



describes the set of activities permissible (at a given time in the given culture) in getting to know people, and assigns roles to the performer(s) and the performance. The interaction sequence is one of a number of possible meeting points between the system of the social action semiotic and the thematic system, and each element bears the imprint of the two systems: the Suggest element, for instance, is the reaction (not necessarily the only possible one) of a dutiful host to a guest who has activated the 'getting to know people' thematic system.

The most interesting element of the interaction sequence is Orient (the pre-suggestion or, as the case may be, pre-invitation, pre-request, etc. of the ethnomethodologists). This element is a component in so many interaction sequences that it may well articulate some very general system of the social action semiotic like 'getting things done' or 'getting other people to do things'. That its function is well understood can be illustrated in the following unremarkable exchange between a young man and his girlfriend:

YM: There's a great new film at the Roxy.

G: Yes, let's go.

This exchange could readily be analysed as Orient ^ Accept, eliminating the Suggest element altogether from the interaction sequence. Such exchanges underline the weakness of the 'function' label, especially in relation to what Searle called indirect speech acts, like the young man's initiation: to characterise such an utterance as a 'Make suggestions' would be misleading, for it does not articulate the thematic system (presequences are too 'wild' to be systematised); and it articulates rather an approach towards, or even a desire to avoid, the interaction sequence element. Thus the preference for thematic system and interaction sequence over language function.

Leaving the discussion on suggestions and pre-suggestions, we turn now to micro-sequence 1 of Unit 4. The distinction we made between the thematic system 'suggestions' and the interaction sequence element Suggest also holds good here. The thematic system 'directions' assigns roles - Actor to performer, material process with Location circumstantials to performance, and an appropriate lexical set. The element Direct in the sequence Summons ^ Orient ^ Enquire Directions ^ Direct articulates not only the thematic system but a system of the social action semiotic, in the event 'relations between strangers', which prescribes accepted behaviour to strangers seeking directions.

In Set 1 of Unit 5, the function(s) 'Ask for, give and refuse permission' appear(s) as the thematic system 'permission' and the element Display in the interaction sequence Greet ^ Orient ^ Service ^ Display. Only two patterns in the thematic system are activated: both involve the speaker - performer as Actor in a modulated material process/polar interrogative clause, the only difference being in the modulation - [obligation: low] versus [potentiality]. The Display element, which should properly be analysed as two elements, Display Verbal (as on a telephone) and Display Visual (as in a shop), articulates the thematic system 'renting accommodation' and the system of the social action semiotic 'relations between buyer and seller'. In fact, the 'permission' thematic system is brought into play to signal a transition between Display Verbal and Display Visual.

Micro-sequence 3 of the dialogue in Unit 7 illustrates the function 'Ask people to do things', which appears as the thematic system 'requests' and the element Prepare of the interaction sequence Orient ^ Prepare. Only one pattern from the thematic system is presented: addressee - performer as Actor in a modulated-[inclination: low] - material/polar interrogative clause. The element Prepare articulates

the thematic system 'cooking' and the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between cook and helper': the 'request' thematic system may be activated when, for example, an ingredient or utensil is required.

In Set 4 of the same unit, the function 'Give instructions and advice' appears as the thematic system 'advice' and the interaction sequence element Advise. The Thematic system patterns involve addressee-performer as Actor in material process/imperative clauses; and performance as embedded material process/non-finite clauses functioning as Carrier in relational process clauses. The interaction sequence element articulates the thematic system 'holidays' and the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between media and public', which permit newspapers to give their readers advice about holidays.

Turning to micro-sequence 1 of Unit 8, we find the function 'make excuses' (the label is taken from Set 2, since Set 1 is actually entitled 'Ask and talk about present actions') appearing in the analysis as the thematic system 'excuses' and the interaction sequence element Speaking Rights. At this point only one pattern is presented: speaker-performer as Actor in a material process clause with tense present in present. The interaction sequence element Speaking Rights: Reject) articulates 'excuses' and the system in the social action semiotic 'telephone behaviour'.

In micro-sequence 2 and Set 2, the function(s) 'Invite people to do things Refuse invitations politely and make excuses' appear(s) as the thematic systems 'excuses' and 'invitations' and as the interaction sequence Orient ^ Invite ^ Excuse. Two patterns are activated from the 'invitations' thematic systems: in the first pattern addressee-performer is Senser in a modulated - [inclination: median]

mental process/polar interrogative clause, which projects the performance; the second pattern imitates the first, except that now the projecting clause of pattern 1 is declarative and modalised - [probability: low] - and is itself projected by another mental process clause in which the 'inviter' is Senser. As for the 'excuses' thematic system, there are four new patterns: they all involve the speaker-performer as Senser in two mental process clauses in a paratactic/adversative relation, the second of which projects four different types of clauses encoding the performances: (1) performer as Carrier, performance as relational: possessive with Attribute from '(bad) health' frame; (2) performer as Actor, performance as material process clause modulated by [obligation: high]; (3) as type (2), but modulated by [obligation: median]; (4) performer as Senser in mental process clause modulated by [inclination: median), performance as projected clause. As for the interaction sequence elements Invite and Excuse, they both articulate the system of the social action semiotic 'relations between boyfriend and girlfriend' - subsystems pertaining to shared activities and seeing other women respectively.

We are now in a position to say what a language function is in terms of our model. It is partly a thematic system - a cultural store of roles for a performer, processes for a performance, and relevant lexical sets and logico-semantic relations (in this connection, see also Derrida 1982:326 on the citationality and iterability of speech acts, and section 7.1). And it is also partly an interaction sequence element, articulating a system in the social action semiotic and sometimes a thematic system as well. Note that a function need not appear as a separate thematic system with a name similar to that of the function - it may figure as an anonymous subsystem in an apparently unrelated thematic system. Thus in Unit 9, for example,

'Ask and talk about plans' and 'Remind people to do things:' are considered subsystems of the thematic system 'travelling'. This explains why Table 5.2 stops at Unit 8.

### 5.1.2 Social System and Interaction Sequence

In order to better consider what thematic system and social action semiotic are in pedagogical terms, I would like to group them according to affinity. Table 5.3 shows this grouping.

Table 5.3  
Thematic System and Social Action  
Semiotic By Groups

Thematic System	Social Action Semiotic
<u>Group 1</u> 'work' 'business' (IDP) 'travelling: business'	'relations between manager and assistant' 'letter-writing conventions' 'relations between organiser and organised'
<u>Group 2</u> 'living conditions' 'domestic activities' 'renting accommodation' 'telephones' 'cooking' 'colour'	'relations between host and guest' 'relations between buyer and seller' 'relations between (potential) flatmates' 'relations between cook and helper'
<u>Group 3</u> 'buildings' 'directions' 'getting to know people' 'community facilities' 'town planning' (IDP)	'relations between strangers'
<u>Group 4</u> 'health' 'medicine' (IDP)	'hospital visiting'

Thematic Systems	Social Action Semiotic
<u>Group 5</u> 'biography'	'relations between media and public' 'relations between reporter and interviewee'
<u>Group 6</u> · 'holidays' · 'travelling' · 'living abroad'	'chance encounter behaviour' 'airport meeting behaviour'
<u>Group 7</u> · 'missing persons' · 'the law' (IDP)	'relations between police and public'
<u>Group 8</u>	'gender roles' 'relations between parents and children' 'relations between friends' 'relations between boyfriend and girlfriend' 'relations between husband and wife'

I would suggest that each group represents what is known in contemporary language teaching as a topic (see van Ek 1975, Matthews & Read 1982, Bell 1985):

Group 1: Work

Group 2: Home Life

Group 3: City Life

Group 4: Health

Group 5: Media

Group 6: Travel

Group 7: The Law

Group 8: The Family

(the names of these topics - also known as themes - are not

standardised; and the topics - as Group 8 shows - do not have rigid boundaries (though not to the point of amorphousness). The interesting thing, from a pedagogical point of view, is that our model permits us to break the topic down into content units (thematic systems) and behaviour units (systems of the social action semiotic). We shall return to the topic and its value as a teaching/learning tool after a brief consideration of the interaction sequence.

It was noted (in section 3.2.3) that an interaction sequence is an activity sequence (social situation/subject matter) shared between participants in a communicative event, and realised both, verbally and non-verbally; and it was further affirmed (in section 3.3.2) that interaction sequence, in common with other discourse strategies and certain situational variables, is not fixed, but may be interpreted in different ways by different participants, and is therefore open to negotiation. To the best of my knowledge, the interaction sequence does not correspond precisely to any current pedagogical unit: the closest approximation would probably be the guided roleplay, such as this example from Unit 2 of Building Strategies:

YOU	YOUR FRIEND
<p>Greet your friend and say your name</p> <p>Suggest something to do in the afternoon</p> <p>Agree. Suggest a time and place to meet</p> <p>Say goodbye</p>	<p>Answer the phone Say your name</p>
	<p>Return greeting</p>
	<p>Disagree. Make another suggestion</p>
	<p>Agree. Say Goodbye</p>

This roleplay can be seen as an activity sequence shared between two participants in a communicative event; but all of its elements are

fixed - there is no potential for alternative interpretations and negotiation of meaning.<sup>1</sup> A roleplay is not an interaction sequence in our terms.

In order to place the interaction sequence in a pedagogical context, we must consider the distinction between process and product, discussed by Christopher Brumfit in his study of communicative methodology in language teaching (Brumfit 1984:88-92), Product is the body of knowledge presented to the language learner, usually specified by a syllabus, whether it be structural, situational, functional-notional, or topical. This body of knowledge is usually the 'content' of a language course, but Brumfit (1984:90-92) pleads for 'process' as content'. Process, in Brumfit's view, has three aspects: (1) the process of using a language (1984:89); (2) the processes of classroom methodology (1984:90); and (3) the process of language acquisition (1984:92). Process in the first sense - the process of using language can be linked to our earlier use of process (see section 3.1 and Martin 1985:259) as the realisation of a dynamic system such as Ventola's decision-tree or flow-chart to generate well-formed schematic structures for service encounters; and to our interaction sequence, with elements open to alternative interpretation and subsequent negotiation. Thus an interaction sequence is not a unit - which is, of course, a product - based concept, - but a process, in Brumfit's first sense and in Martin's sense.

For Brumfit, process and product have important implications for classroom methodology. Process can be identified with fluency, which Brumfit characterises (1984:54) as 'speed and continuity, coherence, context-sensitivity, and creativity'; and product can be equated with accuracy, which Brumfit defines (1984:52) as 'a focus by the user, because of the pedagogical context created or allowed by the teacher,



on formal factors or issues of appropriacy'. Both process/fluency and product/accuracy are essential to language teaching learning - as Brumfit says (1984:117):

We have [...] a product-based syllabus in order to ensure that there are some controls on the activity that takes place in the classroom. But it is clear that the syllabus must contain a process element, for otherwise it will not be a syllabus at all, but simply a statement of terminal behaviour of a restrictive kind.

In other words, product is a checklist of language items, and process is the use of these language items in an authentic context.

This brings us back to the topic. The topic is obviously a product-based syllabus unit, but some doubt has been cast on its value as a checklist of language items. Brumfit quotes A.M. Shaw, in a 1977 article on "recent" approaches to foreign language syllabus development, as denying the topic approach as applicable to normal language teaching situations, 'because the language items will occur (except, no doubt, for some lexis) in a haphazard fashion' (Brumfit 1984:93). There are two possible responses to this view. The first response is to say, or rather, query rhetorically: does it matter? That it may not matter is clear from the aims of the much-discussed Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) set up by Dr. N.S. Prabhu in Bangalore (India), here set forth by Alan Davies (1983:5):

[...] it was decided that a project should be set up which would aim to teach grammar through communicative activities. In other words, the orientation of the Project was from the start unique: it was to teach grammar through communication, not to teach communication (through anything [...]) The assumption behind the CTP was that form is best learnt when the learner's attention is on meaning (grammar through communication). As a consequence, there should be no planned progression in terms of language structure in any syllabus, no pre-selection of language for any given lesson; no language-focused activity in the classroom. Instead, there should be the exploitation of: the learner's desire to solve problems; the preoccupation with

meaning or thinking; the incidental struggle with language-use.

Not all communicative syllabus theorists agree that the CTP lacks a planned progression in terms of language structure. Brumfit (1984: 108) quotes Keith Johnson as claiming, in his 1982 work, Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology, that the 'conceptual development of Prabhu's "procedural syllabus" suggests that it may be a covert semantico-grammatical syllabus'. Brumfit does not agree with this claim:

The concepts with which Prabhu is concerned are not stated specifically, and while they may be sometimes realised in linguistic items [...], they will also appear as formal logical operations which may be realised as any of a large range of grammatical structures. Since the problems are embedded in knowledge of the world, as well as knowledge of the operations of the English language, the nature of the progression will not be defined by semantico-grammatical categories.

Semantico-grammatical categories may account for some of the linguistic items, but it is in the nature of concepts and problems to not remain bound by such a narrow categorisation.

The second response to Shaw's criticism of the topic approach is to enquire whether the 'haphazard fashion' in which language items occur is indeed haphazard or whether it is possible to discern patterns which can be harnessed in the construction of a syllabus with 'planned progression in terms of language structure' and 'pre-selection of language' for each lesson. It was shown in the analysis of Building Strategies, that there are recognizable patterns in thematic systems; and although the matter was scarcely touched on, there are obviously patterns in systems of the social action semiotic. But these thematic system patterns are not individual language items so much as regularly selected configurations of grammatical choices, not necessarily amenable to the traditional structural grading which is still,

to some extent at least, practised covertly in communicative course books such as Starting Strategies or Building Strategies. This is, of course, not to deny the possibility of selecting patterns judged suitable for learners of a particular level. In this case, progression in terms of language patterns would be replaced by progression in terms of thematic system patterns. Such an approach needs to be illustrated, and this will be the aim of our next section.

## 5.2 Social System in a Topical-Interactional Approach

Imagine that we are designing a course for learners of English who are at an elementary level (that is, they are not complete beginners), and that we have chosen Home Life as one of our topics. It is necessary to break the topic up into sub-topics: suppose we have determined that one of these is Renting Accommodation. How do we go about establishing patterns in the thematic system and in the social action semiotic?

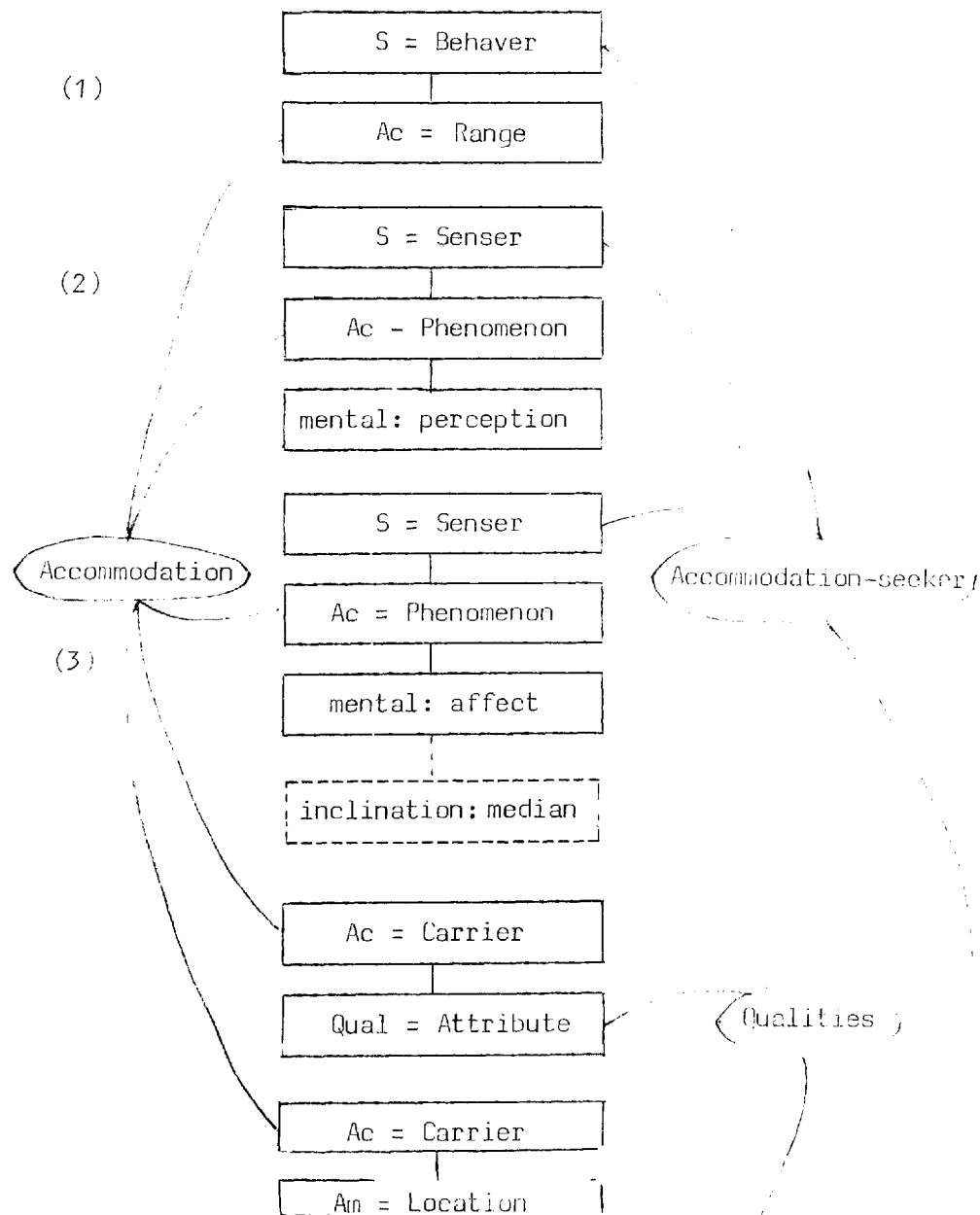
### 5.2.1 A Fragment of a Thematic System

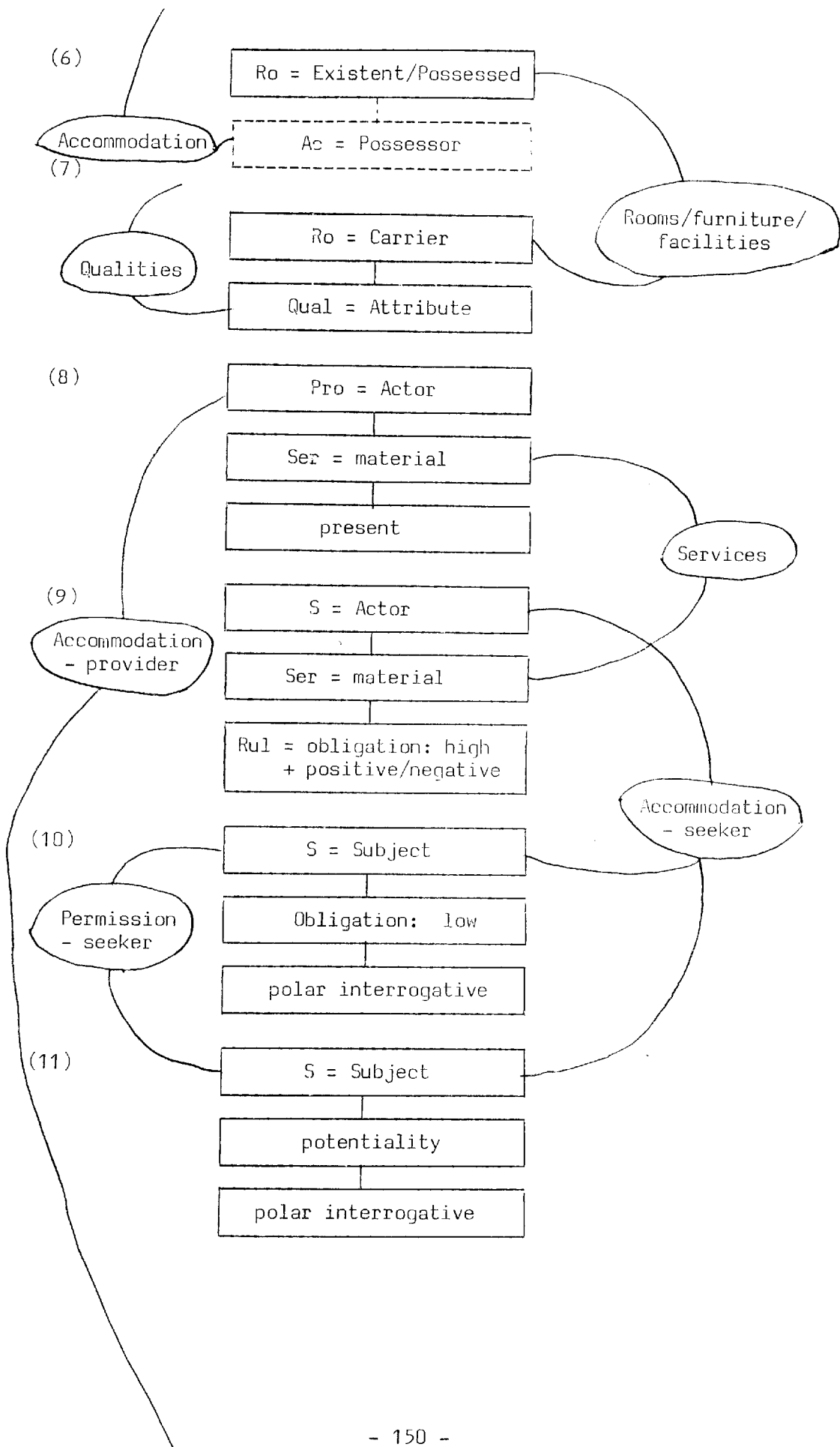
The main problem that confronts us in establishing patterns in the thematic system is that there is no accepted way of representing thematic systems. Lemke indicates a possible approach when he says (1985b:24) that thematic items can be viewed as constituted by the relational networks they enter into, and the thematic relations as constituted by the typical item-relata they appear with. The basic level of discourse for the discussion of meaning he adds, is not an item, or the abstract thematic relations, but whole thematic systems, representable as relational networks. In short, patterns in the thematic system must be established through some form of relational network. There is also the lesser problem of terminology: we are using terminology from grammatical systems such as Transitivity, but it may

well be that the terms we are using here stand for something more abstract, for which no satisfactory terminology exists (or exists only partially).

Figure 5.1 is a very partial fragment of a thematic system for Renting Accommodation.

Ac =	types of accommodation	Qual. =	qualities
Ro =	rooms/furniture/facilities		
Am =	amenities	Rul =	rules
Ser =	services		
S =	accommodation-seeker		
Pro =	accommodation-provider		





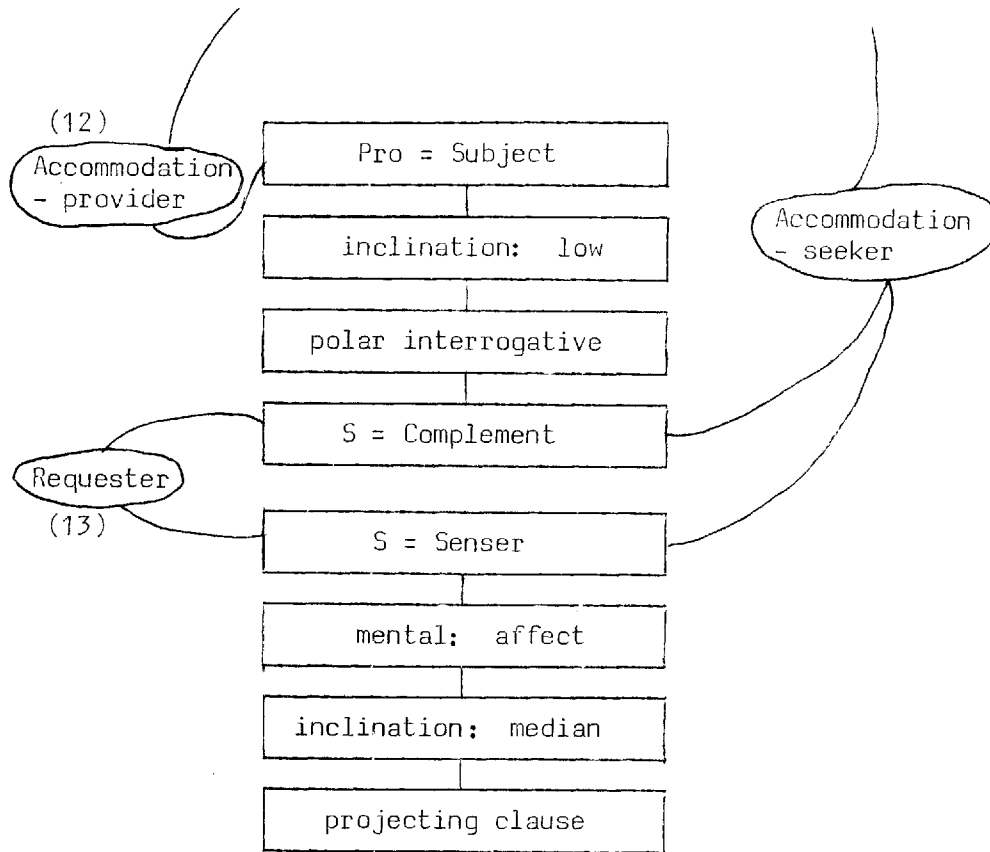


Figure 5.1 Very partial fragment of a thematic system for the sub-  
topic Renting Accommodation

Figure 5.1 is a form of relational network showing the different relations that one thematic item enters into (Accommodation, for example, is Range, Phenomenon and Carrier), and the other thematic items with which a given thematic item enters into a relation (for instance, Accommodation enters into different relations with Accommodation-seeker, Qualities (of the accommodation), and Amenities. Numbers (1) to (9) are patterns involving thematic items directly related to the semantic field of renting accommodation - for the sake of convenience, we shall henceforth refer to these as topical thematic systems; numbers (10) to (13) are patterns belonging to the thematic systems 'permission' (10 and 11) and 'requests' (12 and 13), which I propose - rather unsatisfactorily - to call interactional thematic systems (interactional because these thematic systems provide the socially - sanctioned patterns for 'doing things with words' to another

participant). It would obviously be useful to give examples of utterances motivated by these patterns, but first it is necessary to consider the social action semiotic.

5.2.2 A Fragment of the Social Action Semiotic Relevant to Renting Accommodation

Figure 5.2 represents a fragment of the social action semiotic relevant to renting accommodation.

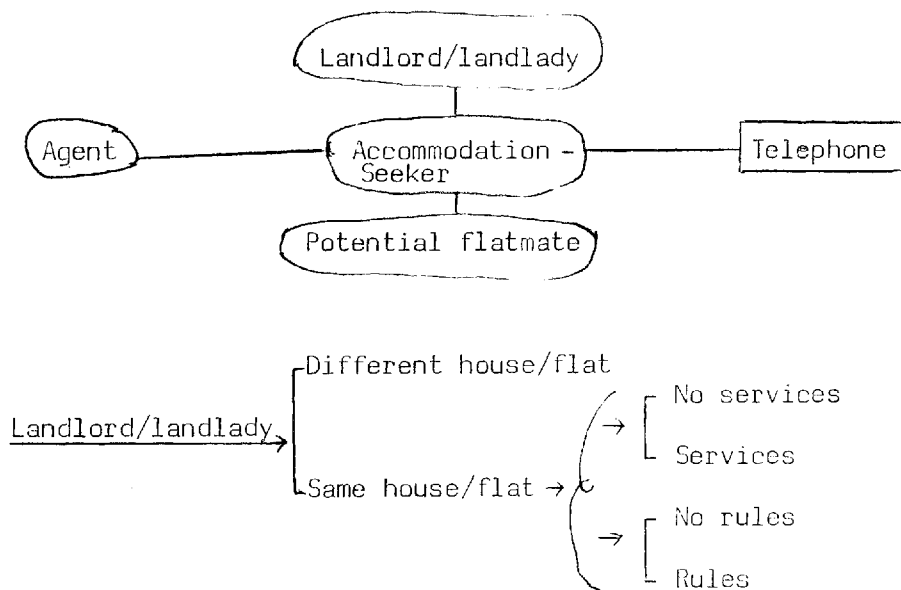


Figure 5.2 Fragment of the social action semiotic relevant to renting accommodation

The relational network shows four of the relations into which an accommodation-seeker may enter. Each of these relations is a system in the social action semiotic, one of which (the 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady' system) is illustrated, with some of the least delicate options being shown. Note that 'telephone' is enclosed by a rectangle rather than an oval: the rectangle indicates that the entity entering into a relationship with accommodations-seeker is inanimate, with obvious implications for the nature of the relation.

### 5.2.3 Linguistic Articulation of the Social System

In our model, social system is articulated by intertextual frame, which is itself articulated by components of the situation, which are in their turn articulated by discourse strategies, which are realised by language and non-verbal codes. However, in what follows, I am going to bypass the intermediate planes and go straight from social system to language, my excuse being that these are citation forms not real communication. What I am in fact going to do is illustrate the thematic system patterns with utterances motivated by patterns in topical, or topical plus interactional, thematic systems, conjoined with one of the systems of the social action semiotic presented in Figure 5.2.

1. (Patterns 1 and 13 + 'accommodation-seeker/agent')  
I'd like to look at the flat in Smith St
2. (Patterns 2 and 11 + 'accommodation-seeker/agent')  
Can I see the flat in Smith St?
3. (Patterns 2 and 12 + 'accommodation-seeker/agent')  
Could you show me the flat in Smith St?
4. (Patterns 2 and 10 + 'telephone' + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
May I see the flat this evening?
5. (Pattern 3 + 'accommodation-seeker/agent')  
I want a large room  
I'd like a large room
6. (Pattern 4 + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
The flat is too small
7. (Pattern 5 + 'accommodation-seeker/agent')  
The flat is on a bus-route



8. (Pattern 6 + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
Is there a washing machine?  
Does it have a separate entrance?
9. (Pattern 7 + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
The sitting-room is lovely
10. (Pattern 8 + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
Do you provide meals?
11. (Pattern 9 + 'accommodation-seeker/landlord or landlady')  
You must clean the toilet after use  
You mustn't keep pets.

Abstracting from these utterances a list of language items like those found in most EFL coursebooks, we arrive at the following:

- a. I'd like to ...
- b. Can I ...?
- c. May I ...?
- d. Could you ...?
- e. I want/I'd like ...
- f. X is Y (copula + adjective)
- g. X is on ... (copula + prepositional phrase)
- h. Is there ...?
- i. Does it have ...?
- j. Simple Present
- k. You must/mustn't ...

As regards the suitability of these items for an elementary course: items f, g, h, i, j are uncontroversial, while items a, b, c, d, e and k are at least defensible. Thus, we have here the basis for a progression in terms of thematic system patterns.

### 5.3 Conclusion

In the next chapter, I propose to demonstrate a progression in terms of thematic system patterns, and the mechanics of a topical - interactional course, through two units at differing levels but both revolving around, *Home Life*.

#### Note:

1. This is not the case with improvisations and other dramatic exercises (see Holden 1981). However, it could be argued that as long as such activities are not formalised in mainstream coursebooks, they remain peripheral to language teaching.

## Chapter 6

### Fragments of a Topical-Interactional Course

#### 6.0 Introduction

In this chapter, two units of a topical-interactional course will be presented - one for learners at elementary-intermediate level, and one for students at intermediate-advanced level. The topic motivating the first unit will be Home Life, while the second unit will articulate a combination of Home Life and Family Life. For each unit there will be three interwoven sections: (1) the social system variables, components of situation, and discourse strategies motivating a dialogue or exercise, together with the grammatical and/or kinesic/proxemic/tone of voice options articulating them; (2) the dialogues and exercises-topical and interactional - as they will be presented to the learner; (3) analytical commentary on sections (1) and (2).

#### 6.1 Unit at Elementary-Intermediate Level

##### 6.1.1 The Specifications for Dialogue 1

###### SS

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'renting accommodation'

SAS: 'relation between accommodation-seeker and landlady'

###### IF

'accommodation-seeker discussing accommodation with landlady'

###### Sit.

SS: 'inspecting accommodation'

SM: 'rooms'/'services'

SR: 'buyer-seller'; 'older-younger'

P: - 'regulatory'; 'respect'

DS

IS: Summon ^ Reply ^ Greet ^ Identify ^ Service ^ Display ^ [Orient to  
Request ^ Accept] • Resolution

At: - 'pleased'/'surprised'/'sad'/'sympathetic'/'uncertain'/'happy'

SK: - 'immediate'/'minimum'/'social'/'maximum'

LR

(a<sub>1</sub>) NVR articulating Summons

(a<sub>2</sub>) NVR articulating Reply

(b) (i) minor clause realising Greet

(ii) [relational: identifying] with Identified/Identifier  
articulating Identify element of IS; [declarative]

(iii) clause complex  $\alpha$ '  $\beta$ :

projecting clause - [mental: affect] with speaker as  
Senser; [declarative] + [inclination: median]; projected  
clause: [behavioural] with Range from 'accommodation'  
frame •; non-finite

(c) (i) [material] with speaker as Range, Actor from 'accommo-  
dation' frame; [declarative]; continuatives

(ii) [material] with addressee as Actor; [imperative]

(iii) [relational: identifying] with Identified recoverable  
from environment; Identifier from 'accommodation' frame;  
[declarative]; exophoric demonstrative

(d) (i) [relational: attributive] with Carrier recoverable from  
environment, Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative]  
+ tone 5

(ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from environment,  
Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + tone 5  
attitudinal sub-modifier; reference

- (iii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'room' frame, Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + tone 5; [extension: addition]
- (iv) minor clause realised by nominal group consisting of interrogative deictic, epithet & Head + tone 5 + conjunctive adjunct (additive)
- (e) (i) clausal ellipsis + [positive]
- (ii) [relational: identifying] with Carrier recoverable from environment or discourse, Attribute from 'accommodation' frame + [past]; [declarative]; anaphoric/exophoric pronoun + repetition
- (f) [mental: perception] with speaker as Senser, Phenomenon from 'room' frame; [interrogative: polar] + [obligation: low]
- (g) clausal ellipsis + [positive]
- (h) (i) [relational: attributive] with Carrier recoverable from environment, Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + tone 5; exophoric demonstrative + conjunctive adjunct (additive)
- (ii) [material] with addressee as Actor, Goal and process from 'services' frame; [interrogative: polar]; Continuative
- (j) [material] with speaker as Actor, Goal and process from 'services' frame, [declarative]; continuative
- (k) (i) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'services' frame; [declarative] + tone 5; anaphoric demonstrative
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier & Attribute from 'accommodation' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal sub-modifier; [enhancement: casual-conditional]
- (l) (i) clausal ellipsis + [positive] + continuative
- (ii) [material] with addressee as Actor, Range from 'accommodation' frame; [imperative]

- (m) minor clause realised by greeting + [vocative]
- (n) (i) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'sad' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal sub-modifier; anaphoric pronoun
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with speaker as Carrier, Attribute from 'sad' frame; [declarative]
- (iii) [material] with speaker + other as Actor + Circumstance: Purpose; [declarative] + [negative] + [usuality: high]; [extension: addition]
- (o) minor clause realised by continuative + nominal group (Epithet from 'worried' frame + Thing) + tone 5
- (p) (i) [material] with addressee as Actor; [imperative]
- (ii) [mental: perception] with addressee as Senser, Phenomenon from 'accommodation' frame; [imperative]; [extension: addition]
- (q) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal submodifier + tone 4; anaphoric pronoun
- (r) (i) clausal ellipsis + [positive]
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'accommodation' frame and Attribute from 'sad' frame; [declarative]; [extension: adversative] + meronym of "garden"
- (iii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'accommodation' frame, Attribute from 'sad' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal submodifier; anaphoric pronoun
- (s) clause complex
  - projecting -- [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] + [inclination: median]
  - projected - [material] with Goal from 'accommodation' frame;
  - non-Finite

- (t) clausal ellipsis + [positive] + [probability: high] +  
[vocative]
- (u) (i) [material] with speaker as Actor, Range from 'accommodation' frame + Circumstance: Purpose; [interrogative: polar] + [potentiality]; [extension: addition] + repetition ("Mitzi") ("take ... for walks")
- (ii) [material] with Goal from 'accommodation' frame: ellipsis of Mood + [extension: addition] + repetition ("garden")
- (v) minor clause realised by continuative + gratitude + [vocative] + tone 5

NVR

- (a<sub>1</sub>) KNOCK ON DOOR
- (a<sub>2</sub>) OPEN DOOR
- (b) SMILE
- (c) PLEASED
- (k) SURPRISED
- (m) PATTING
- (n) SAD
- (o) SYMPATHETIC
- (q) UNCERTAIN
- (r) SAD
- (v) HAPPY

6.1.2 For the Student: Dialogue 1

Susan Brown is a university student. She is going to look at a room that Mrs. Lake is renting in her house.

- (a<sub>1</sub>) Susan: (KNOCKS AT DOOR)
- (a<sub>2</sub>) Mrs. Lake: (OPENS DOOR)
- (b) Susan: (SMILES) Hello. My name's Susan Brown. I'd like to look at your room.

- (c) Mrs. Lake: (SMILES) Oh yes, the agent rang me. Come in.  
(THEY GO UPSTAIRS) This is the room.
- (d) Susan: (SHE LOOKS AROUND. SHE IS VERY PLEASED). That's lovely! It's so clean. And the table's nice and big. What pretty curtains, too!
- (e) Mrs. Lake: Yes, it was my daughter's room.
- (f) Susan: May I see the bathroom?
- (g) Mrs. Lake: Yes. (THEY GO TO THE BATHROOM).
- (h) Susan: Mmm, that's pretty too! Er ... do you provide meals?
- (j) Mrs. Lake: Yes, I do breakfast and dinner.
- (k) Susan: (SURPRISED) Oh, that's amazing! The room is very cheap then.
- (l) Mrs. Lake. Oh yes. (THEY GO DOWNSTAIRS TO THE KITCHEN)  
Meet my little dog, Mitzi.
- (m) Susan: Hello Mitzi (PATS DOG)
- (n) Mrs. Lake: (SAD) She's very fat. I'm old and we don't often go for walks.
- (o) Susan: (SYMPATHETIC) Oh, poor Mitzi.
- (p) Mrs. Lake: Come and see the garden (THEY GO OUTSIDE)
- (q) Susan: (UNCERTAIN) It's very nice.
- (r) Mrs. Lake: (SAD) Yes, but the grass is long and it's so untidy.
- (s) Susan: I'd like to rent the room.
- (t) Mrs. Lake: Yes, of course, dear.
- (u) Susan: And can I take Mitzi for walks and look after the garden?
- (v) Mrs. Lake: (HAPPY) Oh, thank you, my dear.

#### A. Comprehension Exercise

Complete these sentences.

1. Susan is a \_\_\_\_\_



2. Susan is going to \_\_\_\_\_ in Mrs. Lake's house.
3. The room is \_\_\_\_\_
4. The table is \_\_\_\_\_
5. The bathroom is \_\_\_\_\_
6. Mrs. Lake provides \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mitzi is fat because \_\_\_\_\_
8. The garden is \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Groupwork

1. Does Mrs. Lake know that Susan is coming?
2. Why does Susan want to rent the room?
3. Why is Mrs. Lake happy at the end of the dialogue?
4. Why is the room cheap?

#### 6.1.3 Commentary on Dialogue 1

I would first like to examine the specifications for Dialogue 1. Social system is straightforward: thematic system and social action semiotic have already been discussed; and obviously a topic such as Renting Accommodation will articulate the institutional discourse and practices of 'business'. Social situation and subject matter articulate the thematic system 'renting accommodation'; and social relationship and purpose articulate 'relation between accommodation-seeker and landlady' (though 'older-younger' is an optional manifestation, albeit fairly common). The interaction sequence is largely a service encounter, articulating social situation and social relationship ('buyer-seller' only). Embedded in the service encounter is an Orient to Request ^ Accept, which articulates in a very interesting way the subject matter 'services', the purpose 'regulatory' and the social relationship 'older-younger' - and indirectly the objects and subject positions of the discourse of 'business'. Attitude manifests partly

'inspecting accommodation' and 'buyer - seller', partly 'services', 'regulatory' and 'older - younger'. Shared knowledge articulates thematic system ('social'), 'inspecting accommodation' ('immediate'), spoken mode ('maximum') and the explicitness generally associated with the intertextual frame 'accommodation-seeker discussing accommodation with landlady' (minimum evocation of co-text is 'safer' than evoking context of culture (social or personal) in such asymmetrical encounters, unless, of course, one participant in the encounter is being deliberately implicit, as the discussion below will reveal).

Let us turn now to the linguistic realisations. The first two moves are non-verbal, but are included here as being the sole articulators of the interaction sequence elements Summons and Reply. Moves (b i) and (ii) articulate the interaction sequence elements Greet and Identify, while (b iii) articulates both the interaction sequence element Service and the thematic system 'request' (that is social shared knowledge). Move (c i) also articulates social shared knowledge, this time of the thematic system 'renting accommodation' and its social situation frame. Move (c ii) articulates the seller's contribution to Service, while (c iii) articulates the seller's initiating of the element Display. Move (d) articulates the buyer's contribution to Display, together with the attitude 'pleased' and shared knowledge of the immediate environment. Move (e) articulates the larger thematic system 'home life' (or possibly 'family life') which regularly collocates the adjective "pretty" (as Epithet in a nominal group or Attribute in a relational process) with "daughter ... room" or "daughter's room" ("daughter" as Possessor in a relational process or Classifier in a nominal group). Moves (f) and (g) re-articulate the element Service, while (h i) is a return to the Display element (buyer's contribution). Moves (h ii), (j), (k) and (l i) re-articulate the Service element;

move (k) also articulates the attitude 'surprised'. Moves (l ii) to (r) may be analysed as articulating the interaction sequence element Orient to Request (or pre-request) - they obviously entail negotiation of meaning on the part of the buyer, and will be discussed at greater length below. Move (s) articulates the interaction sequence element Resolution and social shared knowledge of the thematic system 'requests'; while move (t) articulates the seller's contribution to Resolution. Moves (u) and (v) articulate the element Accept (Request), and will also be discussed below.

The non-verbal realisations (tone of voice and kinesic options) are clear, and need no comment. Note that these non-verbal realisations are included in the dialogue (upper-case letters, in parentheses) At the end of the dialogue there are two types of exercises: the first exercise, written and for individual work, concentrates on the topic, 'renting accommodation'; while the second exercise, mainly oral and for groupwork - and involving problem-solving, stresses the interactional side and prepares the learners for the subsequent negotiation of meaning exercise(s).

#### 6.1.4. Exercises 1 (Topical)

Exercise 1 is what I shall call a topical exercise, relating to the lexicogrammar that articulates the relevant thematic system, or rather, to an aspect of the lexicogrammar - in this case, the tense [present], and material process with accommodation-provider as Actor and process/Goal from 'services' frame.

##### 6.1.4.1 Specifications

SS

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'renting accommodation'

SAS: 'relation between accommodation-seeker and landlady'

IF

'accommodation-seeker discussing accommodation with landlady'

Sit

SS: 'inspecting accommodation'

SM: 'services'

SR: 'buyer-seller'

P: 'regulatory', 'respect'

DS

IS: Service

At: 'pleased'; 'surprised'

SK: 'maximum'

LR

- (a) [material] with addressee as Actor, process & Goal from 'services' frame; [interrogative: polar]; continuative
- (b) [positive] + ellipsis of Residue
- (c) [relational: attributive] with 'service' as Carrier, Attribute from 'pleased' or 'surprised' frame; [declarative] + [tone 5]; continuative + anaphoric demonstrative

NVR

- (c) PLEASED; SURPRISED

6.1.4.2 For the Student: Exercise 1

You are looking at a room in Mrs. Lake's house, and you ask her questions about services. When she answers, you are pleased or surprised.

Example

meals?

- (a) You: Er ... do you provide meals?

(b) Mrs. Lake: Yes, I do.

(c) Oh, that's amazing.

Use these words to show you are pleased or surprised.

good; wonderful; fantastic; terrific; extraordinary

(1) washing?

(2) ironing?

(3) 'packed lunches?

(4) change the sheets?

(5) clean the room?

(6) do meals at weekends?

(7) cook for guests?

(8) cater for parties?

#### 6.1.5. Exercises 2-4 (Interactional)

It was noted above that moves (l ii) to (r) articulate the interaction sequence element Orient to Request, but obviously entail negotiation of meaning on the part of the buyer. It is quite possible for the buyer to interpret Mrs. Lake's utterances in a different way, as will now be shown.

##### 6.1.5.1. Dialogue 1: a Decoder Perspective

Moves (l ii) to (r) may be specified as follows (only specifications differing from those of the encoder perspective will be listed):

Sit

SM: 'facilities'

SR: 'older-younger'

P: 'informational'

DS

IS: Display

To read moves (1 ii) to (r) as Orient to Request, the buyer must be aware of certain conditions:

- (1) the institutional discourse and practices of 'business' are still being articulated
- (2) the subject matter 'services' is still being articulated
- (3) the 'buyer-seller' relation is still very much in play
- (4) the pragmatic purpose is still 'regulatory'
- (5) The Interaction sequence element Display is no longer in force

Any exercise must somehow make the learner aware of the problems the buyer may have in decoding Mrs. Lake's moves, and why such problems might arise.

#### 6.1.5.2. For the Student: Exercise 2

Here is the last part of the dialogue between Susan and Mrs. Lake. The ending is different. Explain the difference between the two endings.

Susan: Er ... do you provide meals?

Mrs. Lake: Yes, I do breakfast and dinner.

Susan: (SURPRISED) Oh, that's amazing! The room is very cheap, then.

Mrs. Lake: Oh yes, (THEY GO DOWN STAIRS TO THE KITCHEN) Meet my little dog Mitzi.

Susan: Hello Mitzi (PATS DOG)

Mrs. Lake: (SAD) She's very fat. I'm old and we don't often go for walks.

Susan: (SYMPATHETIC) Oh, poor Mitzi.

Mrs. Lake: Come and see the garden (THEY GO OUTSIDE)

Susan: (UNCERTAIN) It's very nice

Mrs. Lake (SAD) Yes, but the grass is long and it's so untidy.

Susan: I'd like to rent the room.

Mrs. Lake: Yes, of course, dear.

Susan: Can I move in tomorrow?

Mrs. Lake: Er ... yes. Um ... Could you sometimes take Mitzi for walks and mow the lawn, though?

### Multiple Choice Questions

1. Mrs. Lake wants Susan to meet Mitzi because
  - (a) she is sad
  - (b) Susan likes dogs
  - (c) Mitzi is fat
2. Mrs. Lake and Susan go into the garden because
  - (a) the garden is nice
  - (b) the grass is long
  - (c) Susan likes gardens
3. In your opinion, Mrs. Lake is
  - (a) old and clever
  - (b) old and sad
  - (c) old and talks too much
4. In your opinion, Susan
  - (a) is lazy
  - (b) has a busy life
  - (c) didn't understand Mrs. Lake

### 6.1.5.3 For the Student: Exercise 3

The dialogue between Mrs. Lake and Susan ends like this:

Susan: Can I move in tomorrow?

Mrs. Lake: Er ... yes. Um ... Could you sometimes take Mitzi for walks and mow the lawn, though?

The dialogue is not finished. Working in groups, finish it in three different ways.

Ending 1 Susan didn't understand Mrs. Lake

Ending 2 Susan is lazy

Ending 3 Susan has a busy life

#### 6.1.5.4 For the Student: Exercise 4

Susan doesn't like dogs and hates gardens. What will Susan say to Mrs. Lake? Rewrite the dialogue starting like this:

Susan: Er ... do you provide meals?

Mrs. Lake: Yes, I do breakfast and dinner.

Susan: (SURPRISED) Oh, that's amazing! The room is very cheap, then.

Mrs. Lake: Oh yes. (THEY GO DOWNSTAIRS TO THE KITCHEN) Meet my little dog Mitzi.

#### 6.1.5.5 Commentary on Interactional Exercises 2-4

The dialogue of Exercise 2 makes Mrs. Lake's requests explicit, questions 1 and 2 attempt to show that Mrs. Lake's moves (n) and (r) are not Display but Orient to Request, while question 3 indicates that Mrs. Lake is speaking in full knowledge of her purpose, and question 4 asks learners to speculate why Susan may not have interpreted Mrs. Lake's moves as Orient to Request. Exercise 3 takes up the last question of Exercise 2 and asks learners to complete the dialogue in three possible ways. Exercise 4 varies Susan's attitude in a crucial way and invites learners to rewrite the dialogue - a fairly sophisticated task. Thus all three exercises attempt to lay bare the mechanics of meaning negotiation and make learners participants in the negotiating process.

#### 6.1.6 The Specifications for Dialogue 2

SS

IDP: 'business'



TS: 'renting accommodation'

SAS: 'relation between accommodation-seeker and landlord'; 'relation  
between potential flatmates'

IF

'accommodation-seeker discussing accommodation with potential flatmate/  
landlord'

Sit

SS: 'inspecting accommodation'

SM: 'rooms'; 'inconveniences'

SR: 'buyer-seller'

P: 'regulatory'; 'respect'

DS

IS: Summon ^ Reply ^ Greet ^ Identify ^ Service ^ Orient to Resolution •  
Display ^ Resolution

At: 'unhappy'/'pleased'/'satisfied'/'unfriendly'

SK: 'social'/'immediate'/'maximum'/'minimum'

LR

(a<sub>1</sub>) NVR articulating Summons

(a<sub>2</sub>) NVR articulating Reply

(b) (i) minor clause realising Greet

(ii) [relational: identifying] with Identified/Identifier arti-  
culating Identify element of IS

(iii) [mental: perception] with speaker as Senser, Phenomenon &  
Location from 'accommodation' frame; [declarative]

(c) (i) minor clause consisting of continuative and [positive],  
articulating attitude 'unfriendly'

(ii) [material] with addressee as Actor; [imperative]

- (iii) [material] with addressee as Actor + Range from immediate environment; [interrogative: polar]; stress on process
- (d) (i) [positive] + clausal ellipsis
- (ii) [relational: circumstantial] with speaker as Carrier; [declarative]; collocation ("band" → "guitar")
- (e) (i) minor clause realised by a continuative, articulating attitude 'unhappy'
- (ii) [relational: identifying] with Identified recoverable from environment, Identifier from 'rooms' frame; [declarative]; exophoric demonstrative
- (f) (i) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame, Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + tone 5; anaphoric pronoun
- (ii) minor clause realised by nominal group with adjective as Head + rankshifted prepositional phrase as Post-modifier (articulates attitude 'pleased')
- (g) (i) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame, Attribute from 'inconveniences' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal sub-modifier; [extension: adversative] + anaphoric pronoun
- (ii) [relational: circumstantial] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame, Attribute (Location) from 'inconveniences' frame
- (iii) [relational: identifying] with Identified recoverable from environment, Identifier from 'rooms' frame; [declarative]; [extension: addition] + exophoric demonstrative
- (h) (i) minor clause realised by exclamative articulating attitude 'pleased'

- (ii) minor clause consisting of attitudinal sub-modifier + adjective + tone 5, articulating attitude 'pleased'
- (iii) minor clause realised by nominal group with adjective as Head + rankshifted prepositional phrase as Post-modifier (articulates attitude 'pleased')
- (j) (i) [negative[ + clausal ellipsis + continuative
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame, Attribute from 'inconveniences' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal sub-modifier; anaphoric reference
- (iii) [relational: identifying] with Identified recoverable from environment Identifier from 'rooms' frame; [declarative]; [extension: addition] + exophoric demonstrative
- (k) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame, Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative]; anaphoric pronoun
- (l) [material] with Actor, process and Manner from 'rooms' frame; [declarative] + attitudinal submodifier & [negative] articulating 'inconveniences' frame; continuative + meronymy ("cooker" → "kitchen") + anaphoric determiner
- (m) (i) minor clause articulating transition to Resolution element
- (ii) [material] with speaker as Actor (process from 'accommodation' frame); [interrogative: polar] + [potentiality]; Time circumstantial as unmarked focus of information
- (n) (i) [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] + [negative]; continuative
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier and Attribute from 'accommodation' frame; [declarative] + [probability: median] + [negative] + Modal Adjunct

NVR

- (a<sub>1</sub>) KNOCKS ON DOOR
- (a<sub>2</sub>) OPENS DOOR

- (b) BIG SMILE
- (c) SMALL SMILE: UNFRIENDLY
- (e) UNHAPPY; POINTING
- (f) PLEASED
- (g) POINTING
- (h) PLEASED
- (j) POINTING
- (k) PLEASED
- (m) SATISFIED
- (n) UNHAPPY

#### 6.1.7 For the Student: Dialogue 2

Jack Smith wants to share his flat with someone. He puts an advertisement in the newsagent's window. Bill Green comes to see the flat. He is carrying a guitar, and has long hair.

- (a<sub>1</sub>) Bill: (KNOCKS ON DOOR)
- (a<sub>2</sub>) Jack: (OPENS DOOR)
- (b) Bill: (A BIG SMILE) Hello. My name is Bill Green. I saw your ad in the newsagent's window.
- (c) Jack: (A SMALL SMILE, UNFRIENDLY) Oh yes. Come in. (THEY GO INTO THE FLAT). Do you play the guitar?
- (d) Bill: Yes, I'm in a band.
- (e) Jack: (UNHAPPY) Oh. (POINTING) This is the bedroom.
- (f) Bill: (PLEASED) It's nice and big! Good for guitar practice.
- (g) Jack: But it's very noisy - it's on a main road. (POINTING) And this is the sitting-room.
- (h) Bill: (PLEASED) Mmm. Very nice! Great for parties.
- (j) Jack: Oh no, it's too small. (POINTING) And this is the kitchen.
- (k) Bill: (PLEASED) It's very modern.

- (l) Jack: Well, the cooker doesn't work very well.
- (m) Bill: (SATISFIED). Right! Can I move in immediately?
- (n) Jack: (UNHAPPY) Er ... I don't know. I don't think this flat  
is suitable for you, really.

#### A. Comprehension Exercise

Complete these sentences.

1. Jack wants to \_\_\_\_\_
2. Bill \_\_\_\_\_ hair.
3. Bill plays \_\_\_\_\_
4. The bedroom is good \_\_\_\_\_
5. The sitting-room is great \_\_\_\_\_
6. The kitchen \_\_\_\_\_

#### Groupwork

1. Does Jack want to share his flat with Bill Green? Why?
2. What does Jack say about:
  - a) the bedroom
  - b) the sitting-room
  - c) the kitchen

Why does he say these things?

#### 6.1.8 Commentary on Dialogue 2

The semiotic specifications for Dialogue 2 do not differ greatly from those listed for Dialogue 1. The main difference is the bringing into play of the system in the social action semiotic, 'relations between potential flatmates', here articulated by the decision to activate the subject matter frame 'inconveniences', the interaction sequence element Orient to Resolution (which we might also term pre-refusal, the attitudes 'unhappy' and 'unfriendly', and their corresponding non-verbal realisations.

Now to consider the linguistic realisations. Moves (a<sub>1</sub>) and (a<sub>2</sub>), which are non-verbal, realise the interaction sequence elements Summon and Reply; (b i) realises Greet, (b ii) realises Identify and (b iii) partly articulates Identify and partly articulates Service, which is also realised by moves (c i) and (c ii). From the seller's point of view, (c iii) is the first move in the interaction sequence element Orient to Resolution (in this dialogue, a pre-refusal), articulating two subject positions in the social action semiotic, landlord and potential flatmate; (d) and (e i) are the response and follow-up to the initiation. Moves (e ii) and (f) are the seller and buyer's contributions to the articulation of the interaction sequence element Display; in moves (g i) and (g ii) the seller rearticulates the element Orient to Resolution (pre-refusal) by introducing a subject matter normally avoided by a seller, the frame of 'inconveniences'. This alternation between Display and Orient to Resolution continues until move (m), when the buyer articulates his version of the Resolution element (a decision-to-purchase), thereby inviting the seller to proceed with the sale or articulate a clear refusal-to-sell. Move (n) is obviously the first step in a refusal-to-sell, although the outcome is still open to negotiation.

#### 6.1.9 Exercise 5 (Topical)

This exercise is based on the Display/Orient to Resolution alternation of Dialogue 2, and requires no further specification.

##### 6.1.9.1 For the Student: Exercise 5

Jack Smith is showing you his flat. He shows you something, and you are pleased, but then he says something bad about it.

##### Example

kitchen/very modern/cooker doesn't work

Jack: And this is the kitchen.

You: It's very modern.

Jack: Yes, but the cooker doesn't work very well.

1. fridge/nice and big/often breaks down
2. bathroom/very nice/water often runs cold
3. garden/good for outdoor parties/neighbours don't like noise
4. TV/good make/old and the picture is bad
5. sofa/looks comfortable/springs are broken
6. my dog/friendly/sometimes bites people
7. washing machine/convenient/sometimes overflows
8. attic/charming/roof is too low

#### 6.1.10 Exercises 6-8 (Interactional)

The buyer appears quite unwilling or unable to interpret moves (c iii), (g i), (g ii), (j i), (j ii); and (l) as articulating the interaction sequence element Orient to Resolution (pre-refusal), so the buyer is clearly 'reading' certain semiotic variables in a different way than that 'intended' by the seller.

##### 6.1.10.1 Dialogue 2: A Decoder Perspective

The Orient to Resolution moves of Dialogue 2 may be specified as follows (only those differing from the encoder perspective will be listed):

SS

SAS: 'relations between accommodation seeker and landlord'

Sit

SM: 'rooms'

P: 'heuristic'/'informational'

DS

IS: Sociability ^ Display

At: 'pleased'

In order for the buyer not to 'read' the six moves mentioned above as articulating Orient to Resolution, he must:

- (1) ignore or not fully understand the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between potential flatmates' (assuming buyer and seller share the same culture and coding orientation)
- (2) be unaware of, or consider unimportant, the subject matter 'inconveniences'
- (3) see the moves as 'heuristic' (c iii) or 'informational', articulating the system in the social action semiotic 'relations between accommodation-seeker and landlord' (the 'honest landlord' subsystem)
- (4) see the moves as articulating Sociability (c iii) or Display
- (5) fail to notice the attitude 'unhappy' articulated by move (e i)

The learner needs to be made aware of this, and of possible strategies the seller can deploy to make the buyer conscious of the pre-refusal moves.

6.1.10.2 For the Student: Exercise 6

Look at these four short dialogues. Two of them are from Dialogue 2, the other two are about the same subject, but are different. How are they different?

- A. (i) Jack: (POINTING) This is the bedroom  
Bill: (PLEASED) It's nice and big! Good for guitar practice  
Jack: But it's very noisy - it's on a main road



(ii) Jack: (POINTING) This is the bedroom.

Bill: (PLEASED) It's nice and big! Can I practice my guitar here during the day?

Jack: Yes, sure.

B. (i) Jack: (POINTING) And this is the sitting-room.

Bill: (PLEASED) Mmm! Very nice! Great for parties.

Jack: Oh no, it's too small.

(ii) Jack: (POINTING) And this is the sitting-room.

Bill: Mmm! Very nice! Can I have small parties here sometimes?

Jack: Yes, sure.

### Groupwork

(1) In two of the dialogues Bill doesn't think of Jack's feelings.

Find the dialogues and say what Bill does.

(2) In the other two dialogues Bill is polite. What does he do?

(3) Do you think Jack likes Bill in all four dialogues? Why?

### 6.1.10.3 For the Student: Exercise 7

Jack doesn't like the guitar and big parties. What will he say to Bill, and what will Bill answer?

Jack: (POINTING) This is the bedroom.

Bill: (PLEASED) It's nice and big! Good for guitar practice.

Jack: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill: \_\_\_\_\_

Jack: (POINTING) And this is the sitting-room.

Bill: (PLEASED) Mmm! Very nice! Good for parties.

Jack: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6.1.10.4 For the Student: Exercise 8

The dialogue between Jack and Bill is not finished. Write an ending for it. Start like this:

Bill: (SATISFIED) Right! Can I move in immediately?

Jack: (UNHAPPY) Er ... I don't know. I don't think this flat is suitable for you, really.

#### 6.1.10.5 Commentary on Interactional Exercises 6-8

The mini-dialogues of Exercise 6 contrast a Bill unaware and a Bill aware of the responsibilities of a potential flatmate as prescribed by the social action semiotic of the particular sub-culture of which he is a member. The questions for groupwork encourage learners to examine the approaches of Bill - unaware and Bill - aware and their possible effect on Jack. Exercise 7 asks the learners to rewrite parts of Dialogue 2, permitting Jack to voice his disapproval of Bill more directly; and exercise 8 requires learners to supply an ending for Dialogue 2, in the light of their knowledge of the types of strategies that Bill and Jack have at their disposal.

#### 6.1.11 Conclusion: General Comments on the Unit

Two dialogues and eight exercises of an elementary-intermediate unit have been presented and analysed here. The emphasis has been on the interactional - there are only two topical exercises, revolving around patterns 7 and 8 of the thematic system (see section 5.2.3) and the structures copula + adjective and Simple Present - because topical exercises represent merely a culturally and situationally explicit extension of a type of exercise that already exists, whereas interactional exercises constitute a relatively new departure for language teaching and need to be explored as thoroughly as possible.

One area that was not touched on in discussion of the interactional

exercises, but certainly needs to be taken into account, is that of coding orientation. The dialogues and exercises all suppose that the fictional participants in the communicative events have the same (middle-class, British) coding orientation, which will obviously not be shared by the real-life participants (the learners) in the parallel communicative event (the learning of English). In the case of Dialogue 1, for learners from societies which accord great respect and obedience to older people, the question of withholding an offer of assistance to Mrs. Lake would not arise - and with respect to Dialogue 2, learners who like guitar music and parties and are not averse to noise may not consider Bill thoughtless, but rather find Jack rude and churlish. Given the range of possibilities - in theory as diverse as the cultures using the course - the question of coding orientation cannot be dealt with in the student's book; the only feasible approach is to sensitise the teacher to the problem, so that he/she is aware of how the cultural baggage of his/her students affects the way in which they 'read' the dialogues and, in effect, negotiate with the (fictional and real-life) emitters of the dialogues.

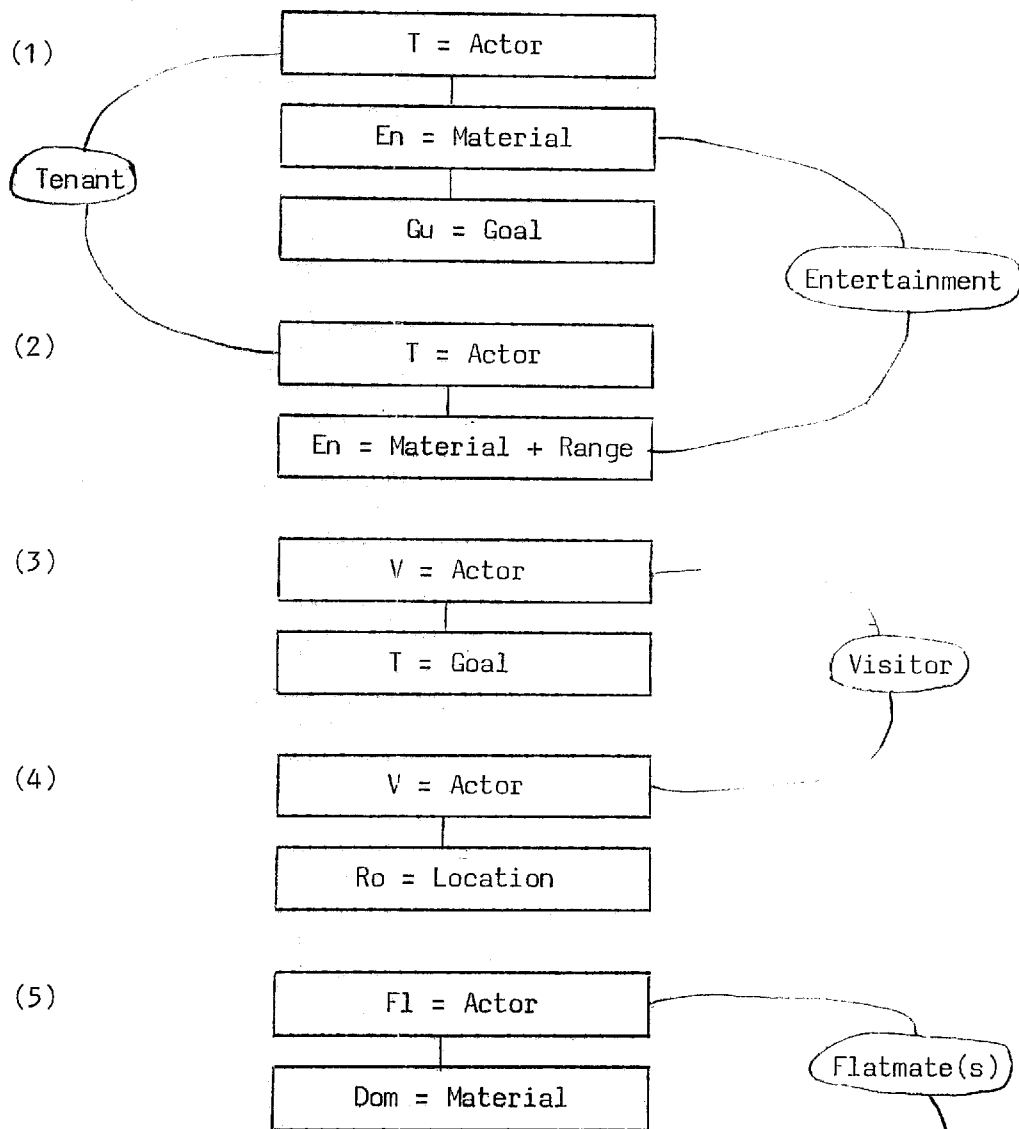
## 6.2 Unit at Intermediate - Advanced Level

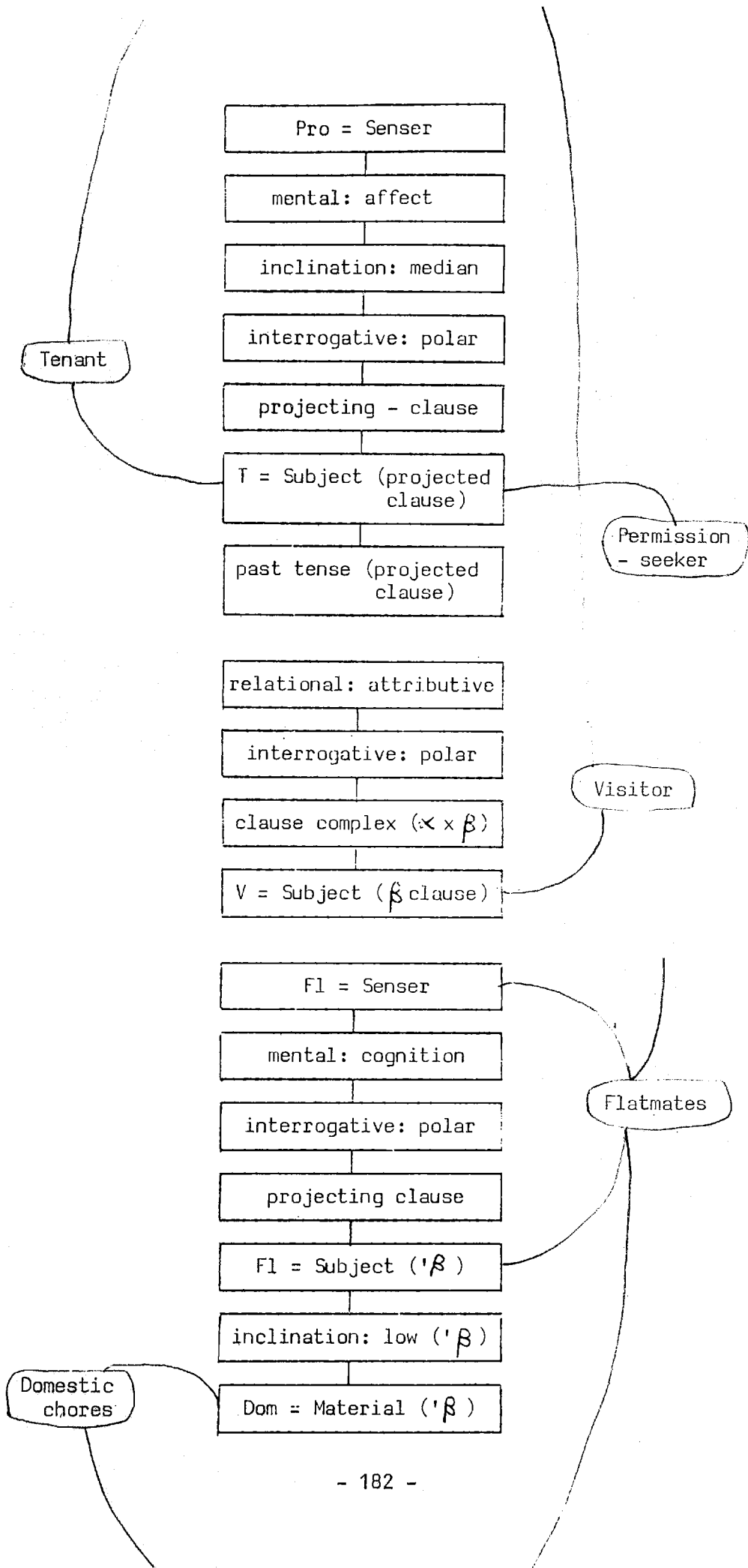
Before proceeding with the unit at intermediate-advanced level, it will be necessary to make some additions to the thematic system (Figure 5.1) and the fragment of the social action semiotic (Figure 5.2) presented in Chapter 5.

### 6.2.1 A Further Fragment of a Thematic System

Figure 6.2 is a continuation of the relational network for the thematic system Renting Accommodation.

T = tenant  
 En = entertainment  
 Gu = guest(s)  
 V = visitor  
 Dom = domestic chores  
 Fl = flatmate(s)





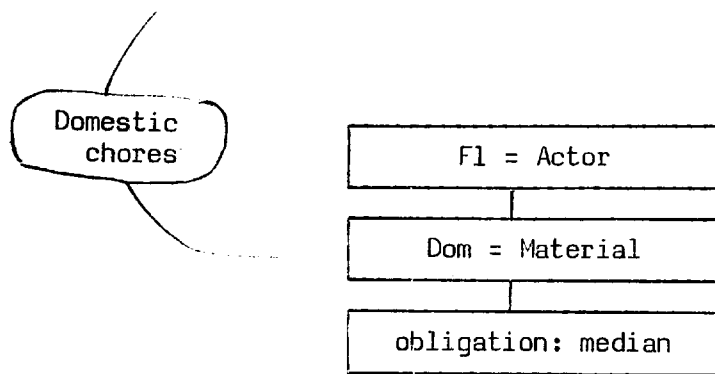


Figure 6.1 Continuation of a very partial fragment of a thematic system for the sub-topic Renting Accommodation

6.2.2 A Further Fragment of the Social Action Semiotic Relevant to Renting Accommodation

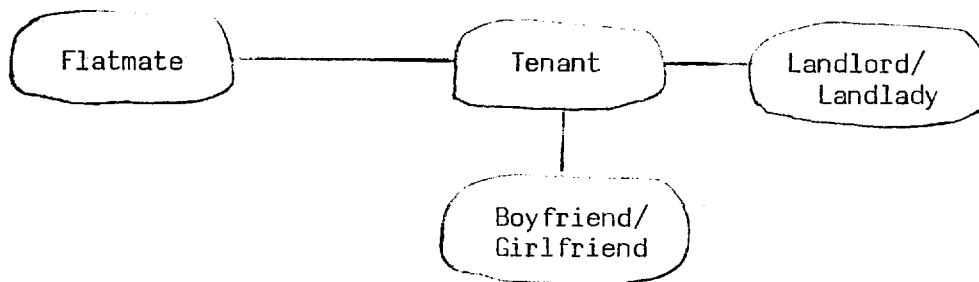


Figure 6.2 A further fragment of the social action semiotic relevant to renting accommodation

6.2.3 Articulation of Thematic System Patterns

The following utterances articulate the topical (1-5) and/or interactional (6-9) thematic system patterns of Figure 6.1, together with a system of the social action semiotic (Figure 6.2). As in section 5.2.3 above, the utterances are citation forms, and do not arise from any real communicative event.

1. (Pattern 1 + 'tenant/landlord or landlady')

I'm entertaining a few friends this evening

2. (Patterns 2, 6 + 'tenant/landlord or 'landlady')

Would you mind if I had a small party on Saturday?

3. (Patterns 4, 7 + 'tenant/landlord or landlady')

Is it alright if a friend stays in my room?

4. (Pattern 3 + 'tenant/landlord or landlady')

Some people from the office are visiting me this evening.

5. (Patterns 5, 8 + 'tenant/flatmate')

Do you think you could do the cooking?

6. (Patterns 5, 9 + 'tenant/flatmate')

You should do the washing up.

These yield the following language items:

a. Would you mind if ...?

b. Is it alright if ...?

c. 1st Conditional

d. 2nd Conditional

e. Do you think you could ...?

f. You should ...

Let us now turn to the unit itself, beginning with the specifications for Dialogue 1.

#### 6.2.4 Specifications for Dialogue 1

##### SS

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'renting accommodation (the rules)'; 'family'

SAS: 'relation between tenant and landlady'

##### IF

'tenant discussing accommodation rules with landlady'

##### Sit

SS: 'discussion'

SM: 'rules of the house'; 'family'

SR: 'insider - outsider'; 'buyer - seller'

P: 'regulatory'; 'dominance'

DS

IS: Conditions of Contract ^ Accept ^ Orient ^ Seek Permission ^ Grant  
Permission ^ Suspend/Cancel Contract

At. 'unenthusiastic'/'unfriendly'/'nervous'/'reluctant'/'indifferent'/'  
'cheerful'

SK: 'maximum'/'minimum'/'social'

LR

(a) [verbal] with speaker as Sayer, addressee as Recipient, Verbiage  
from 'rules' frame; [interrogative: polar] + [vocative]

(b) [negative] + [vocative] + ellipsis of Residue

(c) (i) [existential] with Existent from 'rules' frame; [declara-  
tive]; continuative + nominal ellipsis ( → Numerative as  
Head)

(ii) [material] with addressee as Actor, process & Range from  
'rules' frame; [declarative] + [negative] + [obligation:  
high]

(iii) [material] with addressee as Actor, process, Goal and  
Circumstance from 'rules' frame; [declarative] + [negative]  
+ [obligation: high]

(iv) [material] with addressee as Actor, process & Goal from  
'rules' frame; [declarative] + [negative] + [obligation:  
high]

(d) minor clause realising Accept (tone 1)

(e) [relational: attribute] with addressee as Carrier, Attribute  
from 'enthusiastic' frame; [declarative] + [negative] + atti-  
tudinal submodifier + [vocative]



- (f) [relational: identifying] with embedded clause complex as Identifier; [declarative]; Continuative + general noun (superordinate of "not ... very happy") as Theme/Given

Clause Complex

- (1) [relational: identifying: circumstantial]; [declarative]; collocation ("parties" → "birthday")
- (2) [material] with speaker as Actor + [past in present]; [declarative]; [extension: addition] + collocation ("parties → "birthday" → "invited a few friends over")
- (g) continuative + [positive] + tone 1 (articulating attitude 'unfriendly')
- (h) clause complex  $\alpha, \beta$
- (i) projecting clause: [mental: affect] with addressee as Senser; [interrogative: polar] + [inclination: median]
- (ii) projected clause: [material] with speaker as Actor + [past]; Conjunction (Condition) + collocation ("parties" → "birthday" → "invited a few friends over" → "small birthday party")
- (j) Time circumstantial; [vocative]; continuative + ellipsis of Mood, Predicator & Complement
- (k) (i) [material] with speaker as Goal, Actor & process from 'family' frame + [present in present]; [declarative]
- (ii) [mental: perception] with speaker as Senser, Phenomenon from 'family frame + [past in present]; [declarative] + [negative]; anaphoric pronoun
- (l) [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'pleased' frame; [declarative] + [vocative] + tone 1; anaphoric demonstrative
- (m) clause complex  $\alpha \times \beta$  (enhancement: condition)
- (i) primary clause: [relational: attributive] with Attribute from 'rules' frame; [interrogative: polar]

- (ii) secondary clause: [material] with Actor from 'family' frame, anaphoric pronoun + collocation ("share your room" → "stays in my room") + conjunction (condition)
- (n) (i) [verbal] with speaker as Sayer, Verbiage from 'rules' frame; [declarative], continuative + anaphoric pronoun
  - (ii) minor clause articulating Grant Permission
  - (iii) Time circumstantial; ellipsis of Mood, Predicator & Adjunct
- (o) (i) [material] with speaker as Goal, Actor & process from 'family' frame + [present in present]; [declarative] +
  - (ii) [mental: perception] with speaker as Senser, Phenomenon from 'family' frame + [past in present]; [declarative] + [negative]; anaphoric pronoun
    - clause complex 1 x 2 (iii-v)
  - (iii) [verbal] with speaker as Sayer, Recipient from 'family' frame, Verbiage from 'accommodation' frame + past in present]; [declarative]; anaphoric pronoun
    - clause complex  $\alpha'\beta$  (iv-v)
  - (iv) projecting clause: [mental: affect] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] + [vocative]; [enhancement: causal]
  - (v) projected clause: [material] with addressee as Actor + [future]; [declarative] + [obligation: high]

NVR

- (d) UNENTHUSIASTIC
- (g) UNFRIENDLY
- (h) NERVOUS
- (j) RELUCTANT
- (k) EATING BREAKFAST
- (l) INDIFFERENT
- (m) NERVOUS

(n) VERY RELUCTANT

(o) CHEERFUL

6.2.5 For the Student: Dialogue 1

Alan Jones is renting a room in Mrs. King's house. Mrs. King is explaining the rules of the house.

(a) Mrs. King: Did I tell you the rules, Alan?

(b) Alan: No, Mrs. King, you didn't.

(c) Mrs. King: Well, there are three. You musn't have parties, you musn't share your room with anyone, and you musn't keep pets.

(d) Alan: (UNENTHUSIASTIC) Right.

(e) Mrs. King: You don't sound very happy, dear.

(f) Alan: Um ... the problem is it's my birthday next week and I've invited a few friends over.

(g) Mrs. King: (UNFRIENDLY) Oh yes.

(h) Alan: (NERVOUS) Would you mind if I had a small birthday party next Friday?

(j) Mrs. King: (RELUCTANT) Well, just this once, Alan.

(A few weeks pass)

(k) Alan: (EATING BREAKFAST) My brother's visiting me next week. I haven't seen him for two years.

(l) Mrs. King: (INDIFFERENT) That's nice, dear.

(m) Alan: (NERVOUS) Is it alright if he stays in my room for two nights?

(n) Mrs. King: (VERY RELUCTANT) Well, I don't normally allow it ... Alright, just this once.

(A few weeks pass)

(o) Mrs. King (CHEERFUL) My sister's visiting me next week. I haven't seen her for ten years. I've promised her your room, so I'm afraid you'll have to leave, Alan.

A. Comprehension Exercise

Complete these sentences:

1. In Mrs. King's house
  - (a) Parties \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) The room \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) No pets \_\_\_\_\_
2. Alan was unhappy because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Mrs. King \_\_\_\_\_  
to have a small birthday party.
4. It was two years \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Mrs. King allowed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. As a result of the visit of Mrs. King's sister, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Groupwork

1. Did Alan behave in a reasonable way towards Mrs. King?
2. Did Mrs. King behave in an unreasonable way towards Alan?
3. Mrs. King was unfriendly towards Alan. What should he have done to change her attitude?
4. Will Mrs. King let Alan return to his room after her sister goes?

6.2.6 Commentary on Dialogue 1

Examining first the specifications for Dialogue 1, I shall say nothing further about social system except to note that Renting Accommodation continues to articulate the institutional discourse and practices of 'business' even after the initial commercial arrangement has been concluded, and beyond the regular paying of rent. Subject

matter and social situation articulate the two thematic systems 'renting accommodation - rules subsystem' and 'family'; and social relationship and purpose articulate the system in the social action semiotic 'relation between tenant and landlady'. The interaction sequence, which we might call Signing a Contract, articulates the subject matter 'rules of the house' and the social relationship - and so, indirectly, articulates the institutional discourse and practices of 'business', the thematic system 'renting accommodation - rules subsystem', and the system in the social action semiotic, 'relation between tenant and landlady'. Note that here the elements Seek Permission^Grant Permission are not part of an embedded interaction sequence, but are integral to Signing a Contract - they might better be termed Seek Permission to Waive Conditions and Grant Permission to Waive Conditions. Attitude articulates various combinations of 'rules of the house', 'insider-outsider', 'dominance' (or its opposite 'subordination').

I would now like to consider the linguistic realisations. Moves (a) to (c) articulate the interaction sequence element Condition of Contract and social shared knowledge (of the rules subsystem of 'renting accommodation'). Move (d) articulates the interaction sequence element Accept and the attitude 'unenthusiastic' - and also, perhaps, a transition to the interaction sequence element Orient (to Seek Permission). Moves (e), (f) and (g) articulate the Orient element, while (h) articulates Seek Permission, and (j) Grant Permission plus the attitude 'reluctant'. Moves (k) and (l) rearticulate Orient, move (m) rearticulates Seek Permission, and (n) articulates Grant Permission plus the attitude 'very reluctant'. Finally, move (o) articulates Suspend/Cancel Contract.

### 6.2.7 Exercise 1 (Topical)

#### 6.2.7.1 For the Student: Exercise 1

You are living in Mrs. King's house. She has a number of rules for her tenants, but you are hoping she will make an exception for you.

#### Example

Rule: No parties

You: It's my birthday next week and I've invited a few friends over.

Mrs. King: (UNFRIENDLY) Oh yes.

You: (NERVOUS) Would you mind if I had a small birthday party next Frinday?

1. Rule: No pets  
(your brother has a dog - can you look after it for a week?)
2. Rule: Don't hang anything on the walls  
(you went to an exhibition and bought a poster)
3. Rule: Tenants may not use the back garden  
(some friends are visiting and the weather is glorious)
4. Rule: No overnight guests  
(your friend has missed the last bus - it's after midnight)
5. Rule: No repairs or alterations without permission  
(your room is green - you think it's a cold colour)
6. Rule: No noise after 10 p.m.  
(you want to watch the election results on TV)
7. Rule: Don't dry washing on the radiators  
(the laundrette is closed and you need clean clothes urgently)
8. Rule: No visitors after 10 p.m.  
(your friend has just had a fight with his/her spouse and wants to talk to you - and it's 10 p.m.)

### 6.2.7.2 Commentary on Exercise 1

The aim of this exercise is to practise the permission-seeking form Would you mind? and the 2nd Conditional, although there is also scope for practising the Present Perfect. Unlike Exercise 1 in the Elementary-Intermediate unit (6.1.4.2), this exercise is not entirely mechanical, in that it requires learners to manipulate and/or expand the language provided in the cues.

### 6.2.8 Exercises 2-4 (Interactional)

All the possibilities of negotiation of meaning here lie in the attitude options chosen by the landlady and apparently not interpreted correctly by the tenant.

#### 6.2.8.1 Dialogue 1: a Decoder Perspective

SS

IDP: -

SAS: 'relation between two people sharing a house'

Sit

SR: 'insider-insider'

P: 'respect'

DS

At: 'unenthusiastic'/'nervous'/'cheerful'

It is assumed that the tenant is not aware that the dialogue is articulating the institutional discourse and practices of 'business', and that he sees the system in the social action semiotic motivating the dialogue not as 'tenant/landlady' but as 'two people sharing a house'. Consequently, he will interpret the social relationship as 'insider-insider' (ignoring 'buyer-seller'), and the purpose not as 'dominance' but as 'respect'. Finally, we may suppose that he either ignores, or minimises the significance of, the attitude options

'unfriendly', 'reluctant' and 'indifferent'. Any interactional exercise must attempt to make learners aware of the tenant's differing or deficient interpretation of these variables.

#### 6.2.8.2 For the Student: Exercise 2

Look at this segment of Dialogue 1. How does it differ from the original Dialogue 1?

(Mrs. King has just told Alan the rules)

Alan: (UNENTHUSIASTIC) Right.

Mrs. King: You don't sound very happy, dear.

Alan: Um ... the problem is it's my birthday next week and I've invited a few friends over.

Mrs. King: (UNFRIENDLY) Oh yes.

Alan: (THINKING) But we could go to a restaurant, or get together at my girlfriend's flat.

Mrs. King: (ALMOST FRIENDLY) Oh, since you'd already arranged it, Alan, they can come here.

Alan: (WARMLY) That's very kind of you, Mrs. King.

#### Groupwork

1. Why does Mrs. King seem unfriendly at first after Alan mentions inviting a few friends over.
2. Why does Alan suggest going to a restaurant or his girlfriend's flat?
3. How does Mrs. King react to Alan's suggestion?
4. Alan used two approaches:
  - (a) asking permission for a party at Mrs. King's house
  - (b) suggesting that he and his friends go to a restaurant or his girlfriend's flat.

Which approach was more effective and why?



### 6.2.8.3 For the Student: Exercise 3

Complete this segment of conversation from Dialogue 1 - Alan will use the same approach as in Exercise 2.

Alan: (EATING BREAKFAST) My brother is visiting me next week. I haven't seen him for two years.

Mrs. King: (INDIFFERENT) That's nice, dear.

### 6.2.8.4. For the Student: Exercise 4

Dialogue 1 is incomplete. There are two possible endings:

- (a) Alan loses his room
- (b) Alan returns to his room after a few days

Working in group, write these two endings. Begin like this:

Mrs. King: (CHEERFUL) My sister's visiting me next week. I haven't seen her for ten years. I've promised her your room, so I'm afraid you'll have to leave, Alan.

### 6.2.8.5 Commentary on Interactional Exercises 2-4

Exercise 2 shows a fragment of the dialogue as it would be if Alan interpreted all the social system, situation and discourse strategy variables as they are 'intended' by Mrs. King. Exercise 3 asks students to rewrite another fragment of Dialogue 1 with the same interpretation holding. Exercise 4 asks students to imagine two endings to Dialogue 1 - one unfavourable to the Alan of Dialogue 1, and one favourable to the Alan of Exercises 2 and 3.

### 6.2.9 Specifications for Dialogue 2

SS

IDP: 'business'

TS: 'renting accommodation (sharing)'

SAS: 'relation between flatmates'; 'relation between boyfriend & girl friend'

IF

'sharing arrangements, between flatmates/boyfriend & girlfriend'

Sit

SS: 'discussion'/'performing domestic chores'

SM: 'domestic chores'; 'sharing'; 'going out'; 'work'

SR: 'insider-outsider'; 'buyer-seller'; 'male-female'; 'intimate-intimate'

P: 'regulatory'; 'dominance'

DS

IS: Conditions of Contract ^ Accept ^ Orient (to Request) ^ Accept ^ Defer ^ Orient (to Request) ^ Refuse Acknowledge ^ Greet ^ Orient (to Request) ^ Refuse (Request)

At: 'irritated'/'cool'

SK: 'minimum'/'social'/'maximum'/'personal'

LR

(a) clause complex  $\times \beta$  (enhancement: reason)

(i) secondary clause: [material] with speaker as Actor & process from 'domestic chores' frame; [declarative] + [negative] + [potentiality]; continuative + conjunction (reason) + Subject as marked focus of information  
primary clause (ii-iii)  $\alpha' \beta$

(ii) projecting clause: [mental: cognition] with addressee as Senser; [interrogative: polar]

(iii) projected clause: [material] with addressee as Actor & process from 'domestic chores' frame; [declarative] + [inclination: low]

(b) (i) [positive] + ellipsis

clause complex (ii-iii)  $\alpha' \beta$

(ii) projecting clause: [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser; [declarative]; [extension: adversative] +

- conjunctive adjunct (condition)
- (iii) projected clause: [material] with addressee as Actor, process & Range from 'domestic chores' frame; [declarative] + [obligation: median]; Subject as marked information focus
- (NB projecting clause may also be interpreted as Modal Adjunct: opinion)
- (c) (i) minor clause realising Accept
- (ii) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'domestic chores' frame, Attribute from 'sharing' frame; [declarative]; anaphoric demonstrative
- (d) [material] with speaker & addressee as Actor, process & Range from 'domestic chores' frame; [declative]; [extension: addition]
- (e) [positive] + [probability: high]; clausal ellipsis
- (f) [relational: attributive] with Carrier from 'rooms' frame (see 6.1.1), Attribute from 'domestic chores' frame + [present in present]; [declarative] + [vocative]
- (g) (i) [positive]; continuative + clausal ellipsis
- (ii) [material] with speaker as Actor, process & Range from 'domestic chores' frame + [future]; [declarative]; anaphoric pronoun
- clause complex  $\alpha\beta$  (iii-iv)
- (iii) projecting clause: [mental: cognition] with speaker as Senser; [declarative] + [negative] + [vocative]
- (iv) projected clause: [material] with Actor & process from 'domestic chores' frame + Manner; repetition ("ironing"  $\rightarrow$  "iron")
- (h) SAYS NOTHING

- (j) (i) minor clause realised by [vocative] + tone 2
- (ii) minor clause realised by expletive + tone 5
- (k) (i) minor clause realised by continuative + expletive + tone 5  
clause complex 1 + 2 (ii-iii)
- (ii) [material] with speaker & addressee as Actor, process,  
Location & Time from 'going out' frame; [declarative]
- (iii) [relational: attributive] with speaker as Possessor, process  
& Possessed from 'domestic chores' frame; [declarative] +  
[negative] + [vocative]; [extension: addition]  
clause complex 1 + 2 (iv-v)
- (iv) [material] with speaker as Actor, process & Time from  
'going out' frame; [declarative] + [obligation: high];  
[extension: addition]
- (v) [relational: attributive] with speaker as Carrier, Attribute  
from 'going out' frame + [future]; [declarative]; [extension:  
alternative]
- (l) SAYS NOTHING
- (m) Greet element realised by:
  - (i) greeting + [vocative]
  - (ii) [relational: circumstantial] with addressee as Carrier,  
Manner as Attribute; [interrogative: WH-]
- (n) (i) Attribute/Complement; ellipsis of Subject & Finite
- (ii) [material] with speaker as Actor, process, Range & Location  
from 'work' frame; [declarative]
- (o) (i) minor clause realised by adjective + tone 5
- (ii) [relational: circumstantial] with Role as Identified, Iden-  
tified & Identifier from 'domestic chores' frame; [declara-  
tive]
- (iii) [material] with speaker as Actor + [present in present];  
[declarative]; collocation ("dinner" --- "starving")

(p) Identifier; [negative]; ellipsis of Finite & Adjunct

NVR

- (f) IRRITATED
- (g) READING A BOOK; CALLING OUT
- (h) REFRAINS FROM SPEECH
- (j) CALLING OUT
- (l) REFRAINS FROM SPEECH
- (n) COOL
- (p) COOL

6.2.10 For the Students: Dialogue 2

Alan Jones and his girlfriend Anna have decided to live together in her flat. They are discussing the sharing of domestic chores.

- (a) Alan: Well, since I can't cook, do you think you could cook for both of us?
- (b) Anna: Yes, but in that case I think you should do all the housework.
- (c) Alan: Okay, that's fair.
- (d) Anna: And we should each do our own washing and ironing.
- (e) Alan: Oh yes, of course.  
(A few days pass)
- (f) Anna: (IRRITATED) The kitchen's looking pretty filthy, Alan.
- (g) Alan: (READING A BOOK) Er ... yes ... I'll do it tomorrow.  
(later) (CALLING OUT) I don't understand how your iron works, Anna.
- (h) Anna: (SAYS NOTHING)
- (j) Alan: (CALLING OUT) Anna? ... Damn!  
(next morning)

(k) Alan: Oh hell! We're going out to the theatre this evening and I haven't got a clean shirt, Anna. And I've got to go now or I'll be late.

(l) Anna: (SAYS NOTHING)

(In the evening)

(m) Alan: Hello Anna, how are you?

(n) Anna: (COOL) Fine. I had a good day at work?

(o) Alan: Great! What's for dinner - I'm starving!

(p) Anna: (COOL) Nothing.

#### A. Comprehension Questions

Complete these sentences.

1. Alan suggested that Anna \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Anna agreed, but only if \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. It was decided they \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The kitchen was \_\_\_\_\_ because Alan \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Alan had trouble with Anna's iron and wanted her \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Alan didn't have time \_\_\_\_\_
7. When Alan got home, he found \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Groupwork

1. Why was Anna irritated by the dirty kitchen?
2. In your opinion, how did Anna feel when Alan said: "I'll do it tomorrow"?
3. Why did Anna twice "say nothing" in reply to Alan?

4. Why didn't Anna cook dinner?

#### 6.2.11 Commentary on Dialogue 2

I should like first to examine the specifications for Dialogue 2. The dialogue articulates the institutional discourse and practices of 'business' in that the sharing of domestic chores is in part at least an arrangement between a landlady (Anna) and a tenant (Alan). Other social system variables have already been discussed above (6.2.1 and 6.2.2). Social system and subject matter articulate the thematic system 'renting accommodation - sharing subsystem'; the social relationships 'insider-outsider' and 'buyer-seller' articulate the system in the social action semiotic 'relation between flatmates' while 'male-female' and 'intimate-intimate' articulate the system in the social action semiotic 'relation between boyfriend & girlfriend'. As for purpose, 'regulatory' and 'dominance' articulate 'relation between flatmates' and 'relation between boyfriend & girlfriend' respectively. The interaction sequence Signing a Contract articulates the social situation 'discussion', the subject matter 'domestic chores' and 'sharing', and the social relationships 'insider-outsider' and 'buyer-seller', as far as the elements Conditions of Contracts and Accept are concerned; as for the elements Orient (to Request ((for the Waiving of Contract Conditions))) and the various responses, they articulate the social situations 'performing domestic chores', the subject matter 'domestic chores', 'going out' and 'work', and the social relationships 'male-female' and 'intimate-intimate'. Attitude articulates a combination of the subject matter 'sharing', the social relationships 'male-female' and 'intimate-intimate', and the purposes 'regulatory' and 'dominance'.

Now to the linguistic realisations. Moves (a) to (e) articulate the interaction sequence elements Conditions of Contract and Accept

(moves (a), (b ii/iii) and (d) are Conditions of Contract articulators, moves (b i), (c) and (e) are Accept articulators). Move (f) articulates the interaction sequence element Orient (to Request), the attitude 'irritated', 'personal', and 'social' shared knowledge (of the 'sharing' subsystem of the thematic system 'renting accommodation'). Moves (g i) and (g ii) articulate the elements Accept and Defer, while (g iii/iv) and (j) instantiate a second articulation of Orient (to Request), 'personal', and 'social' and move (h) is an articulator (non-verbal, of course) of Refuse Acknowledgement. Moves (k) and (l) rearticulate the elements Orient (to Request) plus 'personal' and 'social', and Refuse Acknowledgement respectively. Move (m) articulates the interaction sequence element Greet, while (n) articulates Greet plus the attitude 'cool', and (o i) completes the Greet series of moves. Moves (o ii) and (o iii) articulate once more Orient (to Request) and 'social' shared knowledge, while move (p) articulates Refuse (Request) and the attitude 'cool'.

#### 6.2.12 Exercises 6 (Topical)

This is a two part exercises which practices two forms found in the dialogue. (Do you think you could ...? and I think you should ...) in the first part, and a form not found in the dialogue (you should have ...) in the second part - still in the 'domestic chores' framework.

##### 6.2.12.1 For the Student: Exercise 5

###### Part A

You are sharing a flat with your friend, and you are trying to decide who will do various domestic chores.

###### Example

cook/do all the housework



You: Well, since I can't cook, do you think you could do the cooking?

Your Friend: Yes, but in that case I think you should do all the housework.

1. iron/do all the washing
2. clean windows/clean the toilet
3. clean carpets/do the gardening
4. sew on buttons/clean the bath & sinks
5. do odd-jobs/do the washing up
6. mend clothes/take the garbage out
7. polish floors/do all the sweeping
8. do dusting/make the beds

#### Part B

Your friend doesn't do his/her domestic chores, and you are annoyed.

#### Example

kitchen/filthy

You: The kitchen's looking filthy. You should have cleaned it this morning.

Your Friend: Oh sorry, I'll do it now.

1. clothes/dirty
2. toilet/filthy
3. garden/full of weeds
4. bath/grey
5. breakfast dishes/still in sink
6. garbage bin/overflowing
7. kitchen floor/covered with muck
8. table/thick with dust

### 6.2.13 Exercises 6-8 (Interactional)

The specification for Dialogue 2 represents an idealised consensus view of the social system, situational and discourse strategy variables motivating the dialogue. In order to consider how meaning is (or is not) negotiated in this dialogue, we need to separate the the perspectives of each participant.

#### 6.2.13.1 Dialogue 2: A Dual Perspective

	Alan	Anna
<u>SS</u> IDP	∅	'business'
SAS	'relation between boyfriend & girlfriend'	'relation between flatmates'
<u>Sit</u> SR	'male-female'; 'intimate-intimate'	'insider-outsider'; 'buyer-seller'
P	'regulatory'; 'dominance'	'regulatory'; 'respect'

There are four points to be noted:

1. Anna is contextualising the dialogue within the framework of the institutional discourse and practices of 'business', while Alan is not
2. Anna sees the interaction as motivated by the system in the social action semiotic, 'relation between flatmates'; for Alan, 'relation between boyfriend and girlfriend' is the dominant system
3. Alan is performing the social relationships 'intimate-intimate' and 'male-female' (in its most traditional and asymmetrical form); whereas Anna is performing 'insider-outsider' and 'buyer-seller' - though it could be argued that 'intimate-intimate' and 'male-female' (in a more symmetrical contemporary form) are being

articulated by Anna's two refusals to acknowledge and her final response "Nothing".

4. Alan's purpose is one of 'dominance', while Anna's is one of 'respect'.

These four points should be taken into account in the interactional exercises.

#### 6.2.13.2 For the Student: Exercise 6

Compare the two scenes in this dialogue with the same scenes in Dialogue 2.

Anna: (IRRITATED) The kitchen's looking pretty filthy, Alan.

Alan: (READING A BOOK - GUILTY LOOK) Oh, I'm sorry Anna, I've been so busy lately. I'll do it right now (GETS UP) (later) (CALLING OUT). Is there something wrong with your iron? The light's not on and it's not heating up.

Anna: (CALLING OUT) The light's not working, but the iron's OK - just slow.

#### Groupwork

1. How does Alan's behaviour in the kitchen scene differ in the two dialogues?
2. In the iron scene, why does Anna say nothing in one dialogue and give Alan information in the other?

#### 6.2.13.3 For the Student: Exercise 7

Rewrite the clean shirt scene, changing the behaviour of Alan and Anna as in Exercise 6.

#### 6.2.13.4 For the Student: Exercise 8

Dialogue 2 is unfinished. Write an ending for it. Begin like this:

Alan: Hello Anna, how are you?

Anna: (COOL) Fine. I had a good day at work.

Alan: Great! What's for dinner - I'm starving!

Anna: (COOL) Nothing.

#### 6.2.13.5 Commentary on Interactional Exercises 6-8

Exercise 6 represents two scenes from Dialogue 2 as they would be if Alan interpreted the social system and situational variables in the same way as Anna. Exercise 7 asks learners to rewrite a third scene from Dialogue 2 from the same perspective. In the light of insights gained from these exercises, learners are then invited in Exercise 8 to supply an appropriate ending to Dialogue 2.

#### 6.2.14 Conclusion: General Comments on the Unit

As was the case in the elementary - intermediate unit the emphasis is on interactional rather than topical exercises. There are two topical exercises, 1 and 5. Exercise 1 is based on pattern 6 (see 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 above), linked to the 'services' component of pattern 9 from the earlier fragment of thematic system analysed in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.3, separated from, but still informed by, the 'rules' component (in its [obligation: high] + [negative] manifestation). Exercise 5, Part A, is based on patterns 5, 8 and 9 (see 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 again); Part B is based on pattern 5, a variant of pattern 5 formed by [past], [negative] and, in some cases, collocation (e.g. "didn't clean" → "filthy"), and on pattern 9 extended by [past in present] and a Time circumstantial.

As regards the six interactional exercises, no account has been taken of coding orientation, of cultural or sub-cultural angles on the social system. Dialogue 1 poses few problems in this respect: only Mrs. King's reaction to the visit of Alan's brother may cause puzzlement, especially in cultures which place a high value on family

and family solidarity. Dialogue 2 is another matter. Apart from the fact that Alan & Anna's co-habiting is *inconceivable* or even offensive in many cultures, Anna's assumption that Alan should do domestic chores is likely to arouse mirth or incomprehension, and Alan's apparent reluctance to perform his chores may well be seen as 'natural' especially by male learners. Of course at an intermediate-advanced stage, after considerable exposure to the culture of the target language, such reactions are less probable, but need to be foreseen by the teacher.

## Chapter 7

### The Topical-Interactional Syllabus: Implications for Language Teaching and Systemic-Functional Grammar

#### 7.0 Introduction

The aim of this work has been to develop a linguistic model capable of 'generating' or 'motivating' - the terms have been discussed before and will again be examined below - a new type of communicative language teaching syllabus that we have called the topical-interactional syllabus. The linguistic model that has been developed, the process of 'generating'/'motivating' a syllabus, and the fragment of topical-interactional syllabus that has emerged from this process, all have important implications for systemic-functional grammar and for communicative language teaching. In this final chapter I would like to consider these implications, starting with communicative language teaching.

#### 7.1 Why a Topical-Interactional Syllabus?

In Chapter 1 (section 1.4) we reviewed David Wilkins' criticisms of grammatical and situational syllabuses. His criticism of the grammatical syllabus was that learning grammatical form does not guarantee the learning of grammatical meaning; and that to describe the grammatical form of a sentence does not account for the way in which it is used as an utterance. As for the situational syllabus, Wilkins criticised it on the grounds that situation does not necessarily predict language, and is irrelevant in the case of speech acts.

These are fundamental criticisms, but the only criticism offered so far of the functional, or notional, syllabus, is the relatively modest one, made by Vivian Cook (section 1.7) to the effect that functional syllabuses have so far not paid sufficient attention to

situational constraints and interaction sequence. However, as the present work has shown, a more serious criticism can be levelled at the functional syllabus.

It will be recalled that Jacques Derrida, in his critique of speech act theory mentioned in section 5.1.1, claimed that speech acts, as characterised by Austin, were 'reiterative' or 'citational' and, as such, belonged to the realm not of spoken communication but of écriture, or 'writing' (1982:326). Derrida was of course referring to explicit speech acts signalled by performative verbs in the present tense with "I" as Subject, but the same could be said of certain indirect speech acts such as requests which have a regularly recurring conventional form (e.g. interrogative Mood + modality + 2nd person pronoun as Subject).

Of course, functional syllabus designers are well aware of this: after all, language teaching is traditionally based on teaching the reiterable. But there lies the problem. Speech acts are clearly not entirely insensitive to situational constraints and interaction sequence - it may well be more appropriate to 'cite' one form of a speech act rather than another (conventionally agreed) form in a given situation and at a given point in an interaction. But if real sensitivity to situation and interaction sequence is to be made a (the?) major requirement of a syllabus, then reiterable (explicit) speech acts will be swamped by non-reiterable indirect speech acts which, by any rigorous definition, are not speech acts at all.

The criticism of the functional syllabus, then, is this. If it continues as it has until now, with only a nod in the direction of situation and interaction sequence, then, like the grammatical syllabus, it is dealing with the reiterable, and is communicative only in its stress on meaning, and on use rather than usage (see Widdowson 1978:3). If on the other hand it moves in the direction of sensitivity to

situation and interaction sequence, it loses its reiterability and its speech acts (functions), and becomes something different. To achieve its avowed aim of being communicative, the functional syllabus must metamorphise.

It has been argued in this work that what the functional syllabus must be transformed into is the topical-interactional syllabus. This new type of communicative syllabus includes not only the reiterable (in the form of thematic systems), but also the non-reiterable, seen as sensitive to social system, situation and discourse strategies, and therefore open to negotiation between participants in a communicative event. What follows will be a recapitulation of the 'generation' of a topical - interactional syllabus, and of some of the issues raised by this approach to communicative syllabus design.

## 7.2 'Generating' a Topical-Interactional Syllabus

We have already discussed (in section 3.3) the question of whether our model can 'generate' sentences, but we are now in a position to pursue the matter a little further. To claim that a grammar 'generates' the sentences of a language, we saw, is to imply - in the words of Lyons (1979:156) - that the grammar 'constitutes a system of rules [...] which are formulated in such a way that they yield [...] a decision - procedure for any combination of the elements of the language'. Thus, if we wished to attach the label 'generative' to the present model, we would have to find a way of presenting social system, situation-type and discourse strategies as a 'system of rules' that could yield a 'decision-procedure' for any combination of grammatical options, (and, by implication, a 'decision-procedure' for selecting grammatical options). We have gone some way towards presenting social, system, situation-type and discourse strategies as a 'system of rules', with fragments of thematic systems partial and informal descriptions of systems in the social action



semiotic; the frame/script approach to social situation and subject matter, loose categorisation of social relationship and attitude, systems for purpose and shared knowledge, and the structures of a number of interaction sequences. In principle there seems no reason why this sketch of a 'system of rules' should not be extended until it becomes, if not complete (this does not seem a practical goal), then at least adequate to a specific task such as designing a syllabus for learners of English at a certain level and with certain specifiable goals.

The problem, however, lies in the term 'decision-procedure'. A decision-procedure is usually envisaged as an automatic or mechanical procedure for producing grammatical sentences or deciding whether sentences are grammatical (in our terms, an automatic procedure for producing contextually appropriate sentences or deciding whether sentences are contextually appropriate). But, as previously noted (see Chapter 2), no systemic-functional linguist would argue that a given cultural and situational context automatically or mechanically gives rise to or can be associated with a particular set of grammatical options - the argument does not go beyond saying that context 'tends to determine' (Halliday) or 'narrows down in probabilistic terms' (Fawcett) the choice of grammatical options. Furthermore, we have demonstrated in the course of the present work that it is not even possible to automatically or mechanically determine context on the basis of the grammatical options chosen - there are times when contextual variables have to be negotiated by participants in the communicative event. That is why the term motivate has finally been preferred to 'generate': it implies not an automatic or mechanical procedure for producing contextually appropriate combinations of grammatical options, or assigning to combinations of grammatical options appro-

priate contextual descriptions; rather it suggests a process in which certain grammatical options are 'set in motion' (or, in Halliday's words, 'put at risk') by certain contextual configurations. In that case, it is not possible to specify the context then simply 'read out' the grammatical choices, or even specify the grammatical choices and 'read out' the context; the motivational model does not promise automatic retrieval, but principled prediction of grammar or context.

The implications of this emerged rather clearly in Chapter 6, and will be summed up here:

- (1) Social system variables 'set in motion' situational variables (via the coding orientation and intertextual frame), which 'set in motion' discourse strategies. Or, to put it another way, discourse strategies 'articulate' (give discourse-strategic expression to) situation, which itself 'articulates' (gives contextual expression to) social system
- (2) Discourse strategy variables, 'motivated' as they are by discursive formations, thematic systems, systems in the social action semiotic, and social situation./subject matter and social relationship frames, 'put at risk' sets of lexicogrammatical options and choices in non-verbal codes (kinesics, proxemics, tone of voice).
- (3) The decoder, faced with a configuration of grammatical options, non-verbal code choices, and more or less determinable discourse strategy, situation and social system variables, is obviously in a position to move almost automatically from language and/or non-verbal codes to context. The catch is the phrase more or less determinable: the less determinable the discourse strategy, situation and social system variables, the more they must be

negotiated by the participants, and the less automatic (that is, the more predictive) is the move from language/other codes to context.

### 7.3 Product or Process?

The distinction, first put forward by Brumfit (1984:88-92), was made in section 5.1.2 between product (the body of knowledge specified in a language syllabus) and process (considered for our purposes as the process of using a language). The functional-notional syllabus, which stresses grammatical meaning, language in use and communication, might well seem to represent a process-oriented syllabus, but it is clear from our earlier discussion of the reiterability of the speech act that the functional syllabus, despite its aspirations, is very much a product-based syllabus. The topical-interactional syllabus, on the other hand, permits a dual orientation, to both product and process. Product is seen in theory, not as discrete structural items or functions, but as the socially determined networks of lexicogram-matical relations that go to make up thematic systems - including not only 'topics' such as accommodation, family life, health, media, customs, technology, the environment, and law, but also those socially enabled and reiterable devices for 'doing things (i.e. accommodation, family life, health ...) with words', the speech acts, or functions. Process (that is, the process of using a language) is defined here as the ability to hypothesise, on the basis of lexicogrammatical options, non-verbal code choices, and incomplete, unclear or ambiguous contextual data, the social system, situational and discourse strategy variables in play, and subsequently select discursive strategies which permit the testing of the hypothesis. This, then, is a relatively structured approach to process, though not what we might call, tongue in cheek, a product-oriented approach to process: what

is offered is not a body of knowledge, but strategies for manipulating knowledge. It is in the process of using language, in the unclear and ambiguous, in the manipulating of linguistic knowledge, that the so-called 'indirect speech acts' thrive, with all their defensive, offensive, ludic and intimate potential. Only the approach to process outlined above can hope to make this potential available to language learners.

#### 7.4 Authenticity versus Learnability

One of the criticisms we have levelled at the functional course book Building Strategies (see section 4.4) is that the writers of the course have sacrificed - if not consistently then at least rather too frequently - authenticity to learnability - in other words, they have sacrificed late 20th Century pedagogic notions of realistic written dialogues and language learning exercises to late 20th Century (or is it mid 20th Century?) notions of how and in what form language is most readily assimilated. Of course, in the necessarily artificial environment of learning a language in the classroom, we can only speak of degrees of approximation to authenticity, but it would not be unreasonable to say that the topical-interactional approach is capable of coming closer to authenticity than its predecessors (the grammatical, situational and functional-notional approaches), without however abandoning considerations of learnability. Thus, in contrast to the functional-notional course we examined earlier, which skipped from one thematic system to another in the course of a unit or showed a thematic system at work in a dialogue then 'simplified' it for a subsequent exercise, the topical-interactional approach seeks to build up thematic systems - the 'grammar' of the social system-through repeated exposure to particular topics at levels of ever-increasing complexity. Obviously the main

instrument of this is the topical exercise, which concentrates on one relation in the thematic system network; but it should not be forgotten that interactional exercises are also based on one or more relations in a thematic system network, the main difference being that the focus is no longer on the relations, but on manipulating them in order to negotiate an incomplete, unclear or ambiguous meaning. It is these exercises which perhaps come closest to striking a balance between the authentic and the learnable.

### 7.5 A New Systemic-Functional Model?

In constructing a systemic-functional model to motivate a topical interactional language course, we have departed in some respects from all existing systemic-functional models - that is, the original model developed by Halliday, and variants proposed by linguists such as Fawcett, Martin and Butler. To what extent the model I have outlined does in fact differ from other systemic-functional models will form the subject of the second half of this concluding chapter. My first impulse was to discuss each of the four 'planes' of the model (social system, situation-type, discourse strategies, language & other codes) separately; the procedure I have actually adopted recognizes the fact that the four 'planes' are not discrete entities, but shade into each other.

#### 7.5.1 Social System/Situation-Type

The concept of thematic system, developed by the American linguist/physicist Jay Lemke, and reportedly (Threadgold 1986:35) by the linguist/literary theorist Paul Thibault, is central to the present model, but does not find a place in the models of any of the four systemic linguists mentioned above. Or does it? The semantic network for threats and warnings discussed earlier (section 2.1.4), together with the accompanying realisation statements (Halliday 1973:

(89-91) deals with what we have called reiterable speech acts, and there seems no reason why it should not be rewritten as a thematic system. The concept of thematic system can be similarly read into Fawcett's notion of facilitation, in which 'certain formal structures and items are seen as becoming more probable WHEN THE CORRESPONDING COMBINATIONS OF ROUTES THROUGH THE SYSTEM NETWORKS ARE REPEATEDLY SELECTED.' (Fawcett 1980:65). The significance of this becomes clearer when Fawcett includes Halliday's socio-semantic networks as examples of facilitation. Subsequently (1980:79), Fawcett, in discussing the 'discourse grammar' component of his model, refers to the socio-semantic networks as 'codes' distinct from 'language' proper in that 'they seem capable of predicting a string of items without recourse to the main grammar'. In partial support of this view, he quotes Halliday (1975:90f) as saying that 'a significant proportion of the clause, in this instance [i.e. in the utterances of mothers in controlling their children], can be related to its "meaning" in terms of some higher level of a socio-behavioural kind'. This seems to be contradicted elsewhere (1973:90) when Halliday speaks of the 'grammatical and lexical properties of the sentences used by [...] the mother regulating the behaviour of her child' being 'predicted' from a semantics of behaviour - but this may not be a contradiction if a 'semantics of behaviour' is seen as the expression of 'some higher level of a socio-behavioural kind', just as, in the model I have proposed, discourse strategies expresses social system, via coding orientation and situation-type. In any case, it appears at least plausible that the concept of thematic system is implicit in the work of Halliday and Fawcett, and has simply not so far been developed.

Another component of the model presented here that is apparently new is social action semiotic, a concept also developed by Jay Lemke. It may be objected that this is not really a new concept, that it

covers much the same ground as social relationship, especially if social relationship is seen in terms of frames, but I believe this objection can be countered. The best way to do this is to examine the much clearer distinction between thematic system and social situation/subject matter. A thematic system is the 'grammar' of a discrete social event (undefineable, but generally recognizable), - typical processes and participant roles assigned to entities in the event, subject positions (discourse roles) of the entities, and the logical unfolding of the event; social situation/subject matter, on the other hand, is an instantiation of a fragment of a thematic system, in the form of a script available to all members of a culture, or to a sub-group within a culture. The distinction between social action semiotic and social relationship is analogous. I have so far avoided any detailed discussion of the social action semiotic - my views on what constitutes a system in the social action semiotic and how it should be represented remain highly speculative - but at this point some account of it seems inevitable. My best guess is that a system in the social action semiotic consists firstly of what Lemke calls an 'actional formation', which I take to be the non-verbal equivalent of a discursive formation, made up of 'objects' (gestures, postures, facial expressions, tones of voice, degrees of closeness), 'subject positions' (positions of physical or institutional strength or weakness), and 'concepts' (the ways in which the 'objects' combine); and secondly, of what Melrose and Melrose (1988) call the 'axiological', here interpreted as the sayings of the community pertaining to appropriate behaviour in a wide range of everyday situations (e.g. visiting someone in hospital, making a phone call), and in the performance of a wide range of social roles (e.g. male, female, husband, mother, boss, employee). In that case, a system in the social

action semiotic is like the scenario for a silent film (does the 'axiological' provide the subtitles?), whereas social relationship is an instantiation of this scenario, in the form of a frame pre-scribing to two or more people in a fixed, symmetrical or asymmetrical relationship the rights, duties, responsibilities and behavioural parameters of their role.

### 7.5.2 Situation-Type/Discourse Strategies

The components of situation type are all derived from Halliday, Fawcett or Martin, and need no further discussion. Nor do coding orientation, a concept ultimately derived from Bernstein, and inter-textual frame, which resembles Martin's genre when it functions to limit choices in register (situation-type, in our terms). Of far greater interest - and apparently not to be found in the work of any other systemic linguist - is the plane of discourse strategies. In fact, if we examine other systemic models, we can find the concept of discourse strategies implicit in these models. When Halliday speaks (1978:143-5) of second-order field (subject matter) and second-order tenor (discourse roles), he is presumably not thinking of interaction sequence; but a conflation of the two could plausibly give rise to something close to interaction sequence. Halliday does not mention attitude when discussing tenor; but it is probable that attitude belongs to an intermediate order of tenor, like the discourse role 'threaten', which can be realised verbally or non-verbally. Shared knowledge is not an overt category in Halliday's model, but is certainly implied in his discussion (after Bernstein) of the inability of working class (restricted code) children to adequately judge the level of knowledge shared between them and their listeners.

There is also an implicit acceptance in Martin's work of the existence of discourse strategies - this is made clear by his



description of the second function of genre, as the stages through which a speaker passes to get something done (i.e. interaction sequence). Finally, Fawcett appears to be implying the need for discourse strategies and negotiation of meaning when, in his flow-chart for generating and interpreting conversations, he allows for the possibility that a speech act may not have the desired perlocutionary force, and so the utterer will be forced to re-enter the network and choose a different speech act, or a different realisation of the same speech act, or a grammatically identical realisation of the speech act with different non-verbal features (loudness, tone of voice, facial expression, etc.). In short, there is some precedent in systemic-functional linguistics for discourse strategies.

### 7.5.3 Discourse Strategies/Language and Other Codes

Discourse strategies, then, does have as its constituents elements implicit in other systemic-functional models. In this sense, it is not new; but can its role in the model be regarded as somehow different from that of any comparable plane or stratum in other systemic-functional models? Discourse strategies obviously has similarities with Martin's discourse stratum and Halliday's semantic stratum (at least, as it was conceived of in Halliday 1973 and Halliday 1984), in that all three are seen as bridges between can say and can do. The main difference is that while Martin and Halliday each considers his 'bridge' as a level of language, I consider mine as an extra-linguistic 'plane'. This was previously justified on the grounds that discourse strategies/discourse stratum/semantic stratum can be realised verbally or non-verbally; but there is another, possibly more compelling reason for considering this 'bridge' as an extra-linguistic plane, not a level of language. Discourse strategies is the principal site of meaning negotiation, the point at which interaction sequences, attitudes and

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assumptions of shared knowledge are rejected, misunderstood, or doubted and checked on. To select, interpret and negotiate discourse strategies is to select, interpret and negotiate units of behaviour which are close to language but still not part of it. Just as grammar in Halliday's model is a 'semanticized' grammar, so discourse strategies in my model in a 'realisation-oriented' situation-type.

## 7.6 Conclusion

It seems fitting to conclude this work with the ultimate target of the topical-interactional syllabus, the language learner. It has been shown how the topical-interactional syllabus benefits language teaching, and how modelling such a syllabus advances systemic-functional grammar - but how does it help the language learner? The answer is clear and crucial to language learning: it helps language learners by giving them access to meaning negotiation skills. No longer are they tied to a product, however attractively and skilfully presented; they can take verbal (and non-verbal) flight with a process that powers all human intercourse. Through the eyes of a series of fictional decoders, they learn that language is not always straightforward - that there are vaguenesses, ambiguities, danger points, that must be approached warily, and dealt with strategically. Thus, they learn to negotiate meaning as the fictional decoders in their coursebook do - but they may learn more beside. They may learn to negotiate meaning with the culture from which the coursebook sprang, with its discursive formations, thematic systems and social action semiotic as filtered through the coding orientation of the author(s) of their coursebook. This would be the crowning achievement of a topical- interactional syllabus!

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