

**Text and Contextual
Conditioning
in
Spoken English**

A genre-based approach

Volume One: Text

Guenter A. Plum

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Note on Web Publication

Except for the correction of a few typographical errors, this version of my thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on 31 March, 1988 is materially identical to the copies deposited with the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney. However, in order to make this web version more readable on a screen, some of the fonts have been changed, as well as other small changes made to the appearance of some tables and figures. These changes have resulted in changes to the pagination of the original thesis.

The two volumes of my thesis, comprising a 'text' and a 'data' volume, were published in 1998 as Monograph Number Ten (ISSN 0963-1925) in the *Monographs in Systemic Linguistics* Series, Department of English Studies, University of Nottingham, England; see Foreword to Monograph No. 10 below. Sadly, the monograph series is no more and copies are no longer available. To satisfy occasional requests for a copy of my thesis, I decided to republish it on the web and thus make it accessible for the foreseeable future. The changes mentioned above have also of course resulted in changes to the pagination of the monograph.

Use Acrobat Bookmarks to jump to chapters, sections, etc. (The Contents listing is not clickable as it is part of the original Word file.) You may download and / or print part or all of the two volumes, and make use of my work as you see fit – all I ask is that it be acknowledged. Reference should be made to the web version as this is now the only one generally available.

Guenter A Plum
June 2004
<http://functionaledit.com>

Foreword – Monographs in Systemic Linguistics

Number Ten 1998

Editorial Committee: Margaret Berry, Roberta Dewa, Hilary Hillier, Caroline Stainton

The present volume is the second thesis from the nineteen-eighties which we have included in the series. Like the first (Monograph Number Nine), it appears by popular request; it is well known and highly regarded in systemic circles and has often been quoted. We are very pleased to be able to make it more widely available. As in the case of Monograph Nine, the historical perspective of the thesis has been preserved: only very minor alterations have been made to the main body of the thesis; and the references have been left largely in their original form, in order that readers may be clear what was available to the author, in what form, at the time of writing.

Guenter Plum's study brings together two approaches to linguistic variation: Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and Labov's variation theory. In particular, it adopts the model of genre developed by Martin within Halliday's approach, being especially concerned with probabilistic relationships between aspects of the model. A quantitative analysis of clausal theme and clause complex-type relations is reported, the aim being to investigate their correlation with generic structure. The analysis is also related to social characteristics of speakers such as gender and membership of social group. Plum concludes that such factors are significant in the making of grammatical choices and that therefore "social factors must be made part of a model of text in order to fully account for its contextual conditioning".

The study includes much valuable discussion of methodology. The author rightly claims that "by questioning every step taken both in the gathering of the corpus and in its analysis much can be learned which is of interest to a theory of discourse". The corpus too is of interest in its own right, consisting of text collected in sociolinguistic interviews with fifty adult speakers of Australian English in Sydney. In order that full value may be given both to the methodological discussion and to display of the data, we are publishing this monograph in two volumes.

Margaret Berry (on behalf of the editorial committee)

Dedication

In memory of my parents

Wilhelm Plum
(1905 – 1959)

and

Anna Plum née Zimmermann
(1907 – 1961)

who taught me much about text:

my father as storyteller and my mother as conversationalist

Abstract

This study brings together two approaches to linguistic variation, Hallidayan systemic-functional grammar and Labovian variation theory, and in doing so brings together a functional interpretation of language and its empirical investigation in its social context.

The study reports on an empirical investigation of the concept of text. The investigation proceeds on the basis of a corpus of texts gathered in sociolinguistic interviews with fifty adult speakers of Australian English in Sydney. The total corpus accounted for in terms of text type or 'genre' numbers 420 texts of varying length, 125 of which, produced in response to four 'narrative' questions, are investigated in greater detail in respect both of the types of text they constitute as well as of some of their linguistic realisations. These largely 'narrative-type' texts, which represent between two and three hours of spoken English and total approximately 53000 words, are presented in a second volume analysed in terms of their textual or 'generic' structure as well as their realisation at the level of the clause complex. The study explores in some detail models of register and genre developed within systemic-functional linguistics, adopting a genre model developed by J.R. Martin and others working within his model which foregrounds the notion that all aspects of the system(s) involved are related to one another probabilistically.

In order to investigate the concept of text in actual discourse under conditions which permit us to become sufficiently confident of our understanding of it to proceed to generalisations about text and its contextual conditioning in spoken discourse, we turn to Labovian methods of sociolinguistic inquiry, i.e. to quantitative methods or methods of quantifying linguistic choice. The study takes the sociolinguistic interview as pioneered by Labov in his study of phonological variation in New York City and develops it for the purpose of investigating textual variation. The question of methodology constitutes a substantial part of the study, contributing in the process to a much greater understanding of the very phenomenon of 'text in discourse', for example by addressing itself to the question of the feasibility of operationalising a concept of text in the context of spoken discourse.

The narrative-type texts investigated in further detail were found to range on a continuum from most experientially-oriented texts such as procedure and recount at

one end to the classic ‘narrative of personal experience’ and anecdote to the increasingly interpersonally-oriented ‘exemplum’ and ‘observation’, both of which become ‘interpretative’ of the ‘real world’ in contrast to the straightforwardly representational slant taken on the same experience by the more experientially-oriented texts. The explanation for the generic variation along this continuum must be sought in a system of generic choice which is essentially cultural.

A quantitative analysis of clausal theme and clause complex-type relations was carried out, the latter by means of log-linear analysis, in order to investigate their correlation with generic structure. While it was possible to relate the choice of theme to the particular stages of generic structures, clause complex-type relations are chosen too infrequently to be related to stages and were thus related to genres as a whole. We find that while by and large the choice of theme correlates well with different generic stages, it only discriminates between different genres, i.e. generic structures in toto, for those genres which are maximally different. Similarly, investigating the two choices in the principal systems involved in the organisation of the clause complex, i.e. the choice of taxis (parataxis vs. hypotaxis) and the (grammatically independent) choice of logico-semantic relations (expansion vs. projection), we find that both those choices discriminate better between types more distant on a narrative continuum.

The log-linear analysis of clause complex-type relations also permitted the investigation of the social characteristics of speakers. We found that the choice of logico-semantic relations correlates with genre and question, while the choice of taxis correlates with a speaker’s sex and his membership of some social group (in addition to genre). Parataxis is favoured by men and by members of the group lowest in the social hierarchy. Age on the other hand is not significant in the choice of taxis at all. In other words, since social factors are clearly shown to be significant in the making of abstract grammatical choices where they cannot be explained in terms of the functional organisation of text, we conclude that social factors must be made part of a model of text in order to fully account for its contextual conditioning.

The study demonstrates that an understanding of the linguistic properties of discourse requires empirical study and, conversely, that it is possible to study discourse empirically without relaxing the standards of scientific inquiry.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to my many friends and colleagues who have supported, advised and encouraged me during my work on this thesis. There is room to thank only a few by name.

First and foremost I wish to thank the two people in the Department of Linguistics at Sydney University who have made the most direct contribution to my attempt in this study to bring together the two theoretical perspectives of systemic-functional grammar and variation theory, my supervisor Dr James Martin, and Dr Barbara Horvath. While my theoretical debt to Dr Martin will be obvious from the thesis itself, my debt to Dr Horvath will not be so self-evident and I would therefore like to record that she, in her role as my teacher of variation theory, not only first encouraged me to explore issues of linguistic variation in a systemic framework but that she has also always been prepared to act as the second supervisor ‘from the other side’ when needed. I consider myself fortunate to have had the benefit of both my teachers’ advice.

My debt to Professor Michael Halliday exceeds the contribution his theoretical work has made to my study; it certainly extends to the inspiration he provides to anyone who has had the privilege of working with him. His specific contribution to the accomplishment of this study lies in his discussing with me the many finer points of his analysis of the clause complex in the light of seemingly recalcitrant spoken data and I thank him for his forbearance.

My very special thanks go to my friend and colleague Joan Rothery who has provided the kind of support which is as invaluable as it is rare – intellectually stimulating, knowledgeable and insightful she has also been unconditionally supportive personally. Not only has she discussed my work with me on countless occasions, she also familiarised herself with ‘my texts’ so well in order to discuss theoretical problems with me that they may now form a subtext in our conversations even when these are not concerned with problems of text. I also thank her for reading as much of my very own text, undoubtedly much less entertaining, as she found possible and for her helpful comments and suggestions.

I thank Ann Cowling for her invaluable assistance with the statistical analysis of the clause complex. Any errors evident in the discussion will be entirely due to my insufficient understanding of (the language of) statistics.

Acknowledgments

I thank Fran Christie for reading a number of my chapters in draft form – some of them in successive versions – and commenting on them in great and helpful detail.

And last but certainly not least I wish to thank my interviewees who invited me into their homes and permitted me to disturb their lives just a little, my fond hope being that they may not have minded too much talking about their favourite subject – their dogs. Since many expressed the view that they as dog lovers are misunderstood in the community at large, I trust that by my taking them and their stories seriously (though not solemnly) in this thesis I may be repaying them for the many kindnesses shown to me. Whatever misunderstandings, shortcomings and errors of judgment remain may not be blamed on those who have tried their very best to save me – and my reader – from these; those who know me also know how stubbornly I will at times resist the best advice.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Note to Web Publication | iii |
| Foreword – Monographs in Systemic Linguistics Number Ten 1998 | iv |
| Dedication | v |
| Abstract | v |
| Acknowledgments | vii |
| Contents | ix |
| List of Figures | xi |
| List of Tables | xiv |
| Notational Conventions | xv |
| Volume I: Text | xx |
| Chapter 1: Relevant Models of Textual Variation | 1 |
| 1.1 The Quantification of Choice | 4 |
| 1.2 Overview of other Models of Text | 12 |
| 1.3 Objectives of Current Study | 17 |
| Chapter 2: Text in Relation to Context and Language | 23 |
| 2.1 Language as Social Semiotic | 23 |
| 2.1.1 Language as System | 23 |
| 2.1.2 Language as Institution | 29 |
| 2.1.3 Language as Metaphor of Social Reality | 40 |
| 2.2 Generic Structure: Source or Output of Semiotic Conditioning? | 42 |
| 2.2.1 Two Competing Models of Text: An Evaluation | 55 |
| 2.3 Text as Product vs. Text as Process | 60 |
| Chapter 3: Data Design | 69 |
| 3.1 Controlled Variability in a Corpus of Texts | 69 |
| 3.1.1 Comparability vs. Differentiability | 69 |
| 3.1.2 Texts as Natural Discourse | 70 |
| 3.1.3 Dependently vs. Independently Produced Texts | 71 |
| 3.1.4 Interviewing for Texts | 79 |
| 3.1.5 Diversity within a ‘Single Interest’ Group | 80 |
| 3.2 Generic Variation | 81 |
| 3.2.1 Interaction of Genre, Field, and Question | 83 |
| 3.2.2 Formulating Interview Questions | 85 |
| 3.2.3 Asking Interview Questions | 90 |
| 3.3 The Interview in terms of a Stratified Model of Context | 96 |
| 3.3.1 Field | 96 |
| 3.3.2 Tenor | 104 |
| 3.3.3 Mode | 108 |
| Chapter 4: Towards a Synoptic Account of Text | 110 |
| 4.1 Idealisation in the Transcription of Spoken Texts | 111 |
| 4.2 Continuous Change in Structure at the Level of Lexicogrammar: The Clause Complex in English | 116 |
| 4.2.1 Providing Additional Information: The Role of Conjunctions and Reprise | 121 |
| 4.2.2 Changing the Level of Generality: The Role of Lexis | 134 |
| 4.2.3 Reiterating Information: The Role of Janus Clauses | 137 |
| 4.2.4 Presenting Closely Related Information: The Fusion of Two Clauses | 141 |
| 4.3 Generic Perturbation in Spoken Texts | 144 |

Contents

| | | |
|--|--|-----|
| 4.4 | Continuous Change at the Level of Generic Structure | 153 |
| Chapter 5: Contextual Comparability of Texts | | 160 |
| 5.1 | The Sociolinguistic Interview as Research Tool | 160 |
| 5.2 | Interview Schedule as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC) | 163 |
| 5.2.1 | Question Not in Schedule | 164 |
| 5.2.2 | Question Not Applicable to Interviewee..... | 164 |
| 5.3 | Interviewer as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC) | 165 |
| 5.3.1 | Forgetting to Ask the Elicitation Question | 166 |
| 5.3.2 | Unable to Ask the Elicitation Question..... | 167 |
| 5.3.3 | Interfering with the Elicitation Process..... | 168 |
| 5.4 | Interview as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC) | 178 |
| 5.4.1 | Response Given By Partner | 179 |
| 5.4.2 | Interruption by a Third Party or Some Event..... | 180 |
| 5.5 | Interviewee as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)..... | 188 |
| 5.5.1 | Dismissing the Elicitation Question as Trivial | 188 |
| 5.5.2 | Misunderstanding the Elicitation Question..... | 191 |
| 5.5.3 | Summary of coding SLC 8 (Q dismissed as trivial or Q misunderstood) | 194 |
| 5.6 | Analytical Techniques as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC) | 195 |
| 5.6.1 | Delimitation of Text..... | 196 |
| 5.6.2 | Identification of the Beginning of a Text..... | 197 |
| 5.6.3 | Identification of the End of a Text | 207 |
| 5.6.4 | Summary of Coding SLC 9 (Beginning/End Problems)..... | 219 |
| Chapter 6: Generic Differentiability of Texts | | 221 |
| 6.1 | The Corpus as Tool for Researching Generic Hypotheses | 221 |
| 6.2 | Narrative-type Texts | 229 |
| 6.2.1 | Recount | 230 |
| 6.2.2 | Narrative..... | 246 |
| 6.2.3 | Thematic Narrative | 265 |
| 6.3 | Expository-type Texts | 269 |
| 6.3.1 | Report (1) | 269 |
| 6.3.2 | Report (2) | 275 |
| 6.3.3 | Report (3) | 277 |
| 6.3.4 | Exposition | 280 |
| 6.4 | Relating Elicited Genres to Elicitation Questions | 283 |
| Chapter 7: Social Representativeness of Texts | | 286 |
| 7.1 | Selection of Speakers in Sample | 286 |
| 7.2 | Social Stratification of Sample | 291 |
| 7.2.1 | Sex and Age | 292 |
| 7.2.2 | Socioeconomic Class | 294 |
| 7.3 | Social Neutrality of the Sociolinguistic Interview | 304 |
| 7.4 | Social Stratification of Genre..... | 310 |
| Chapter 8: Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure | | 317 |
| 8.1 | Theme and Clause Complex: Two Aspects of Text Structure..... | 317 |
| 8.2 | Functional Hypotheses concerning the Role of Theme in Text..... | 322 |
| 8.2.1 | The Analysis of Theme in SFG..... | 327 |
| 8.2.2 | The Quantification of Themes with Text-Structural Potential..... | 331 |
| 8.2.3 | Quantificational Methods..... | 340 |
| 8.3 | Quantificational Aspects of the Analysis of the Clause Complex | 370 |
| 8.3.1 | Quantificational Methods..... | 375 |

TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text

| | | |
|--|--|-----|
| 8.3.2 | Results and Interpretation | 377 |
| 8.4 | Theme and Clause Complex Choices Related | 387 |
| Coda | | 388 |
| Appendix A: Interview Schedule | | 393 |
| Appendix B: Interviewees | | 395 |
| Appendix C: Examples of divergent codings for social groups..... | | 396 |
| Bibliography | | 397 |

Volume II: Data

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | iii |
| Contents | vi |
| Notational Conventions..... | ix |
| Part 1: Question 01 – ‘getting into dogs’ | 1 |
| Part 2: Question 08 – ‘a funny incident’ | 39 |
| Part 3: Question 10 – ‘a show success’ | 84 |
| Part 4: Question 11 – ‘a favourite story | 133 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Fig. 2-1: | Strata of the linguistic system (after Halliday 1985d:11)..... | 26 |
| Fig. 2-2: | Outline of a tri-stratal systemic-functional grammar with central systems on each stratum noted (Martin 1985a:249) | 27 |
| Fig. 2-3: | Metafunctional organisation of the linguistic system..... | 28 |
| Fig. 2-4: | Relationship of Language-as-Institution to Language-as-System..... | 39 |
| Fig. 2-5: | Language in relation to its connotative semiotics: register and genre (Martin 1985a:250)..... | 45 |
| Fig. 2-6: | Revised register categories (adapted from Martin 1984b; Poynton 1985).. | 51 |
| Fig. 2-7: | Static and active perspectives cross-classifying potential and actual (Martin 1985a:259)..... | 61 |
| Fig. 3-1: | Narrative structure (after Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972b)..... | 73 |
| Fig. 3-2: | Genres to be elicited in data collection (after Martin & Rothery 1981:11) | 82 |
| Fig. 3-3: | Generalised structure of elicitation questions..... | 94 |
| Fig. 3-4a: | Register description of interview – field | 97 |
| Fig. 3-4b: | Field network – animal (p.2) | 99 |
| Fig. 3-4b: | Field network – animal (p.3) | 100 |
| Fig. 3-5: | Register description of interview – TENOR | 105 |
| Fig. 3-6: | Register description of interview – MODE..... | 108 |
| Fig. 4-1: | Generic structure of textual example 4-35 – 35a..... | 158 |
| Fig. 5-1: | Codable responses given to questions in interview schedule..... | 161 |
| Fig. 5-2: | Relative importance of sources of lack of comparability (SLC)..... | 162 |
| Fig. 6-1: | Notional types of discourse according to two parameters (after Longacre 1983:5) | 233 |
| Fig. 6-2: | Notional text types of telling and describing..... | 243 |
| Fig. 6-3: | Narrative-type genres vs. observations elicited in response to questions intended to elicit narrative | 248 |
| Fig. 6-4: | Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative..... | 260 |
| Fig. 6-5: | Distribution of genres elicited in response to Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/accident?’)..... | 261 |
| Fig. 6-6: | Multiple gloss on genres produced in response to narrative questions .. | 263 |
| Fig. 6-7: | Incidence of narrative ‘proper’ in responses to narrative questions..... | 268 |
| Fig. 7-1: | Age distribution in speaker sample | 293 |
| Fig. 7-2: | Comparison of different codings of sample as hierarchically-ordered groups of ‘like’ speakers (1=low – 4=high) | 302 |
| Fig. 8-1: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes: ABSTRACT vs. CODA (initial)..... | 349 |
| Fig. 8-2: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre EXEMPLUM: Incident vs. Interpretation (initial)..... | 350 |
| Fig. 8-3: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre OBSERVATION: Event Description vs. Comment (initial) | 351 |
| Fig. 8-4: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre NARRATIVE: Complication vs. Evaluation vs. Resolution (initial) .. | 352 |
| Fig. 8-5: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre RECOUNT: Record vs. Reorientation (initial) | 354 |

TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Fig. 8-6: | Relative frequency of Textual Themes in REORIENTATION vs. CODA vs. COMPLICATION, EVALUATION, and RESOLUTION (initial)..... | 355 |
| Fig. 8-7: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in ABSTRACT: initial vs. non-initial..... | 356 |
| Fig. 8-8: | Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in INTERPRETATION: initial vs. non-initial | 357 |
| Fig. 8-9: | Relative frequency of $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ Sequence in selected generic stages: initial vs. non-initial | 359 |
| Fig. 8-10: | Relative and observed frequencies of Participant Chaining Themes (initial) | 364 |
| Fig. 8-11: | Relative and observed frequencies of Non-Participant Chaining Themes (initial) | 366 |
| Fig. 8-12: | Relative and observed frequencies of Extended Reference Theme in selected generic stages (initial)..... | 369 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|--------------|--|-----|
| Table 5-1: | Interview schedule as source of lack of comparability | 163 |
| Table 5-2: | Interviewer as source of lack of comparability | 166 |
| Table 5-3: | Interview as source of lack of comparability | 179 |
| Table 5-4: | Interviewee as source of lack of comparability | 188 |
| Table 5-5: | Analytical techniques as source of lack of comparability | 196 |
| Table 6-1: | Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at recount | 245 |
| Table 6-2: | Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative | 247 |
| Table 6-3: | Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative (Partial re- presentation of results in Table 6-2) | 259 |
| Table 6-4: | Genres elicited in response to question aimed at thematic narrative..... | 266 |
| Table 6-5: | Incidence of reporting vs. procedural strategies followed in texts elicited in response to report questions (2–3)..... | 279 |
| Table 6-6: | Genres elicited in response to narrative vs. expository questions..... | 284 |
| Table 7-1: | SEX x AGE distribution in speaker sample..... | 294 |
| Table 7-2: | Sample coded for occupational status (= ‘socioeconomic class’) on the basis of two sociological models | 297 |
| Table 7-3: | Comparison of different codings of sample as hierarchically-ordered groups of ‘like’ speakers (1=low – 4=high) | 302 |
| Table 7-4: | SOCIAL GROUP x SEX distribution in sample..... | 303 |
| Table 7-5: | SOCIAL GROUP x AGE x SEX distribution in sample..... | 304 |
| Table 7-6: | Distribution of speakers in sample according to SOCIAL GROUP compared with distribution of texts in corpus attributed to them | 306 |
| Table 7-7: | Recounts produced in response to Q 4 by SOCIAL GROUPS | 307 |
| Table 7-8: | Average no. of texts contributed to corpus by speakers categorised according to SEX X SOCIAL GROUP | 308 |
| Table 7-9: | Speakers’ rate of contribution of texts to corpus (125) | 312 |
| Table 7-10: | Distribution of genres in corpus (125) by ELICITATION QUESTION | 313 |
| Table 7-11a: | Distribution of genres in corpus (125) according to SEX | 315 |
| Table 7-11b: | Distribution of genres in corpus (125), minus 2 expositions, according to SOCIAL GROUP | 315 |
| Table 8-1: | Types of Non-Participant Chaining Themes | 339 |
| Table 8-2: | Observed frequency of Textual Themes in corpus (125): initial vs. non- initial | 343 |
| Table 8-3: | β^{α} Sequence in corpus (125): initial vs. non-initial | 358 |
| Table 8-4: | Observed frequency of Topical Theme in corpus (125): initial vs. non- initial | 363 |
| Table 8-5: | Choice of Projection | 378 |
| Table 8-6: | Choice of Parataxis | 382 |

Notational Conventions

The conventions listed below apply on the whole to both volumes, the major differences being that the representation of textual examples in Volume 1 is influenced by having to serve particular objectives in the context of some argument, while the primary objective in Volume 2 is to present a fair transcription of spoken texts with a simultaneous display of their generic structure and clause complex relations.

The transcription aims to strike a balance between the kind of faithfulness which records any and every noise made by interactants on the one hand and the kind of idealisation and regularisation of speech which represents speech as a carefully planned if spoken activity. While the former style of transcription may render the transcribed text quite unreadable and useless for any analysis other than one whose aims are to shed light on interaction per se, the latter is likely to give a misleading picture of both the nature of the spoken language as well as of the spontaneous production of text.

For this reason hesitation phenomena, for example, have not been transcribed but pauses have been represented. Most of the self-corrections have also not been transcribed since a 'slip of the tongue', which is corrected, or the repetition of some wording, especially when it is no more than a kind of hesitation, tell us nothing of great interest. Some instances of correction, especially where a wording 'fades out', are transcribed since the following wording at times builds on the very wording left trailing in the previous one and would itself become difficult to understand without it. Equally, some false starts have been transcribed since their wording may be built on later on in the text, e.g. by a pronominal reference to a fully lexical item in an abandoned clause at an earlier point. Lastly, the interviewer's linguistic and paralinguistic expressions of his role as listener are excluded since they are irrelevant to the largely monologic production of these texts. (See also discussions in Volume 1, Sections 4.1 and 4.3.)

The texts as presented here aim to be *readable* despite the addition of generic and grammatical coding. It is greatly regretted that there are no indications of intonation included. Apart from lying outside the interests pursued in the thesis, the inclusion of any intonation analysis in the texts themselves would have severely affected the texts' readability.

1. General

Speakers are identified as ‘GP’, the current writer and interviewer, and ‘I’, the interviewee. Where necessary, a third party is suitably identified.

Self-corrections, including ‘broken-off’ words, are indicated by a dash placed immediately to the right of the corrected item and, if such items can be excluded from the textual and grammatical analyses without distortion, they are also enclosed in single curly brackets.

Interjections by a third party, including the interviewer, as well as interpolations by the interviewee (and any responses to them by a third party) which clearly lie outside the text are enclosed in double curly brackets.

Doubtful text, i.e. text which could not be heard, is indicated by being ‘enclosed’ in empty single parentheses; similarly, if the status of the transcribed item is doubtful it is enclosed in single parentheses.

Gestures, laughter, etc., are so indicated in double parentheses.

Slips of the tongue which are not corrected are transcribed but interpreted by giving their likely meaning enclosed in single inverted commas inside double parentheses.

Pauses are indicated by three dots; no attempt is made to quantify the length of the pause except that a very lengthy pause marking the end of a text is indicated by a triple sequence of three dots.

Continuation of text which is not transcribed is indicated by ‘... (continues)’.

Conventional punctuation is largely limited to indicate group boundaries, e.g. to separate vocatives or to signify elaboration at group rank, as well as to isolate those interpersonal or textual clauses which have been ignored in the clause complex analysis, e.g. adjuncts such as *you know*, *as I told you*, *I’m sorry* (as part of reported speech), etc., as well as certain kinds of repetition such as the commonly repeated projecting clause *I said*.

In addition, conventional punctuation is also used to indicate exclamations and questions unambiguously. Elsewhere at clause rank, clause complex notation is relied on instead of standard sentence punctuation, with clause complex-initial words being capitalised redundantly.

The major exception to the practice of minimal punctuation at clause rank pertains to the need to indicate those wordings whose status as reported speech or thought is not already indicated by the clause complex notation because they are not structurally related to a projecting process. This may apply to a clause (‘simplex’) or clause complex which are clearly not projections yet still reported speech or thought in a non-structural sense, and in those instances single inverted commas are used to signify thought and double inverted commas speech; conversely, this may apply to some wording which is not part of a projected clause, such as the ubiquitous *you know* which may or may not be part of the projection, and in those instances the status of the wording excluded from the projection is indicated by virtue of the actual projection being enclosed in inverted commas contrary to the usual practice.

Spelling of ordinary words reflects non-standard pronunciation in only one instance, viz. the common *me* for *my* as in *me dog*.

Loudness as one particular realisation of prominence is indicated by upper-case spelling of the word or syllable in question.

2. Text

Boundaries of each text are indicated by three cross-hatches ###.

3. Genre

Generic structures, i.e. genre categories, are signified by name in upper-case preceding the whole text, e.g. **NARRATIVE**.

Generic stages, i.e. elements of generic structure, are signified by names in small capital letters preceding the relevant part of the text, e.g. **ORIENTATION**.

Recursed generic structures or recursed generic stages are signified by being numbered sequentially, e.g. **ARGUMENT (1)**, **ARGUMENT (2)**.

Abandoned, resumed, continued, etc., generic stages are signified as such by being labelled in parentheses, e.g. **REORIENTATION (abandoned)**.

Embedded generic structures and embedded generic stages are signified as above (in smaller print) but indented, the status of the structural ranking of all elements being inferrable from the relative position of the category labels and the relevant text, e.g.

ORIENTATION:

RECOUNT

ORIENTATION

...

RECORD

...

REORIENTATION

...

COMPLICATION

...

4. Clause complex

Logico-semantic relations are indicated by:

| | | |
|------------|-------------|---|
| EXPANSION | elaboration | = |
| | extension | + |
| | enhancement | x |
| PROJECTION | locution | “ |
| | idea | ‘ |

Tactic relations are indicated by:

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| parataxis | Arabic numerals: | 1, 2, 3 ... |
| hypotaxis | Greek letters: | α, β, γ, δ, ε ... |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Boundary markers: | | | clause complex boundary |
| | | | clause boundary |
| | | | group/phrase boundary |
| | 3 | 4 | enclosed (interpolated) clause |
| | 5 | 6 | enclosed (interpolated) group/phrase |
| | 1 | 2 | embedded (rankshifted) clause |
| | [|] | embedded (rankshifted) group/phrase |

Non-experiential clauses are not coded as part of the clause complex analysis. For example, clauses such as *you know* or rhetorical interpolations such as the ‘self-querying’ *what was the other one?* in *and he picked out two dogs, the cattle dog and a – what was the other one? – collie, sheltie*; textual clauses such as *and as I said*; and repetitions of projecting clauses such as *I said* in *I said, “Fred”, I said, “why don’t you tell him?”* will have their status as technically separate clauses indicated by conventional punctuation such as commas or hyphens and, in the latter case, ‘additionally’ by the non-application of single or double inverted commas. (However, the common modalisation *I think* is not usually ‘set apart’ from coded clauses in this way since it is rarely spoken on a separate tone group.)

Numbering in subscripts enclosed in parentheses is such that single clauses not entering into any clause complex are treated as units on a par with complexes, i.e. are treated as ‘simplexes’; e.g. (3.1) followed by (3.2) means one complex with two related clauses, whereas (4.1) followed by (5.1) etc., means that (4.1) is a single clause structurally unrelated to any other clause in the text.

Rankshifted clauses which themselves form clause complexes have their clause complex relations indicated but are left unnumbered.

Exemplification of clause complex relations

(after Halliday 1985c:197)

| paratactic | hypotactic |
|---|--|
| EXPANSION | |
| elaboration | |
| The man was very pale; 1 he didn't like dogs. =2 | My mother had had dachshunds, α which she'd bred. = β |
| extension | |
| We bought this one 1 and she was terrible. +2 | She's the worst I've ever seen α except she had a terrific nature. + β |
| enhancement | |
| John liked a beagle 1 so we bought a beagle. x2 | We kept them for a while α because it was our first litter. x β |

| | |
|---|---|
| PROJECTION | |
| locution | |
| The chap said: 1 "Oh why don't you show it?" "2 | They told me α that there was still one left in the litter. " β |
| idea | |
| I thought: 1 'I'll buy Joan a nice birthday present.' '2 | The judge thought α she was afraid of being in the ring. ' β |

Volume I: Text

Chapter 1:

Relevant Models of Textual Variation

This study is concerned with discourse as ‘text’, i.e. with questions pertaining to the production and comprehension of those stretches of languaging within the essentially continuous and unbounded (oral) discourse of ordinary daily life which are commonly perceived to be discrete units, constituting texts which are describable apart from the discourse within which they may occur. The imposition of discreteness itself, and the making of distinctions between the units thus created, is nothing more than a manifestation of the familiar human quest for creating seeming order out of seeming chaos. Some of the commonly made folk-terminological distinctions between categories of discourse, for example those between a ‘story’ and a ‘description’, are evidence for the contention that such distinctions are not inventions of professional linguists, anthropologists or semioticians but instead are based on an understanding shared by the members of a speech community that such categories reflect more or less closely related ‘types’ of languaging. This study is an attempt at making explicit the nature of some of the distinctions between types of text, the conditions of their unremarkable and unremarked-on production and comprehension, and their function in everyday spoken discourse.

The study of text as it is perceived here is part of the study of discourse generally, encompassing forms that may be spoken or written, monologic or dialogic, formal or informal, interactional or non-interactional, two-party or multi-party, and many other forms based on a multitude of other distinctions – all of which oversimplify the phenomena characteristic of discourse by presenting them as seemingly straightforward, and thus often dichotomous, choices. The focus of this study is on the structure of different text types or ‘genres’ produced by single speakers in the context of the sociolinguistic interview as originally developed by Labov (1966a). To use a distinction that has come into vogue in discourse studies in recent years, its focus is on ‘text-as-product’ rather than on ‘text-as-process’ although the meaning of this characterisation is uncertain and its adequacy doubtful.

The seemingly narrow focus on text type, studied in the context of the production of largely monologic, minimally interactional discourse, is considered warranted for two reasons: One, since the phenomenon of a seemingly bounded, relatively self-

contained text which represents a token of some text type is found in all kinds of discourse including the most highly ‘process-like’, e.g. a narrative jointly told in a multi-party conversation, it is important to understand its particular properties for a general theory of discourse to succeed; and two, although the phenomenon of relatively bounded text is found everywhere, certain aspects of discourse, specifically those which are conditioned by the particular contributions due to an individual’s group membership, can really only be studied by observing an individual’s production in a context the parameters of which can be explicitly stated to a high degree.

Within the terms of the theory of text adopted in this study, text is to be investigated in a SYNOPTIC¹ rather than a DYNAMIC perspective, the former largely corresponding to the static description which characterises all (sentence) grammars while the latter corresponds more closely to the real-time description only beginning to be developed in order to generate text by computer. The synoptic perspective is certainly the appropriate one for an investigation of text which assumes, judiciously, the existence of text types in order to better control their conditioning factors in an empirical study. But since the investigation is one of spoken texts we may confidently expect such a synoptic perspective to be found lacking at times, i.e. to reveal something about the limits of a synoptic account, demonstrating at least the desirability if not the necessity of a complementary perspective on the same text (see Section 2.3 for discussion).

The attempt to contribute to a model of discourse which aims at being ‘generative’ in the sense of being both explicit as well as oriented towards discourse production, albeit via the less ambitious pursuit of the more limited concept of text, is forced to take seriously the notion that a linguistic phenomenon that is both ‘larger’ than, and very different from, any unit at a phonological or grammatical level will exhibit variability of various kinds. One such kind of variability presents a challenge to a theory of discourse which is in principle no different from that presented to a theory of phonology or grammar. As at those levels of linguistic description, what is necessary is an explicit statement of ‘when a difference makes a difference’, and when it does not. In other words, what is necessary is an explicit formulation of the ‘emics’ and ‘etics’ of discourse pertaining to the definition of text types, to adopt the extension of a distinction familiar from phonology suggested by Pike (1954/1967). But while the

¹Terms intended to be understood as technical terms are written in small capitals at their first mention.

issue itself may be familiar from traditional linguistic analysis, the actual problem of defining and reliably identifying types of text raises the issue of variability from an at most peripheral one in phonology and syntax to a central one in discourse analysis – not the least because the work of many generations of linguists which has provided a rich foundation for any study of phonological or syntactical phenomena has absolutely no counterpart in the study of phenomena in the area of discourse or text.

The other kind of variability is different in kind from anything generally dealt with in linguistic analysis. The concept of text employed in this study views text as a semantic unit and not as some kind of giant unit of phonology, morphology or syntax. For example, the view of text as a context-free morphological pattern created without reference to meaning implicit in the work by Harris (1952) or as a syntactic unit akin to the sentence and generated in the fashion of transformational-generative grammar (TG), e.g. by van Dijk (1972), i.e. views associated with pre- and post-Chomskyan American structuralism respectively, is specifically rejected. Instead, following Halliday & Hasan (1976), Halliday (1977), text is considered a SEMANTIC UNIT which is *realised* in language, the ‘unity’ of text needing to be stated in terms of a theory of context rather than in the terms of traditional formal semantics. According to this view of text, the meanings that find their expression or realisation in text can only be found in the social and cultural context of the production and comprehension of text as encountered in everyday life. As the title of Halliday (1977) has it, text constitutes a ‘semantic choice in social contexts’. It is therefore proposed in this study that, in order to further the aim of a comprehensive model of discourse, those aspects of context that contribute to a given text being an instance of one text type rather than another be considered contextual meanings which somehow need to be built into the model itself.

Such a model of discourse or text then encompasses a number of different types of abstraction, something which presupposes a stratification of context and language similar to that accepted for the linguistic system itself, and for the same reasons, viz. to be able to relate the different types of abstraction to one another in a realisational relationship, e.g. those of dependency at the level of semantics to those of constituency at the level of syntax. Such stratification of a unified model of context and language is but a reflection of that general property of grammar which makes it possible ultimately to represent an untold number of distinctions of different kinds in a very small set of phonological distinctions.

An important consequence of a model of text which is contextually oriented in the terms described above is that the nature of the realisational relationship between context and language must be held to be one of greater or lesser likelihood, i.e. that the relationship is *probabilistic*, since categories of contextual meanings, however modelled, cannot possibly stand in a one-to-one relationship to the categories modelled at the different levels of the linguistic system. And while this is clearly the case for the relationship between context and language generally, it is equally so, and non-trivially, for the relationship between text type and text token. (In principle, this is also true for the relationship between linguistic abstractions at different levels of the linguistic system, such as between semantics and syntax, and syntax and phonology, although the degree of pre-selection of abstractions at a lower level by those made at a higher level is such as to make the statement of the realisational relationship in probabilistic terms less important.)

A direct consequence then of building context into a model of discourse is that it can only be non-categorical – while it is certainly possible to characterise, to sketch so to speak, general properties of discourse, including general properties of text types, it is impossible to state such properties truly explicitly without resorting to stating them in terms of statistical tendencies. What is therefore needed to build theoretical models of discourse or text are ways of modelling linguistic variation – and ways of incorporating the concept of linguistic variation into the empirical study of text or discourse itself.

1.1 The Quantification of Choice

Two approaches which represent quite different yet complementary kinds of linguistics in the context of the study of text, viz. M.A.K. Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, henceforth SFG, as a model of LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC and William Labov's quantificational approach to urban dialectology, in which he laid the foundations for an empirically grounded model of LANGUAGE AS A VARIABLE SYSTEM, recommend themselves to a study of the structure of text. If text is correctly viewed as the probabilistic realisation of contextual meanings, then an empirical study of text is of necessity in some sense concerned with the *quantification of choice*. While Halliday's major work is concerned with the modelling of choice in language, Labov's work is largely identified with the quantification of linguistic variation as a way to understanding processes of linguistic change, and the social distribution of linguistic choice, to name but two. Bringing together relevant aspects of their work is seen here

as a most promising route towards a theoretically rich model of text which is firmly grounded in an empirical study of texts since the quantificational methods developed by Labov, and the variationist paradigm thus initiated, potentially ‘mesh’ with the type of grammar developed by Halliday.

In his quantitative study of vowel variation in English in New York City, Labov (1966a), building on his (1963) Martha’s Vineyard study of the social motivation of sound change, not only pioneered a new way of doing empirical linguistics but also produced a study whose major theoretical outcome was the weakening of the categorical view of linguistic realisations. While the emphasis of this work was on the social conditioning of linguistic features, Labov’s (1969a) attempt at modelling such variability probabilistically in *VARIABLE RULES* sought to integrate quantitative information about the occurrence of linguistic features in their social and linguistic contexts into the grammatical description of the features themselves. The main significance of this step therefore lay in the (partial) replacement of the concept of categoricity with that of *INHERENT VARIABILITY*. Labov’s innovative approach to the study of variable linguistic behaviour has since led to the development of a whole new way of doing linguistics, variously referred to as *QUANTITATIVE LINGUISTICS*, *QUANTITATIVE PARADIGM*, *VARIATION THEORY*, etc.

Using the concerns and practices of variation theory as his point of departure, the theoretical continuity between modelling phonological and grammatical variation probabilistically is underlined by Sankoff when he says that variation theory is ‘in large part the study of to what extent these probabilities are intrinsic to language as a system, and how extrinsic considerations impinge’ (Sankoff 1978:236). But while the desirability, and even possibility, of extending Labovian-style variation studies ‘above and beyond phonology’ without this involving ‘a conceptual leap’ (G. Sankoff 1973) may have been taken for granted by most variationists, the problems of successfully doing so were certainly underestimated. As a result, the so-called linguistic variables or constraints typically investigated have largely been phonological, morphophonemic and morpho-syntactic or morpho-lexical but rarely ‘purely’ syntactic, to use a typology of the linguistic variable suggested by Romaine (1981:15).

Variation studies have typically investigated the association between the realisation of the linguistically possible variants of some linguistic variable, such as presence vs. absence of [r] as the variants of /r/ (Labov 1966a) or the alternation of *avoir* and *être* as

the realisation of the auxiliary in compound tenses of certain French verbs (G. Sankoff & Thibault 1977), and the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors likely to condition the realisation of the variable. An example of a linguistic, or internal, conditioning factor is the presence/absence of a morpheme boundary following /t,d/ in the case of final stop deletion in consonant clusters (e.g. Wolfram 1969). Non-linguistic, or external, conditioning factors commonly pertain to speaker, typically speakers' sex, class, ethnicity, etc., as well as to style, typically features of the social context in which the language data was produced such as 'casual style', 'reading style', 'interview style', etc. While such non-linguistic or external conditioning was in early work typically accounted for not in a variable rule but in a separate statement of such conditioning effects (cf. Wolfram & Fasold 1974:118, fn.16), current analyses using the varbrul programs developed by D. Sankoff incorporate both types of conditioning factor. (For a discussion concerning the mathematical modelling of such constraints, see Kay 1978; Kay & McDaniel 1979; Sankoff & Labov 1979.)

It has been an unstated assumption in almost all variation studies that the linguistic variables to be studied are those whose postulated variants mean 'the same thing', i.e. have the 'same truth-value' (Labov 1978:2). (But see Romaine (1981) for a critique of Labov's use of the concept of truth-conditional equivalence.) Responding to a demand by Lavandera (1978) for an extension of variation studies to the study of meaningful variation, Labov restates a classic functional interpretation of language derived from Bühler (1934), viz. that there are

two major functions of language that are opposed to the representational use:
the self-identification of the speaker, and his accommodation to the listener.

and goes on to conclude – very much on behalf of variationists everywhere, considering the examples of studies cited – that

To the extent that we recognize their importance, we will take a narrow view of
representational meaning.

(Labov 1978:2-3)

In other words, the variationist position, at least as enunciated by Labov, is that although the significance of representational meanings is acknowledged in principle, the linguistic variation actually to be studied may be meaningful only in the sense that it reflects a speaker's self-identification and his accommodation to his listener, captured by the external variables 'speaker' and 'style' that are typically part of a variationist study. Variation of that kind, studied by investigating some so-called

‘sociolinguistic variable’, i.e. a linguistic variable which is said to ‘correlate(d) with some nonlinguistic variable of the social context’ in a regular way (Labov 1972e:237), is always tacitly assumed to be meaningful only in the sense of what (Hudson 1980:179) calls an ‘index of membership strength’. (For variation studies which explicitly reject the straitjacket of ‘truth-conditional equivalence’, thereby effectively abandoning the concept of the sociolinguistic variable as defined by Labov, and which rely instead on a concept of ‘functional equivalence’, see Dines 1980; Lavandera 1981; Schiffrin 1985b.)

Variation studies have regularly demonstrated correlations between the linguistic behaviour of speakers and the social features considered to be criterial of their group membership, thus providing a base line, quantitatively speaking, for a further, and conceptually different, kind of ‘stylistic’ variation which is due to two kinds of interaction, viz. (i) due to differences between the linguistic tasks performed by speakers of the same group; and (ii) due to differences in interaction with members of different groups when performing the same task. It is this latter type of variation, the ‘stylistic’ or contextual variation, which is functional in the sense of Bühler’s functional model of language adduced by Labov. The differential behaviour of speakers according to social group membership, geographical provenance, generation, age, etc., is clearly just as ‘functional’ but by reference to a model of society and its vertical and horizontal stratification rather than a model of language production in context, of language-in-use.

It is my contention that the achievements of variation theory in demonstrating the patterned association of certain types of linguistic phenomena, i.e. mainly phonological and low-level syntactic ones, with extra-linguistic phenomena were made possible initially because of the restriction of its data to that which is meaningful only in the sense of signifying ‘solidarity’, such solidary behaviour being largely influenced by who the speaker is interacting with and by what he is doing. Although Labov himself argues that this limitation is a necessary restriction of the domain of variationists’ investigations in order to achieve the necessary rigour, it could equally be argued that the limitations were – at the time – at least partly a reflection of the Bloomfieldian legacy in American linguistics which eschewed statements of meaning other than those in a formal semantic sense. Although the development of ‘pragmatics’ since then has of course led to a lively concern with contextual meaning, it is arguable whether

pragmatics is actually widely considered to be part of language in the sense of the phenomena of its descriptive domain being considered part of a theory of grammar.

However, it may also be argued that the limitations on the phenomena to be investigated are very likely partly due to the type of grammatical model within which most variation studies are set, viz. typically some version of a transformational grammar (see also Hudson 1986b:1054), which is concerned with modelling linguistic structures, rather than choices, and with speakers as psycho-cognitive rather than as social beings. And while variationists have found it perfectly possible to operate successfully with a dichotomy of linguistic vs. non-linguistic, or extra-linguistic, variables or constraints in the domain of phonological variation, the lack of a fully developed functional model of language which might permit the investigation of grammatical variation, i.e. of linguistic behaviour that is very likely to be meaningful in the widest sense, has stood in the way of the study of grammatical variation within variation theory. Put differently therefore, I would contend that had Labov (1966a) attempted to quantify linguistic variation of a representational kind, the model of grammar available to him as the dominant one in American linguistics at the time, i.e. TG, would not have lent itself as readily to the study of syntactic variation as the formalism of TG did to the study of phonological or low-level syntactic variation did.

But any attempt at an empirical investigation of textual variation, and likewise any attempt at building a generative model of text, depends on a model of language which facilitates the probabilisation of grammar, i.e. a model of language which takes seriously the otherwise unremarkable observation, since reflecting a fundamental Saussurean insight, that 'The fact that grammatical structures incorporate choice as a basic building block means that they accept probabilization in a very natural way, mathematically speaking.' (Sankoff 1978:235). However, the grammatical model which in a very general way provides the theoretical background for most variation studies, i.e. some form of generative grammar ultimately derived from TG, does not accept probabilisation in a very natural way because of its focus on structure rather than choice. Furthermore, TG as a model of a linguistic competence that is to be explained in terms of individual psychology, and which seeks to model such competence essentially at the level of the sentence in terms of rule-governed behaviour, does not make it the obvious model for the study of textual variation.

On the other hand, the theoretical thrust of Halliday's SFG as a model of a linguistic potential that is to be explained in terms of the social life of speakers, and which seeks to model linguistic choice at all levels of the linguistic system as a resource, contrasts markedly with that of TG. It is in these two respects, viz. having a focus on paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic relations and on the social vs. the psychological, that SFG and TG differ most significantly and it is for the above reasons that Halliday's model of a functional relationship between language and context, and which models the relations obtaining as choices, suggests itself as the model most suitable for a study of text. (Hudson's (1986a) view that the difference between SFG and TG is theoretically minimal and essentially one of different research interests, SFG simply being more concerned with a study of text, would probably come as somewhat of a surprise to most linguists acquainted with both theories.)

Halliday's work is premised on a particular perception of the nature of language and of the linguist's role vis-à-vis the object of his study, viz. (i) that language is a meaning system; and (ii) that it is the linguist's task to account for it as such. The name 'systemic-functional' given to Halliday's model reflects the two principal strategies used to accomplish this goal: language is modelled systemically, i.e. as a system of choices, and it is interpreted functionally, i.e. its form is motivated by what language has to do for its speakers. A functional interpretation of language makes possible a unifying theory of language and its context and it is this which Halliday's concept of 'language as social semiotic' aims at by placing 'language in the context of the culture as a semiotic system' (Halliday 1978a:191; emphasis added). It is this conceptualisation of language and its environment as systems of meaningful, dialectically related choices, as 'meaning potentials' (Halliday 1972) in both a phylogenetic and an ontogenetic sense, which provides the theoretical basis for successfully extending the study of phonological variation pioneered by Labov to syntactic variation.

Central to Halliday's thinking is the concept of choice, formalised in a system of choices in a technical sense. It is 'systemic choice' on which Halliday's entire model of language as a social semiotic (system) rests. The model incorporates the notion of the variable realisation, and therefore of necessity probabilistic realisation, of context in language and for this reason Labov's concept of inherent variability (in the individual), whether conditioned linguistically ('internally') or socially ('externally'), seems perfectly compatible with functional concepts of the determination of linguistic choices

by contextual ones. In fact, Halliday's model – being systemic and functional – makes it possible to contemplate the probabilisation of grammar begun with the postulation of variable rules in the context of phonological variation by Labov (1969a). (The concept of a 'variety grammar' developed by the *Heidelberger Forschungsprojekt* on second-language acquisition by foreign workers in Germany is clearly relevant here although the grammatical model underlying their work – a context-free phrase structure grammar – is arguably not the way to build a general model of language in context; see Klein & Dittmar 1979.)

Although the idea that language is in some sense probabilistic is not new, as Sankoff (1978) points out, it is largely due to Labov's work that the concept of probability has become respectable again in language studies. (See Sankoff 1978 for a review of the history of probability in linguistics; also Sankoff (1986) for an interpretation of the role of probability in variation theory.) Halliday's interest in incorporating the concept of probability in grammatical theory goes back to the use of probability in early information theory (Shannon & Weaver 1949; see also Cherry 1957/1966). Its influence can be traced to his earliest published work, Halliday (1956), where he expresses the relations between the grammatical categories of Modern Chinese in terms of their probability of occurrence. Even before that though, in his doctoral dissertation in 1955 (= Halliday 1959), he had made the detailed and comprehensive statement on the frequency of grammatical categories in a fourteenth century text of Chinese part of his description.

It was Halliday's work on the grammar of Chinese, incorporating quantificational statements as it did, which led him to hypothesise: (i) that grammars are inherently probabilistic (Halliday 1961:259, 1971c/1973:116); and (ii) that grammatical systems principally belong to one of two types in terms of probability: In one type of system, its categories or features are likely to occur with a distribution tending towards equiprobability, i.e. they occur with a ratio of 1:1, while in the other type of system, its categories or features are likely to tend towards a strongly 'skewed' distribution, i.e. a distribution with a ratio in the order of 9:1.² So, in addition to believing with Labov, in very broad terms, that the relationship between language and its semiotic environment is probabilistic, Halliday also hypothesises that the linguistic system itself is probabilistic. His position thus goes beyond that which is implied by the application of

²I first heard Michael Halliday expound the hypothesis in any detailed form in a seminar conducted by him in the Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney, in April 1979; see also Halliday (1987a).

the concept of probability to the relationship between choices in a structure in variation theory.

Although the research interests of Halliday and Labov are very different, the basic position taken by both on the nature of (at least some aspects of) linguistic variation, viz. that it is both functional and realised probabilistically, is very similar. The work of both scholars is often referred to as ‘sociolinguistics’ and both reject the label where it is intended to imply a contrast between ‘socio’ linguistics and linguistics ‘proper’. However, the direction taken by each within a linguistics for which the social nature of language is a fundamental tenet is very different.

Halliday considers his functional linguistics a ‘sociological’ linguistics in the sense of Firth (1935/1957:27) – cf. Halliday (1974b/1978a:35) – since his model of language and its determining semiotic environment incorporates theories of social structure and process (Halliday 1978b:108ff). Labov on the other hand considers his linguistics to be a ‘social’ linguistics which is characterised by ‘the use of data from the speech community to solve problems of linguistic theory’ (Labov 1966a:v). The discontinuity in their work thus lies in the status given to social facts: For Halliday, they are part of a general social-semiotic theory focusing on language while for Labov they are outside linguistic theory but have explanatory value for problems dealt with in the theory, e.g. for theoretical problems concerned with linguistic change.

Whereas Halliday’s work tends to minimise the dichotomy of ‘language as object’ vs. ‘language as instrument’ by a constantly shifting focus between language and society with the goal of building a model of a human meaning system in which language plays a central role, Labov’s perspective essentially maintains the dichotomy but reverses the familiar position of the (non-linguist) social scientist whose object of study is society and for whom language is an instrument to better study it. Such a difference in emphasis notwithstanding, the fact that Halliday and Labov share a commitment to the study of language as a social phenomenon, i.e. share an ‘inter-organism’ perspective, and are thereby clearly distinguished from linguists pursuing an ‘intra-organism’ perspective (cf. Halliday 1974a:81) makes the task of bringing about a synthesis of their theoretical approaches all the more interesting.

The work on linguistic variation initiated by Labov (1963, 1966a) represents a strong reaction against an American structuralist linguistics which had its basis in the Saussurean dichotomy of ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ and which posited language in a

collective consciousness but divorced it from its speakers, thus paving the way for a linguistics whose data was the linguist's intuition. Halliday, on the other hand, continues in the tradition of a Firthian linguistics which never accepted the Saussurean dichotomy (cf. Lyons's 'Foreword' to Labov 1972c). Also, Firth's demand that there always be a 'renewal of connection' has meant that in the work of Firth's students a constant testing of linguists' abstractions against 'operational' or contextualised language, rather than an exclusive reliance on 'citational' or dictionary-like language, has prevented the development of those 'abstract systems of qualitative and deductive thinking that have dominated linguistics in its more philosophical, categorical mode' criticised by Labov (1975:229).

Approaching Labov's work from a systemic perspective, it is the continuity with a Firthian, i.e. European, linguistics which impresses and rather less the challenge to an orthodoxy not shared in the first instance. It is therefore not doing violence to either scholar to attempt an extension of variation studies to meaningful variation, i.e. to extend the domain of variation studies to syntactic variation as any concern with textual variation must be, and be prepared to consider such syntactic variation to be at least potentially synonymous with semantic variation.

1.2 Overview of other Models of Text

The model of text adopted for this study will be one that has been developed in SFG, and its description will be the subject of Chapter 2. One of the main advantages of using a SFG model of text – especially so in an empirical study – lies in the very fact that it is underpinned by a functional grammar which relates its categories to context, and it is this aspect which makes Halliday's 'comprehensive analysis of English [one] which is relatively easy to apply to texts – something which no other school has to offer' as Hudson (1986a:793) observes. There are many points of contact between SFG models of text and other models developed within different theoretical frameworks, both within linguistics and in other disciplines. But if it is true to say that grammatical theories are not generally noted for their applicability to text, it is equally true that most models of text are not noted for their ability to be easily related to theories of grammar.

The SFG approach to text adopted in this study will obviously be most closely related to other functional models of texts, most prominent among these being the

model proposed by Labov & Waletzky (1967) and developed in Labov's (1972b) (partly quantitative) study of certain aspects of oral narrative. The reason for this is that Labov, at least implicitly, also operates with the concept that non-linguistic meanings which are shared collectively and whose interpretation is based on convention, i.e. which are cultural meanings, are realised in language. On the other hand, the work by Longacre (1974, 1976, 1977, 1983) on text structure, while functional in orientation, is less suitable to a study of text aspiring to contribute to – if not itself achieving – a quantitative account of textual variation since it does not seek to account for generic structure in terms of the realisation of non-linguistic meanings but instead in the 'sentence-to-text' extension of syntax favoured in tagmemics; see also Pike & Pike (1983).

Ultimately similarly syntactic approaches to text go back to Propp's (1958) formulation of a 'morphology' for the Russian folktale, originally published in 1928, and to Harris' (1952) procedurist approaches to text analysis in linguistics. While Harris' distributional approach has little appeal today, the concept of a story grammar implicit in Propp's work was revived by Rumelhart (1975) and survives in concepts now largely pursued in the domain of cognitive science such as frame, script, outline, schema, scenario, etc., all of which seek to capture the structure of text generally, i.e. not only of 'story' text, in terms of text processing, both from the point of view of production and of comprehension; see for example Schank & Abelson (1977). The most rigorously syntactic approach is to be found in work which seeks to describe text in terms of the sentence by extending the descriptive apparatus used for the latter to the former, e.g. in the TG style work of van Dijk (1977, 1980) and van Dijk & Kintsch (1978, 1983) on semantic macro-structures in text. All of these approaches are primarily concerned with modelling genre in terms of its formal semantic properties and/or its psychological processing in the individual speaker rather than with relating a cultural/ contextual concept to its realisation in language. (See reviews in de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981; Brown & Yule 1983.)

Other approaches to text, collectively labelled discourse analysis by Levinson (1983:286ff) in a review which contrasts them rather unfavourably with conversational analysis (see below), owe much to concepts developed in speech act theory. For example, the approach pioneered by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), and developed in a number of publications by members of the English Language Research group at the University of Birmingham – see especially the papers in Coulthard & Montgomery

(1981), and Stubbs (1983) – and by Berry (1981b), Edmondson (1981) is concerned with building models of discourse units, such as a largest unit ‘lesson’ in their original work on classroom interaction. For the purposes of an empirical study of many texts, the Sinclair & Coulthard model is insufficiently oriented towards the production of text and as a result is relatively inexplicit, its extensive listing of discourse units, which are in practice a kind of speech act, notwithstanding. As a result, the model turns out to be rather unsuitable for the study of textual variation since it assumes, in Labov’s terms, a high degree of categoricity despite its concern with sequencing in actual discourse, that is, a concern which is virtually unknown in speech act theory itself.

(The concept of a discourse unit is superficially related to both Firthian situation types and Hymesian speech events (see below), i.e. to functional and anthropological models respectively, an impression largely created by a selective adoption of Hallidayan concepts; see Coulthard (1977) for a critique of Halliday and, conversely, Berry (1981a:120-1) for a critique of the model’s half-hearted use of Halliday. See Butler (1985:148ff) for a detailed and – unlike Levinson (1983) – sympathetic discussion of the discourse analysis approach pioneered by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975).)

The concern with sequencing in discourse found in the Birmingham type of discourse analysis work is shared with the approach to discourse known as conversational analysis, pioneered by Sacks (1972a, b, 1974); Schegloff (1968); Jefferson (1972); Schegloff & Sacks (1973); Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) and others within a branch of sociology referred to as ethnomethodology. Here the concern is primarily with the ‘interactional’ aspects of text production, conversational analysts’ almost exclusive interest being in the systematics of adjacency pairing and turn-taking in multi-party interaction that is largely linguistically constituted. The great value of the conversational analysis approach lies in its close attention to real data while perhaps its greatest shortcoming, despite occasional defensive claims to the contrary (cf. Levinson 1983:368), lies in its severely limited potential to contribute to linguistic theory in the sense of a theory of grammar. For the purposes of this study, however, the main limitation of the conversational analysis model lies in its not having very much to say about units of text other than conversation.

By contrast the model of an ethnography of speaking developed by Hymes (1962, 1964/1972, 1967, 1971a,b,c) in the strong tradition of American anthropological

linguistics not only seeks to contribute to linguistic theory in a much wider sense, it also has strong connections with the Firthian model of a contextual theory of language via its roots in anthropology by way of Malinowski. In fact, one of the earliest, and still best, examples of a description of an (at least partly) linguistically realised social activity in the early Firthian model, that of buying/selling livestock and wheat in North African markets by Mitchell (1957), is in its general thrust not unlike the descriptions of speech events favoured by Hymes. The relationship, however oblique, between the contextual models of Firth (1950) and Hymes (1962), and between both their models and the functional model put forward by Jakobson (1960) in the pursuit of very different descriptive goals, is evident in the various categories put forward by Hymes as constitutive of a 'situation', such as sender, receiver, message form, etc., as well as of the functions of language considered to be potentially characteristic of any one speech event, such as expressive, directive, poetic, etc. Unlike Firth's contextual model and its development by linguists with a primary interest in linguistic theory, which ultimately led to their seeking to relate context to grammar and vice versa, and thereby effectively to extend the descriptive domain of grammar, the descriptive goals of Hymes' model remain ethnographic. However, without a functional theory of grammar to motivate its situational abstractions, and its functional interpretations of situations, the model lacks the relatability of models of text to models of grammar noted above.

Lastly, models of text types or genre cannot be discussed without reference to classical models of rhetoric since its modern descendants are certainly part of models of text in education, perhaps most prominently so in the USA but also in 'communication' studies in strongly vocationally oriented degree courses at a number of second-tier tertiary institutions in Australia. Such models of rhetoric are considered models of 'the art of using language effectively' (Brooks & Warren 1972/1979:5), i.e. models of language-in-use. Such an impression is unwarranted, however, since these educational models of rhetoric are essentially based on precepts of logic derived from philosophy as applied to public speaking.³ Their linguistic content, even in the sense of traditional school grammar, is negligible as any teaching text of rhetoric soon shows, the occasional involvement of linguists in such enterprises notwithstanding (cf. for example Young, Becker & K. Pike 1970). Instead, such courses appear to be more informed by the pop philosophy of commercial success of a Dale Carnegie than the

³The SOED definition of rhetoric is illuminating here: 'The art of critical examination into the truth of an opinion: in earlier English use, a synonym of LOGIC as applied to formal rhetorical reasoning; logical disputation'.

scholarship of linguists. Needless to say, prescriptive models of this kind have little to contribute to a study of text as it would be understood by discourse analysts generally.

A model which attempts to give a model of rhetoric linguistic content has recently been put forward under the name of rhetorical structure theory (RST) by workers in computer text generation (Mann 1984; Mann & Thompson 1985, 1986, 1987, to appear, to appear (eds.); Matthiessen & Thompson 1989). Its thrust is to relate logical structures at the level of text, i.e. the logical propositions implicitly held in rhetoric to account for the generic structures of different types of text, to language. RST does this in the first instance by considering the logical relations between propositions to be realised in the clause complex at the level of lexicogrammar and, in the second instance, by considering the cross-classifying interclausal relations of taxis and logico-semantics postulated by Halliday (1985c) as in fact the grammaticalisation of text-structural relations (see esp. Matthiessen & Thompson 1989).

The RST model of text makes the very strong claim that text can be adequately represented in a single, constituency-type structure whose arguments are usually controlled in a hierarchy characterised by dependency relations of hypotaxis, formally modelled in the relationship between a nucleus and its satellite(s). Rather than offer an alternative model of text, RST appears to offer an alternative analysis of conjunctive-type relations in text (cf. Matthiessen & Mann 1987). And, as Steiner (1985) observes, it is by no means obvious how those aspects of rhetoric which deal with logical concepts and inferences, 'dialectics' in the classical model, are to be related to context. While RST undoubtedly captures some important and interesting aspects of text structure, the context of its development, a computer text-generation project whose aim is to generate brief written texts of an information-giving kind, seems to have led to a serious neglect of many aspects which contribute to text structure.⁴

The aim of this regrettably brief overview of approaches to the study of text has been limited to motivating the choice of a model that is particularly relevant to the study of textual variation to be undertaken; undoubtedly, the approaches developed outside SFG have much to offer and wherever relevant and possible reference to these will be made in subsequent descriptions and discussions. (For a more detailed review of various approaches to text, especially interactional text, from a SFG perspective, see Ventola 1987.)

1.3 Objectives of Current Study

An empirical investigation of text set in a probabilistic model of language would seem to entail the testing of the hypothesis that linguistic choices are conditioned by contextual ones as one of its major objectives. In fact, it may even be argued that any attempt at accounting for the variation between corpus texts at a linguistic level must be synonymous with such hypothesis testing since the only real evidence for any contextual or generic categories postulated to account for such variation can only be indirect evidence of a quantitative kind: It is only by demonstrating a statistical correlation between two sets of categories which are realisationally related that we can have confidence in our theoretical model of text, the categories set up within that model, and our coding of corpus data. In other words, only an empirical study of text which achieves its goals as comprehensively as for example Labov's (1966a) study of phonological variation succeeded in demonstrating the social stratification of English in New York City can provide the evidence which would allow us to accept or reject the hypothesis that context and language are not only related realisationally but that such a realisational relationship is a probabilistic one. Ultimately, the only meaningful statements in such a model are quantitative ones.

However, for such an attempt at hypothesis testing to succeed, i.e. for an empirical study such as this one to have any chance of yielding results which would have clear evidential status in a probabilistic model, it is essential to be working with well-defined categories at all levels of abstraction. Yet the obvious problem for an empirical study is that the categories appealed to in the area of textual studies generally, compared with categories at the levels of lexicogrammar or phonology, are theoretically underdetermined. Compared with the study of phonological variation, which presents few problems when it comes to the linguistic categories themselves and a very limited range of problems in terms of contextual categories by virtue of the self-limitations imposed on the object of study, the study of textual variation has very little secure ground on which to build. (A similar argument is used by Horvath & Sankoff (1987) in support of their use of a type of factor analysis, viz. principal components analysis, of phonological variation to overcome the grouping problems created for the linguist interested in correlating linguistic with social phenomena by the similarly theoretically ill-defined nature of the social category 'class'.)

4Bill Mann glossed the meaning of 'brief' as being of 'paragraph-length' in the context of his presentation of Mann & Matthiessen (1987) at the 14th International Systemic Workshop, Sydney (August 24–28, 1987).

But while it is presumably this underdetermination of theoretical constructs which leads Levinson (1983:286ff) to accuse the practitioners of what he calls discourse analysis-type approaches – which, although ignored in his review, must be considered to include the approaches developed within SFG – of premature theorising, of the setting up of unwarranted categories, and of intuitive coding, its ultimate cause is to be found in the probabilistic nature of the realisation of meanings in text itself rather than in the shortcomings of the practitioners of discourse analysis. Rather than consider this state of affairs a classic Catch 22 situation, the study of text structure presents us with the kind of questions which can only be resolved by a dialectic interaction between theory building and empirical investigation, i.e. by a constant shifting between the linguistic system underlying all text and its actualisation in text (or process) in Hjelmslev's (1943/1961) formulation. Any attempt at extending grammatical description (in the widest sense) to discourse must make recourse to empirical studies, i.e. must study actual texts, not merely in order to test the validity of hypothesised constructs – corresponding to having the grammaticality of some sentence structure judged by speakers other than the analyst – but in order to discover the structure of text itself as it is constituted by the probabilistic realisation of choices in the linguistic system underlying text. Despite Chomsky's (1965:52ff) wholesale dismissal of 'the taxonomic, data-processing approach of modern linguistics', it is difficult to see how any attempt at building theoretical models of discourse could be other than empirical. (See also discussion in Section 2.1.1.)

A further problem for an empirical study of text set in a probabilistic model is that the goal of investigating an amount of data which is large enough to yield quantitative results which are capable of being interpreted probabilistically essentially conflicts with the equally important goal of being explicit and exhaustive – in other words, the goal of exhaustively analysing a large number of texts in respect of all possibly relevant lexicogrammatical realisations, and in terms of any contextual categories postulated, making the basis of the latter analyses sufficiently explicit for them to be replicable. It must be self-evident that it is not possible for a single researcher to achieve both those goals satisfactorily – nor am I aware of any well-funded research project which has ever attempted to achieve such a goal.

But the characterisation of text as a probabilistically realised semantic unit has been somewhat overstated if taken to imply an all-or-nothing state of affairs which completely dictates the nature of research into text. Text in the sense of text type – and

that, as will be argued in Chapter 2, means essentially text with a unique structure – is neither realised entirely probabilistically nor are all contextual choices relevant to the creation of text structure expected to be realised with the same probability.

Analyses of texts rely to a great extent on specific, identifiable textual clues rather than on a patterning of linguistic choices which is essentially non-discrete, text-wide and thus potentially probabilistic in nature. Such textual clues are typically of two kinds, viz. those which signal a text's genre globally, and those which signal its structure locally. Global signals of generic structure, commonly interpreted as characterisations of particular text types or genres, are typically found in lexicalisations, e.g. story, description, opinion, etc. but also in 'prefaces' (Stubbs 1983:183) such as *once upon a time*; *did you hear the one about ...?*; *did I ever tell you how .../what happened when ...*; *I remember...*, and similarly unique indicators of text types. This type of signal, itself a type of realisation of some higher-level meaning, will be referred to as *indexical realisation* (see also Halliday 1985d:39).

Local signals of generic structure are variously referred to as 'boundary markers', 'misplacement markers' (Schegloff & Sacks 1973), 'frames' (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) and 'discourse markers' (Labov & Fanshel 1977; Schiffrin 1987). They are typically realised grammatically, e.g. in 'extended or text reference' by phoric items such as *this/that* (Halliday & Hasan 1976), marked circumstantial Themes, continuative Themes such as *well*, *anyway*, etc. (cf. Halliday 1985c) and in many other ways besides. Such signals mark local structure both prospectively and retrospectively and their function as marker can only be inferred on the basis of their place in text, i.e. they do not realise local structure bi-uniquely. This type of realisation will be referred to as *discrete realisation*.

The type of realisation which has been assumed in this chapter as the probabilistic realisation of higher-level meanings par excellence is that which is found in patterns of lexicogrammatical choices text-wide, for example in patterns of process types, lexical choices, etc. (see the discussion in Chapter 2). This type of realisation will be referred to as *dispersed realisation*. Since it is clearly impossible to quantify a large number of choices in a large number of texts, a study such as this will have to limit itself to one or two lexicogrammatical choices which make a significant contribution to text structure.

The three types of realisation introduced above may in some sense be seen as constituting different 'levels of probabilisticness', rather than simply being

± probabilistic, since even the most indexically-marked text is only likely to be realising the higher-level meaning indicated by the indexical marker in a probabilistic fashion at the other levels of realisation. Since all three levels of probabilisticness, all three types of realisation, function jointly to realise contextual meanings in text, they may be usefully employed towards building up a model of the probabilistic realisation of context in language. In this way, realisational statements about text and context may be made at different orders of generality, illuminating different aspects of text, thereby still ultimately contributing towards an empirical study of text which is quantitative – rather than ‘merely’ maximally accountable – and the development of a model of text that is probabilistic.

In addition to such a goal of contributing to a probabilistic model – rather than somewhat precipitously aiming to accomplish it in one fell swoop – there is one further goal which is not to be underrated at this stage of our knowledge of text. Again compared with the study of phonological variation there is very little in the way of a consensus as to how to study textual variation, and certainly nothing like the acceptance of what by now is regarded as orthodox scientific method in the variationist paradigm. While it may be a truism that there is much to be gained from an explicit account of texts, I would contend that there is as much to be gained from an explicit account of a production of texts which is carefully controlled in the sense of a scientific experiment.

It seems inevitable then that the goals of this study have to be very much more limited than the theoretical model of text would compel one to accept as inevitable. Obviously, while no researcher simply wishes to engage in a great deal of descriptive work without being able to proceed to generalisations on the basis of it, it has to be accepted in an empirical study into text that there is as yet a great deal to learn about text, its contextual conditioning and its linguistic realisations, and that any one researcher can only expect to be making a contribution to a growing body of knowledge.

The thesis consists of two volumes, Volume 1 presenting a discussion of text and Volume 2 a set of analysed texts which seeks to support the hypotheses about text structure advanced in Volume 1. The structure of the thesis is to present a detailed discussion in Chapter 2 of the model of text adopted and the grammatical theory within which it is located, i.e. SFG. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a discussion of the data

design of the study which will argue the need for a sound theoretical underpinning of any empirical study of text on the assumption that a theoretical concept such as text cannot be studied successfully in an atheoretical fashion.

At their most general the following four chapters are in one form or another concerned with issues of accountability. Chapter 4 develops the case for the analysis of the corpus data in a synoptic perspective despite the abundant evidence for the possibility of a complementary dynamic perspective on the same text, and it does so by ranging from clause level and below to the level of text structure itself. It seeks to demonstrate both the scope and the limitations of a synoptic perspective on text and ends up by arguing for the essential grammaticality of spoken text but also by demonstrating the need for the development of a grammar for spoken discourse.

Chapter 5 then firmly adopts the synoptic perspective on text which is the general focus of this study, developing the concept of a ‘codable text’ by aiming at an optimum degree of contextual comparability of texts, i.e. it begins by taking all of the data gathered in the course of a large number of sociolinguistic interviews as given and then sets out to define clearly what is to be considered data for the purposes of a study of text with an ultimately quantitative goal in mind.

Chapter 6 accounts for all of the codable, i.e. contextually comparable texts, in the corpus in both qualitative and quantitative terms, by relating the texts obtained to their elicitation questions. Generic hypotheses are advanced which seek to explain the variation obtained, relating the realisations of genres to an interpretation of the cultural meanings which related generic choices may be considered to constitute.

Chapter 7 is concerned with relating the corpus texts to the speakers who produced them. Beginning with a fairly standard Labovian account of the social stratification of the speakers in the sample, it then goes on to investigate the social neutrality of the sociolinguistic interview and concludes with an account of speakers’ generic choices in a context which gave everyone the chance to behave alike linguistically.

Chapter 8 is essentially concerned with the realisations of the contextual conditioning of the corpus texts in language. In the first part of the chapter this is done by an investigation of clause Theme, of both the seemingly transparent markers of generic structure, i.e. the so-called discourse or boundary markers, and of topical Theme, the choice most closely resembling topic in different approaches, in order to provide some quantitative evidence for the postulation of stages of generic structure. In

the second part of the chapter we will investigate a type of grammatical choice which is equally clearly implicated in the creation of text structure yet whose meaning is far from transparent, viz. the logico-semantic and tactic choices which relate clauses in the clause complex, thus leading to the ‘packaging’ sometimes referred to as paragraphing in speech.

The choice of clause complex relations is investigated not only for all the conditioning factors accounted for in the model, i.e. both ‘textual’ and social conditioning factors, but in order to account fully for the variation between individual texts it is investigated by means of log-linear analysis, i.e. the type of statistical analysis on which the several versions of variable rule programs developed by Sankoff are based and which are widely used in variation theory; see Sankoff & Labov (1979).

We will conclude with a Coda – perhaps aptly so after what will have been a rather lengthy story. We hope that by attempting to stand back from the very deep involvement in the study of so much text we might be able to look back fruitfully over the beginning of this study in order to assess where we ended up – theoretically speaking. We will be seeking to draw out some of the implications of the work presented for both systemic-functional grammar as well as for the study of discourse regardless of the theoretical orientation of its student.

The discursive part of the thesis in Volume 1 – the development and investigation of generic hypotheses – will be supported by a Volume 2 which, although simply entitled ‘Data’, will be anything but a mere collection of textual data. Instead, it will contain a subset of 125 corpus texts analysed for their generic structure, which in itself forms the basis of the texts’ categorisations as belonging to certain types of text, as well as for their organisation at the level of the clause and the clause complex, in effect showing their maximal organisation in terms of grammatical structure and their significant organisation in terms of text or generic structure, the former constituting an important aspect of the realisation of the latter. The volume of texts thus aims at a degree of accountability not commonly found in discourse analysis, thereby offering a convenient starting point for a serious critique of the work presented in this thesis.

Chapter 2:

Text in Relation to Context and Language

In this chapter we will first be describing in some detail Halliday's model of 'language as a social semiotic', and its contribution to the study of text. This will be followed by the critical discussion of two SFG models of text and context whose competing claims turn on the degree of stratification proposed for a level of context, i.e. effectively on the distinction between CONTEXT OF SITUATION and CONTEXT OF CULTURE respectively proposed by Malinowski (1923) and Malinowski (1935). Lastly, the opposition between text-as-product and text-as-process will be examined for its significance for the description of text of the kind focused on here.

2.1 Language as Social Semiotic

Halliday's conceptualisation of 'language in the context of the culture as a semiotic system' is briefly discussed by focusing on three major levels of abstraction in turn: (i) language as system; (ii) language as institution; and (iii) language as metaphor of social reality.

2.1.1 Language as System

The basic organising principle of SFG is *paradigmatic*, a focus which constitutes a development away from earlier, related models such as Firth's 'system-structure' model (see papers in Firth 1957; Palmer 1968; Mitchell 1975) and Halliday's 'scale & category' model (Halliday 1961), which gave equal weight to paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. (See Halliday (1976a) for a collection of papers tracing the development of the current 'systemic' model, contrasting the derivation 'systemic' with a non-technical 'systematic'; cf. Firth 1950/1957:187.) Systemic CHOICES or OPTIONS, which are made neither consciously nor in real-time, are modelled in a system, which is defined as

a set of options with an entry condition: that is to say, a set of things one of which must be chosen, together with a statement of the conditions under which the choice is available

(Halliday 1976a:3)

The entry condition of a system is itself an option in a prior system so that systems may be said to model options in terms of the logical priority of certain options over other options. This ordering of options or choices into a system, and of systems into networks of systems, essentially reflect a scale of differentiation or depth of detail between grammatical distinctions referred to as a scale of delicacy, with distinctions between choices being made on a scale from ‘primary delicacy’ to ‘most delicate’ (Halliday 1961:272). In a system of mood⁵, for example, the distinction between indicative and imperative is prior, and thus a less delicate choice, than the distinction between declarative and interrogative since the latter only becomes available after the entry condition to the system declarative/interrogative has been met by a choice of indicative in the system indicative/imperative.

By contrast, *syntagmatic* relations, i.e. STRUCTURES, are derived from paradigmatic relations – technically FEATURES in a system – by REALISATION RULES. The relationship between paradigmatic and syntagmatic abstractions is said to be one of REALISATION, paradigmatic abstractions constituting the POTENTIAL or SYSTEM, and syntagmatic abstractions the ACTUAL or STRUCTURE; cf. also the earlier metaphors of ‘choice’ and ‘chain’. This primacy of paradigmatic relations in SFG stands in sharp contrast to the syntagmatic orientation of structuralist models, both transformational and non-transformational.

The distinction between system and structure made in SFG is related to the relationship between ‘language as system’ vs. ‘language as process’ or ‘text’ postulated by Hjelmslev (1943/1961:39). While Hjelmslev stresses the actualisation of system in process or text, Halliday considers process/text primarily an actualisation of the system in a pattern of systemic oppositions or choices, and only secondarily an actualisation of these paradigmatic abstractions in syntagmatic abstractions derivable by realisation rules. However, Halliday is in full agreement with Hjelmslev not only on the point that while text is only possible with a linguistic system lying behind it – although one could actually envisage ‘a language without a text constructed in that language’ (Hjelmslev 1943/1961:39-40) – but also on the point that the nature of the relationship between system and process/text is *dialectic*, i.e. that the linguistic system itself is maintained as well as changed by the linguistic process itself (Hjelmslev 1943/1961:39-40). As the linguistic system is constantly renewed by its actualisation in the linguistic process –

⁵Following the conventions of SFG, labels for systems will be written in upper-case – always when first introduced although subsequently only when there is a desire to emphasise the status of a term as the name of a system.

since ‘unavoidably affected’ – a ‘probabilistic grammar’ becomes a necessity for any model of language which seeks to take text seriously. In such a grammar, the relations between linguistic categories and their actualisation may be stated in terms of statistical *tendencies* rather than in terms of *categoricity*; see Halliday 1987a; Nesbitt & Plum (1988).

The relationship of system networks to one another is stated in terms of either STRATUM, reflecting the *type* of relatedness obtaining between grammatical abstractions, or of METAFUNCTION, reflecting the *degree* of relatedness obtaining between grammatical abstractions (Halliday 1970a, 1973). The concept of stratum is invoked where the choices modelled in different networks display a different type of relationship while the concept of metafunction is invoked in order to capture the fact that the degree of the internal strength of the clustering of systems in different networks may differ, i.e. the degree of relatedness between systems, while holding the type of relatedness constant.

In his work, Halliday assumes a tri-stratal model of language with a SEMANTICS, a LEXICOGRAMMAR and a PHONOLOGY. The strata are considered to be related, following Hjelmslev (1943/1961), by the concept of REALISATION (Halliday 1974a:85-6). Such realisation or ‘encoding’ involves both a symbolic recoding of one type of linguistic representation into another, i.e. of semantics into lexicogrammar, and of lexicogrammar into phonology, as well as an increasing degree of PRE-SELECTION between successive strata. In other words, although all three strata of the linguistic system are considered to contribute to the realisation of contextual meanings, i.e. of meanings lying outside the linguistic system itself rather than of conceptual or formal linguistic meanings, their contribution is considered to decrease in significance moving from semantics to lexicogrammar to phonology. The type of relations modelled at these strata may be considered those of *dependency* in semantics (e.g. between co-referential items), *constituency* in lexicogrammar (i.e. of units at different RANKS, e.g. of clause to group), and *composition* in phonology (e.g. of tone group to foot).⁶ For a diagrammatic representation of how the strata are related, see Figure 2-1:

⁶The term ‘composition’ for phonology in contradistinction to ‘constituency’ for lexicogrammar is suggested by Jim Martin (p.c.) in order to capture the relative strengths of top-to-bottom determination of realisations at different ranks.

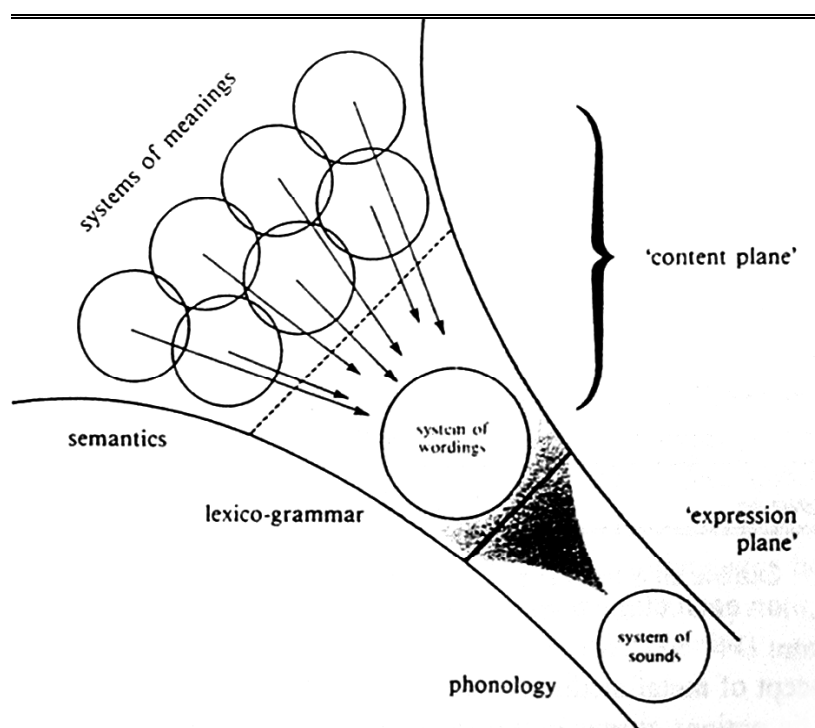


Fig. 2-1: Strata of the linguistic system (after Halliday 1985d:11)

In Halliday's writings, the boundary between semantics and lexicogrammar is left somewhat 'fluid' (Halliday 1974a:90), and it is not usually stated in formal terms. The lexicogrammatical stratum is the one most exhaustively formalised in systemic terms so far (see Halliday 1961, 1985c; Hudson 1971; Muir 1972; Berry 1975, 1977; Monaghan 1979; Fawcett 1980; Butler 1985; Halliday & Martin 1981; Halliday & Fawcett 1987; Fawcett & Young 1988) while the phonological stratum is somewhat neglected descriptively, the lack of interest in its formalisation possibly being a reflection of the lesser contribution made by phonology to meaning. (For systemic work on phonology see Palmer 1970; Halliday & Martin 1981.) Halliday's work on intonation is exceptional among systemicists for its concern with phonology, and among linguists generally for its successful integration of descriptions of intonation and grammar, i.e. for giving a satisfactory account of the contribution intonation makes to meaning-making (Halliday 1967c, 1970b).

The most comprehensive attempt at formalising a semantic stratum in systemic terms, building on the description of the 'cohesive' resources of English for the creation of text by Halliday & Hasan (1976), henceforth H&H (1976), is by Martin (1981a, 1983a,b, 1984b,d, in press). Martin sets up a renamed DISCOURSE stratum –

since referred to by him as the stratum of DISCOURSE SEMANTICS (Martin (in press)) – to handle the non-structural, dependency-type relations of REFERENCE, CONJUNCTION and LEXICAL COHESION described by H&H (1976) as well as those relations accounted for under the heading of ‘conversational structure’ by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975); Berry (1981a,b) and others, i.e. speech function in one form or another. This latter description is compatible with Halliday’s formalisation of dialogue as a system of SPEECH FUNCTIONS which is in turn realised by a system of MOOD, i.e. indicative, declarative, interrogative, etc., in lexicogrammar (Halliday 1976d/1984). Martin’s conceptualisation of a tri-stratal model of the linguistic system, a development of Halliday’s model, is outlined in Figure 2-2:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE | TRANSITIVITY | TONALITY |
| CONJUNCTION | THEME | TONICITY |
| REFERENCE | MOOD | TONE |
| LEXICAL COHESION | group LEXIS | foot & syllable prosodies |
| | & word systems | phoneme systems |
| <i>discourse</i> | <i>lexicogrammar</i> | <i>phonology</i> |

Fig. 2-2: Outline of a tri-stratal systemic-functional grammar with central systems on each stratum noted (Martin 1985a:249)

The concept of metafunction is motivated by the finding that particularly at clause rank linguistic options cluster in three networks which exhibit strong *interdependence internally* and strong *independence externally*. The three networks which most clearly demonstrate Halliday’s ‘metafunctional hypothesis’ model options in TRANSITIVITY (types of processes, participants and circumstances), MOOD (types of clause, e.g. declarative, interrogative, etc.) and THEME & INFORMATION (Theme/Rheme and Given/New). In addition, a choice of *recursion* applies to choices in all three networks but particularly to choices in transitivity where it is modelled in a system of TAXIS, the two options being parataxis and hypotaxis. (See Halliday 1973 for an extension of the metafunctional hypothesis to other ranks; see Martin 1984d for a review.)

Halliday views these system networks as the major representation of an abstract metafunctional organisation of the linguistic system at clause rank. The metafunctions themselves are referred to by Halliday by very general, semantically oriented, terms

which reflect the basic thrust of the grammatical model as one with a ‘rich *semantax*’ (Martin 1985a:249) rather than one favouring an autonomous syntax. The metafunctions, with glosses added, and their major systemic reflections at clause rank, are outlined in Figure 2-3 below:

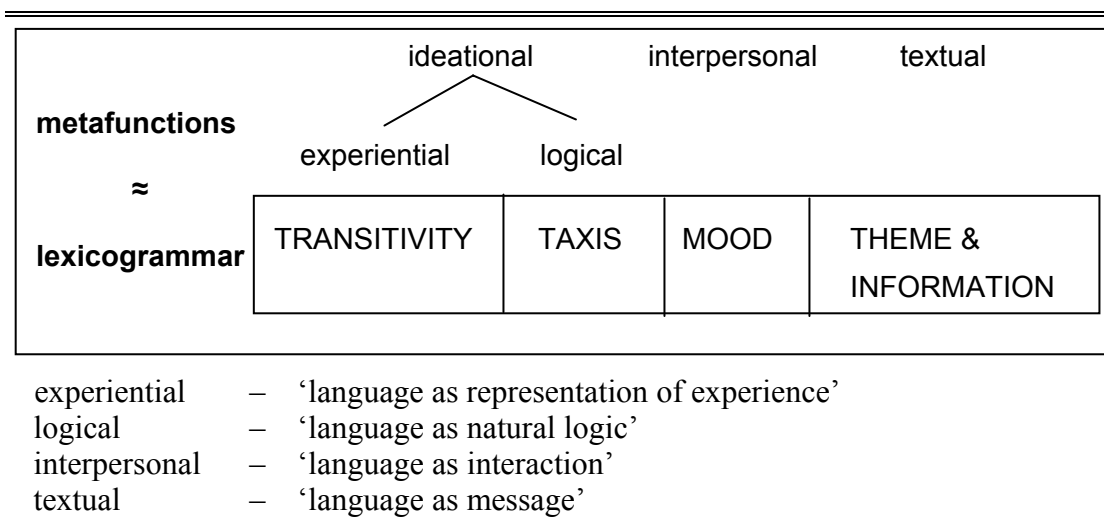


Fig. 2-3: Metafunctional organisation of the linguistic system

The concept of the metafunctional organisation of the linguistic system suggests a formal mechanism for relating choices at the levels of lexicogrammar and discourse semantics to choices at the level of context via an extension of the notion of choice or system in a technical sense. If it is the *formalisation* of language as a system of choices which permits the conceptualisation of the linguistic system itself as a ‘set of possibilities’ or *meaning potential* in the first instance, it is the *meta-functional interpretation* of language which creates the potential for relating language to its environment not only when considering it as abstract system but also as actualised structure or text.

The significance of Halliday’s functional interpretation of language lies in the fact that his analysis takes as its point of departure the linguistic system, and not its environment in whatever special focus on man’s social life. The SFG interpretation of language is thus motivated by the hypothesis that

the system of natural language can best be explained in the light of the social functions which language has evolved to serve. Language is as it is because of what it has to do.

(Halliday 1976a:17)

Functional hypotheses in one form or another go back to Malinowski (1923, 1935), and even to Wegener (1885) if situational theories of linguistic meaning are included. What characterises most functional interpretations from Malinowski onward, with the exception of the work of Prague School linguists (cf. Vachek 1964), is that they have been motivated by interests which are not primarily linguistic, i.e. mostly language is seen as instrumental to explaining something else.

Most of the ‘functional’ schema suggested by scholars pursuing a wide range of questions are best seen as schemas of language *uses* from the perspective of a particular enquiry rather than as schemas of language *functions* if by this term are understood the reflections of social functions in the linguistic system. In fact, the interests pursued by proponents of functional explanations cover a wide range of disciplines besides linguistics as pointed out by Halliday (1980b, 1982), e.g. ethnography (Malinowski 1923, 1935), psychology (Bühler 1934), ethology (Morris 1967), education (Britton 1970), ethnography of communication (Hymes 1967), stylistics (Jakobson 1960). (See especially Halliday 1985a; Steiner 1983 for reviews of functional theories.)

By contrast, Halliday’s formalisation of lexicogrammar in functional terms, which demonstrates a particular ‘plurifunctional’ organisation of the linguistic system, presents strong language-internal evidence for the functional hypothesis (Halliday 1970a, 1973, 1975a; see also Painter 1984 for further ontogenetic evidence). However, despite its being internally motivated, the analysis aims to

be both extrinsic and intrinsic at the same time. It is designed to explain the internal nature of language in such a way as to relate it to its external environment.

(Halliday 1974a:95)

It is this aspect of the interpretation of language then, i.e. the concern to relate language as a system to the environment in which it ‘functions’, which creates the potential for relating linguistic to non-linguistic, contextual, categories.

2.1.2 Language as Institution

The distinction between language as system and language as process in some sense amounts to a distinction between different levels of abstraction as far as each can be seen to reflect the social organisation of the world of speakers. Whereas system reflects its social context phylogenetically, and therefore so abstractly as to be totally removed from speakers’ consciousness, process reflects it in a much more immediate, though

still abstract way, something of which speakers are clearly aware at least at some levels of linguistic abstraction. Speakers' *language-in-use* in some sense reflects every speaker's more or less conscious ability to function successfully as a social being, since doing so largely means functioning linguistically. However, this ability of individuals to interact successfully linguistically with their environment can only be understood in a model of speakers' social context which in one sense 'grammaticalises' that context, and in another, complementary sense, broadens the conceptualisation of language by 'contextualising' grammar. It is this interplay between language and context which Hill (1958) sought to capture by naming the perspective on language-in-use *language as institution*.

Two kinds of variation were identified by Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens (1964) as falling within the ambit of 'language as institution', viz. 'variation according to the *user*' and 'variation according to *use*'. The former is considered to correspond to dialectal variation, the latter to REGISTER variation, adopting a term first suggested by Reid (1956). The similar nature of the abstractions dialect and register was underlined by Gregory's (1967) use of the terms DIALECTAL VARIETY and DIATYPIC VARIETY respectively. Both terms refer to *patterns of co-selections* of linguistic features, those of the dialectal variety being typically associated with a speaker's provenance, age, class, sex, etc., while those of the diatypic variety are 'typically associated with the situation type in question' (Halliday 1977:203).

It is register-type variation which is considered to be meaningful in a very broadly defined way while dialect-type variation is considered to be meaningful only in a very narrow way, essentially realising a speaker's social identity. Ultimately, of course, such a distinction becomes blurred since the choice of one dialect over another, such as standard over non-standard, or indeed one language over another, in the context of a 'bi-dialectal' situation, reflects register-type variation being realised in dialect-type variation (see Halliday 1985a:41ff).

Research in this area has been prominently associated with British linguistics since the 1930s, and especially with J.R. Firth and his students, to the extent that such work has been referred to as 'British contextualism' (Steiner 1983). However, the more familiar term REGISTER THEORY, by which is meant a theory of functional variation of 'language-in-use', is both narrower in scope and more specifically directed towards

language as institution by excluding those aspects of the functional nature of language which are reflected in its system.

The problem of how to describe 'language as institution' in order for such a description to be relatable to 'language as system' has occupied linguists working with functional models at least since Firth first proposed a SCHEMATIC CONSTRUCT to relate the concept of CONTEXT OF SITUATION (Malinowski 1923) in the form of 'categories at a different level from grammatical categories but rather of the same abstract nature' to grammatical categories (Firth 1950/1957:182). The challenge has always been twofold: One, to describe language and context independently; and two, to do so in terms which permit the system in stasis and the system in use to be related to one another. Two important theoretical steps may be identified which have led from Malinowski's original conception of 'context of situation' to the model underlying the study reported here.

Firstly, the level of generality of contextual description has been steadily raised. What for the anthropologist Malinowski was a descriptive device for the elucidation of the meaning of an instance of an exotic language produced in a particular situation, permitting a multi-layered 'explication de texte' so to speak, became for the linguist Firth a schematic construct of context, constituted of abstract categories and potentially relatable to linguistic categories, and an even more general concept of a SITUATION TYPE for a generation of British linguists interested in contextual interpretations of meaning (Hill 1958; Strang 1962/1968; Catford 1965; Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens 1964; Spencer & Gregory 1964; Ellis 1965; Gregory 1967; Halliday 1974b, 1977; Halliday & Hasan 1980, 1985; and others).

Although there are some differences between the various abstract contextual categories proposed, there is a sufficient degree of convergence of views for Halliday's (1977) model to claim a degree of representativeness which is sufficient for it to be adopted here as a means of briefly introducing register theory. Halliday proposes the following tri-partite categorisation of context:

FIELD is concerned as *social action* with ‘that which is “going on”, and has recognizable meaning in the social system; typically a complex of acts in some ordered configuration’ while *subject matter* is a special aspect of field whose recognition as a separate abstraction depends on where the social action is located on a continuum of language-in-action to language-as-reflection;

TENOR is concerned with *social roles*, the ‘cluster of socially meaningful participant relationships’, both permanent ones and those specific to the situation, while *discourse roles* are the specifically linguistic roles of questioner, informer, etc., taken up by participants in the situation;

MODE is concerned with the *symbolic organisation* of the text, i.e. ‘with the particular status that is assigned to the text within the situation; its function in relation to the social action and the role structure, including the channel or medium and the rhetorical mode’.

(Halliday 1977:200-203, *passim*)

Secondly, Halliday (1977) takes the step of radically changing the perception of the nature of the relationship held to obtain between the categories of the various contextual schemata proposed on the one hand and linguistic categories on the other. He suggests that the relationship of ‘association’ generally assumed by Firthian linguists to obtain between contextual and linguistic categories, i.e. where choices in a category at one level are said ‘to go with’ choices in a certain category of a similarly general type at another level, is in fact in some sense a *deterministic* one. These categories are the register categories of field, tenor and mode, and the linguistic categories of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions introduced above.

Options – or rather choices from among the options – of the semiotic construct ‘context of situation’ are hypothesised by Halliday to determine options in the metafunctions of the linguistic system, such that field is associated with the experiential metafunction, tenor with the interpersonal, and mode with the textual. A particular situation type is thus considered to determine the patterned co-selection of options in the different metafunctions, giving rise to the register or diatypic variety associated with particular situation types. In other words, the second step taken towards bringing about a ‘functional integration’ of a contextual model of language, which in effect also means a step towards realising Halliday’s model of language as a social semiotic, consists of an attempt by Halliday at ‘grammaticalising context’ and at ‘contextualising grammar’. Halliday’s conceptualisation thus represents a challenge to linguists to view contextual schemata as testable hypotheses about the functional relationship between context and language.

The seemingly one-way determination of linguistic choices by contextual ones argued for by Halliday must be considered qualified by his equally strong support for the Hjelmslevian position on the nature of the dialectic relationship between system and process/text discussed in Section 2.1.1 above. The resolution of the apparent inconsistency is to be found at the level of abstraction at which the ‘determination’ of one by the other is testable. While for the most part an empirical investigation is likely to take place at the level of register or diatypic variation, i.e. an investigation will be concerned with seeking evidence for the determination of instances of language by instances of context and extrapolate to language registers and context or situation types lying behind them, it is only at the more abstract level of the linguistic system itself – one much more difficult to investigate empirically – that the question of how language may also be said to ‘determine’ its own context can be fruitfully asked. And so while the assumption of such mutual determination of context and language is not necessarily spelled out in the context of a study of some particular instance of languaging, it nevertheless lies behind every such study.

The concept of TEXT is proposed as the one mediating between context and language, text being defined as a ‘SEMANTIC unit: a unit not of form but of meaning’ (H&H 1976:2; emphasis in original). Such unity is further glossed as *coherence* of two particular kinds in their definition of a text as

a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive. Neither of these two conditions is sufficient without the other, nor does the one by necessity entail the other. Just as one can construct passages which seem to hang together in the situational-semantic sense, but fail as texts because they lack cohesion, so also one can construct passages which are beautifully cohesive but which fail as texts because they lack consistency of register – there is no continuity of meaning in relation to the situation. The hearer, or reader, reacts to both of these things in this judgment of texture.

(Halliday & Hasan 1976:23)

It is coherence in these two senses which lead H&H (1976) to propose the embracing term *texture* for the distinguishing property of text, a property they say that ‘results from the combination of semantic configurations of two kinds: those of register, and those of cohesion.’ (H&H 1976:26).

The interpretation of text as a linguistic abstraction characterised by ‘semantic unity’, such unity ‘deriv[ing] ... from the fact that it functions as a unity *with respect to*

its environment' (H&H 1976:2; emphasis added), is complementary to the interpretation of context as a socio-cultural construct which determines its patterns of linguistic realisations, rather than as one which is merely 'recognised' on the basis of its realisations in language. While lexicogrammatical structures such as the clause may reveal the plurifunctional organisation of the linguistic system (see especially Halliday 1979 on 'elemental, prosodic and periodic' realisation of options in transitivity, mood and theme), it is the text as a whole which displays the connection with its environment (see Halliday 1980a/1985a, 1985b on the relationship of clause to text). Such a connection is said to be established via patterns of *typical* realisations, created through the 'relative frequency of options in the different systems' (Halliday 1977:206). And the patterns of linguistic choices which realise text do so not only in structures at all strata of the linguistic system but in different types of 'structure' at the levels of discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology, i.e. in structures which are characterised by dependency, constituency, and composition respectively.

And so, while text is *defined* as a semantic unit, it is *realised* in patterns of linguistic choices at all strata of the linguistic system. While H&H (1976) are primarily concerned with the contribution made to texture by the dependency-type structures created by the cohesive resources of English, i.e. by choices in systems which are roughly equal to Martin's systems at the stratum of discourse semantics, viz. reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, they point out that

Texture involves much more than merely cohesion. In the construction of the text the establishment of cohesive relations is a necessary component; but it is not the whole story.

In the most general terms there are two other components of texture. One is the textual structure that is internal to the sentence: the organization of the sentence and its parts in a way which relates it to its environment. The other is the 'macrostructure' of the text, that establishes it as a text of a particular kind – conversation, narrative, lyric, commercial correspondence and so on.

(Halliday & Hasan 1976:324)

While neither type of structure is pursued in H&H (1976), Halliday (1967b, 1985b,c) describes the organisation of the sentence in terms of its THEMATIC STRUCTURE of Theme/Rheme and its INFORMATION STRUCTURE of Given/New, and Hasan the 'macrostructure' of the text in terms of its GENERIC STRUCTURE (see below).

The concept of the semantic unity of text has been strengthened further within register theory – specifically in Halliday's (1977, 1985a) model – by Hasan (1978,

1979, 1984b,c, 1985b,c). Hasan's work seeks to strengthen the notion of textual unity, only one of whose twin components, viz. the concept of cohesion, was developed, albeit exhaustively, in H&H (1976), by complementing cohesion (and sentence structure) with the notion of (text) *structure*. To this end, she reinterprets the notion of *texture* formulated in H&H (1976) – defining it more narrowly by restricting it to cohesion and sentence structure – and contrasts it with the notion of *structure* on the basis of the text's register. In other words, whereas in H&H (1976) the term texture embraced both cohesion and register as the sources of a text's unity, in Hasan's work texture (= cohesion) and structure (= macrostructure) are embraced by the term textual unity.

The notion of 'text structure' is interpreted by Hasan in the sense of generic structure which, in its simplest form, goes at least back to Aristotle's definition of tragedy as having a beginning, a middle, and an end. While the concept of GENRE is a familiar one both from literary studies, and from a tradition of the teaching of rhetoric that, like the concept of genre itself, goes back to antiquity, in Hasan's work it is employed to describe the functional organisation of *any* text, not only literary ones, and no matter how ordinary and everyday. And just as the notion of text is not limited to *written* text, the notion of generic structure equally applies to both spoken and written texts (cf. Sacks et al. 1974). A text's generic structure is stated as a STRUCTURAL FORMULA (Hasan 1978:229) in terms equivalent to, but less general than, the beginning, middle and end 'stages' of the classic Aristotelian genre. Such stages of a text are captured here by postulating different ELEMENTS of structure, an element being defined as 'a stage with some consequence in the progression of a text' (Hasan 1985c:56). A structural formula thus seeks to state the functions of different stages in a text in the achievement of the text overall, an approach familiar from the functional analysis of narrative by Labov & Waletzky (1967) with its stages Abstract, Orientation, Complication, Resolution and Coda.⁷

In order to arrive at such a structural formula, Hasan suggests that the categories field, tenor, and mode be considered the significant 'variables' of a CONTEXTUAL CONSTRUCT, recalling Firth's 'schematic construct' of context, and that any particular context of situation be stated as a CONTEXTUAL CONFIGURATION which realises

⁷The spelling convention for generic structures, i.e. genres, and generic stages, i.e. elements of generic structure, follows that of SFG generally by using upper-case initials for functional labels and lower-case initials for structural labels, thus Abstract but narrative. Again following the conventions of SFG, labels for systems will be written in upper-case, although this practice will generally be limited to first mention.

specific ‘values’ pertaining to each of the variables. The contextual variables field, tenor, and mode are thus seen as providing ‘a point of entry to any situation as a set of possibilities’ (Hasan 1985c:55) and the relationship between contextual construct and contextual configuration is analogous to that between system and structure at the level of language, i.e. it is one of potential to actualisation. While in very general terms Hasan’s work on genre thus constitutes yet another attempt at relating text to its context in terms of those aspects of a text’s organisation which lead to its recognition as a cultural artefact, in terms of a register model of text her work seeks to link up with the hypothesis that context is realised probabilistically in text since, as Halliday writes,

The concept of generic structure can be brought within the general framework of the concept of register, the semantic patterning that is characteristically associated with the ‘context of situation’ of a text;

(Halliday 1977:193)

It is on the basis of the contextual configuration of some given situation that Hasan infers the STRUCTURE POTENTIAL (SP) (Hasan 1978) or, equivalently, the GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL (GSP) (Hasan 1979) of a text realising the situation in question, the terms SP and GSP being used interchangeably (Hasan 1985c). The GSP is a device for formally stating, *predictively*, the obligatory and optional elements, their sequencing potential vis-à-vis one another, and the possibility of their iteration (Hasan 1985c:56) for the structural formula of any text that may realise a particular contextual configuration, i.e. a particular context of situation. It is stated as a structure *potential* rather than an actual structure in order to allow for the necessary distinction between a generic type and its possible variant tokens.

The major source of generic structure in Hasan’s model of text structure appears to be the contextual category field which, defined as ‘being concerned with the nature of the social activity, involves both the kind of acts being carried out and their goal(s)’ (Hasan 1985c:56). The definition itself is similar to Halliday’s definition of field as social action in the sense of ‘that which is “going on”, and has recognizable meaning in the social system; typically a complex of acts in some ordered configuration’ (Halliday 1977:200). The major characteristic of a generic structure is that it seeks to capture the social activity or process which, at both the level of context and of language, i.e. when

realised in text, can be shown to have a functionally motivated, goal-directed structure, which at its most general is a Beginning ^ Middle ^ End structure.⁸

The significance of Hasan's work on genre within the context of this account of Halliday's model of 'language as system' and 'language as institution', Hasan's account of text structure also representing Halliday's position, lies in the fact that, by bringing generic structure within the domain of register theory, it also implies that the clearly non-linguistic generic structures are realised probabilistically just as other, linguistic, structures. The concept of genre, which in itself is found to be part of other models of discourse, both within linguistics and in other disciplines, is thereby brought within the ambit of a linguistic model which seeks to account for the structural output of linguistic choices as determined by contextual choices.

For the purposes of this study, the deciding factor in the choice of a particular approach has to be its capacity to relate discourse both to the social context in which it is produced as well as to the phenomena of conventional linguistic description which realise it. It is only by meeting those two conditions that it will be possible to quantify the variable linguistic behaviour of speakers in respect of the production of 'units' of discourse or text. Whether the Halliday/Hasan model of register, i.e. a model of 'the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type' (Halliday 1975b/1978a:111), permits the probabilistic modelling of generic structures on the basis of a single-stratum model of context is a question which will be taken up in Section 2.2 below.

By way of summary, the relationship between 'language as system' and 'language as institution', in the specific sense of register, is represented schematically in Figure 2-4 below.

The *realisation* (or encoding) relationship is to be understood as deterministic between context and language and as entailing a total change in symbolic representation, in both these aspects differing from the realisation between the strata of the linguistic system. The deterministic relationship between context and language is considered to hold for both the potential and the actual, the former relation being reflected in the organisation of the system, the latter in register variation.

The *actualisation* relationship invokes the concept of 'text' such that text is an actualisation of the potential at the same level of abstraction, and at each of the

⁸The caret is used to indicate concatenation of functional elements.

linguistic strata (cf. Halliday 1974a:86-7). In Figure 2-4 this actualisation relationship is extended to the model of ‘context of situation’.

The *instantiation* relationship aims at reflecting the fact that a given instance must be relatable to the general class to which it is said to belong, i.e. the relationship is one of token to type. In general, descriptions will be concerned with the typical, i.e. with classes of diatypic variety and classes of situation (type), the usual naming practice being somewhat inconsistent in its reflection of that tacit understanding. The only instantiation relationship shown in Figure 2-4 is between diatype and token, i.e. some single text, although it may become desirable also to show such a relationship for the contextual configuration. Both diatypic variety and a given text instantiating that variety are thus semantic constructs: both are ‘text’ in the above sense.

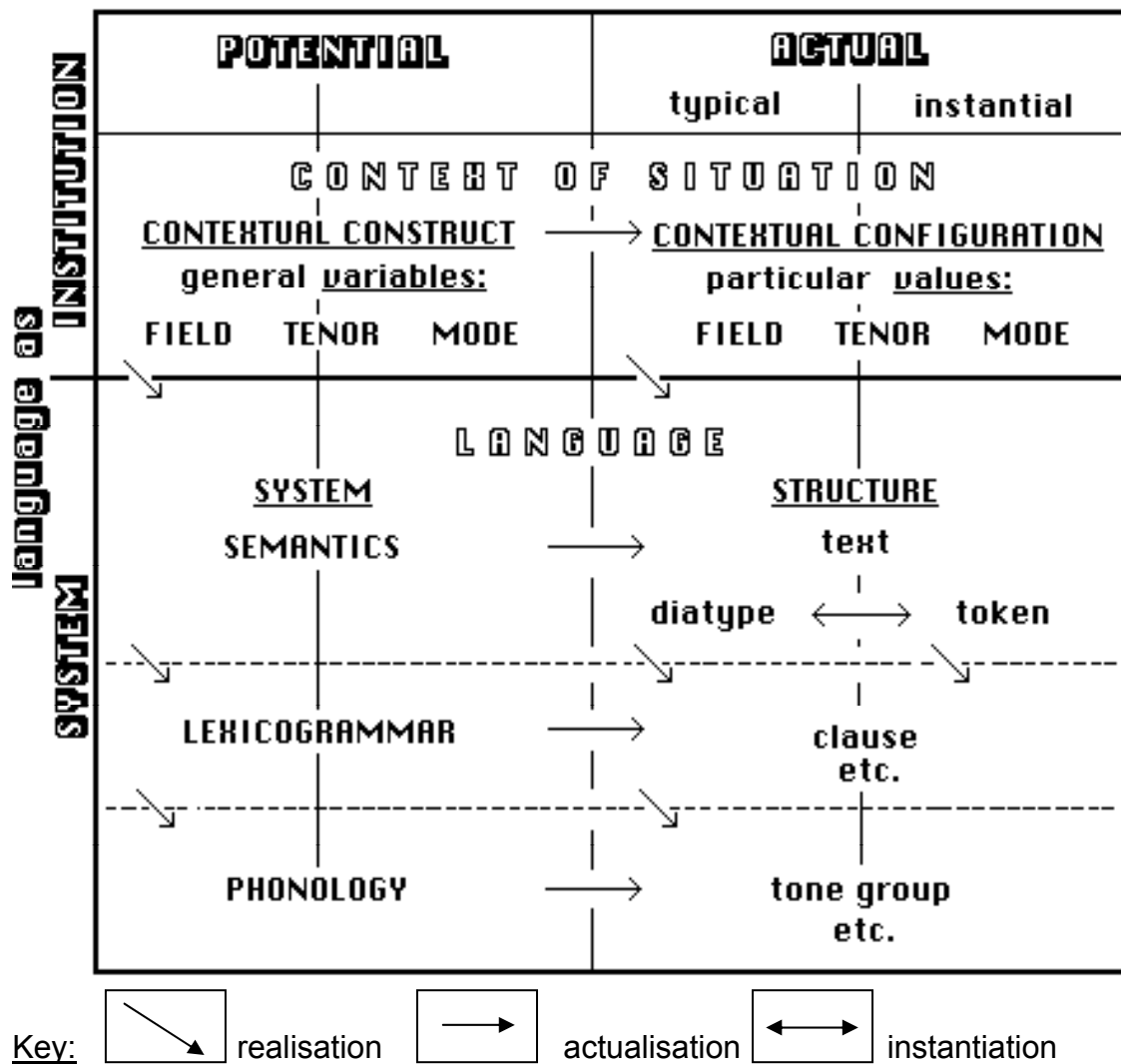


Fig. 2-4: Relationship of Language-as-Institution to Language-as-System

One of the premisses of SFG, viz. that the realisation of context in text is *probabilistic*, provides not only the key to making the hypothesis of the functional determination of text by its context testable but also provides a way of accounting for the variability found in text. In terms of the work by Labov, attempting to break down a ‘categorical view’ of linguistic structure based on the grammarian’s intuitions, and replacing this view with one of ‘inherent variability’ based on ‘*measurement*, which converts our work from qualitative to quantitative, from iterative to cumulative, from argumentative to provable’ (Labov 1975:4-5; emphasis in original), the SFG model of text provides a model which, at least potentially, lends itself to doing for text, i.e. for syntactic and semantic variation, what Labov (1963, 1966a, 1969a) did for

phonological variation. Since in a probabilistic grammar the familiar type/token dichotomy is weakened – types, whether at the level of context or of language, being stated in terms of their statistical tendency of occurrence – such an approach might even lead to linguists rethinking their exclusive concern with linguistic types and actually paying attention to linguistic tokens, something currently not commonly done despite a ritual affirmation of the type/token distinction.

Testing such a hypothesis of course also represents a methodological challenge – the difficulties involved in any attempt to model, let alone ‘prove’, a deterministic relationship between abstract constructs which, like system and process at the level of language, stand in a dialectic relationship to one another, and the objection of circularity it is likely to raise, are familiar from several decades of debates of Whorf’s views of the relationship between culture and language.

2.1.3 Language as Metaphor of Social Reality

The previous two sections have been concerned with Halliday’s functional interpretation of language, i.e. with ‘language as system’ and ‘language as institution’, in other words, with an interpretation of language in terms of the ‘reality’ of the world of its speakers within which it functions. The role of language vis-à-vis reality, which obviously cannot be a direct one, is seen as ‘metaphorical’ by Halliday:

... language, while it represents reality *referentially*, through its words and structures, also represents reality *metaphorically* through its own internal and external form. (1) The functional organization of the semantics symbolizes the structure of human interaction (the semiotics of social contexts ...). (2) Dialectal and ‘diatypic’ (register) variation symbolize respectively the structure of society and the structure of human knowledge.

(Halliday 1978a:191; emphases in original)

By reversing the perspective, i.e. by once again ‘seeing’ the dialectic process involved in the creation of any two abstractions related by realisation, Halliday ultimately suggests a way of investigating reality through language, continuing:

But as language becomes a metaphor of reality, so by the same process reality becomes a metaphor of language. Since reality is a social construct, it can be constructed only through an exchange of meanings. Hence meanings are seen as constitutive of reality. This, at least, is the natural conclusion for the present era, when the exchange of information tends to replace the exchange of goods-and-services as the primary mode of social action. With a sociological linguistics we should be able to stand back from this perspective, and arrive at

an interpretation of language through understanding its place in the long-term evolution of the social system.

(Halliday 1978a:191; emphasis added)

Understanding the place of language in the creation of reality, i.e. of social reality and ultimately of the social system (cf. Berger & Luckman 1966; Berger & Kellner 1970), should equally, and simultaneously, lead to an understanding of those ‘realities’.

The investigation of aspects of social reality, such as the transmission and maintenance of a given social system via, for example, different forms of mother/child interaction, the modes of communication favoured in public education systems, or the processes of shaping public opinion on a particular issue by the popular press, etc., has to proceed via an investigation of ‘text’, i.e.

The data are the observed facts of ‘text-in-situation’: what people say in real life, not discounting what they think they might say and what they think they ought to say. (Or rather, what they *mean*, since saying is only one way of meaning.)

(Halliday 1978a:192; emphasis in original)

It is this understanding of the central role of text as the realisation of semantic choices in context, with language serving as a resource or potential for meaning-making, which has led a number of researchers to investigate the relationship between language and social structure, and ultimately thereby social structure itself.

While any discussion of such research lies outside this account of Halliday’s social semiotic model, mention might be made of some text-based interpretations which have to stand for directions of current inquiry. The issue of *child socialisation*, first explored in a Hallidayan linguistics by Bernstein and his co-workers in the 1960s (see Bernstein 1973), is taken up by Hasan (1986) while the issue of social class-based *modes of communication* in the school, and thus the transmission and maintenance of power relations in a given social system (Bernstein 1971), and their determining educational success or failure is implicit in much of the work concerned with developing a ‘language-based theory of learning’ by educational linguists associated with the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney of which Halliday was founding professor (see Martin 1984a, 1985c; Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987b; Martin & Rothery 1986; Christie 1984; Rothery 1984, 1986a,b,c).

Ideology is investigated by Martin (1986) by looking at the construction of diametrically opposed political positions, a style of investigation also favoured in work

originating at the University of East Anglia (see Kress & Hodge 1979; Fowler et al. 1979) but also in a more recent volume of papers dealing with the nuclear arms debate (Chilton 1985). The construction of ideology is also the theme of Threadgold (1986) who, in a study of a historical incident of murder and rape seen through the eyes of observers separated in time and differentiated in their medium (newspaper report, essay, film), focuses on the interaction of *race* and *gender* while the distribution of and access to different genres in society according to *gender* are the themes of Poynton (1985). And a provocatively ideological look at *sanity* is taken by Rochester & Martin (1979); Martin (1985b) in their investigation of the speech of schizophrenics from a linguistic rather than a psychological or psychiatric perspective.

2.2 Generic Structure: Source or Output of Semiotic Conditioning?

In a series of papers, Martin (1981b, 1984a,b,d, 1985a,c) has developed a model of text within a SFG framework informally referred to as GENRE MODEL, which differs from the conventional REGISTER MODEL as described above by adopting a stratified model of context. Martin (1981b, 1984b) proposed to revise the then current register categorisations by setting up a level of semiotics at a ‘deeper’ level than field, tenor and mode.⁹ Originally named FUNCTIONAL TENOR after Gregory (1967), Martin (1984b) adopted the term GENRE for this level. *As a semiotic level*, genre is equated with culture, more specifically with the *culturally possible purposes* that may be realised in text, and genre in this sense is considered to generate a text’s SCHEMATIC STRUCTURE, directly equivalent to Hasan’s (1978) ‘structural formula’. (The term GENERIC STRUCTURE will be used in this study in preference to either schematic structure or structural formula because of its transparency.)

It is important to keep in mind that Martin’s proposal does not differ substantively from Hasan’s work as far as genre as text type is concerned. *As text type*, genre is defined as a ‘*linguistically realized activity type*’ Martin (1985a:250; emphasis added) or, in a later but equivalent formulation, as a

staged, goal oriented social process. Most members of a given culture would participate in some dozens of these. Some Australian examples include: jokes, letters to the editor, job applications, lab reports, sermons, medical examinations, appointment making, service encounters, anecdotes, weather reports, interviews and so on. Genres are referred to as *social processes* because

⁹This move was partly a response to pressure from some of his students interested in questions of functional variation, especially Joan Rothery and also the current writer.

members of a culture interact with each other to achieve them; as *goal oriented* because they have evolved to get things done; and as *staged* because it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals.

(Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987a:59; emphases in original)

The term genre in the sense of text type is thus intended not only to encompass all kinds of ‘text’ which can be described in terms of their generic structure – as in Hasan’s work, it is not restricted to literary genres – but it also is no more than a mnemonically useful term for *referring* to a type of text which itself is *defined* in terms of its generic structure, a position clearly implicit in both models. Again, as in Hasan’s work, a text’s generic or schematic structure is expressed in terms of its Beginning ^ Middle ^ End structure, i.e. by postulating different elements of structure and their order relative to one another.

The following discussion is primarily concerned with how Martin’s genre model and Halliday/Hasan’s register model differ in respect of their generating a text’s generic structure rather than with an account of generic structure per se. The principal objective in stratifying the level of context, by setting up genre as a semiotic level, is the usual objective of seeking a gain in descriptive power that is common to all stratification in linguistic models, such power relating to a model’s ability to predict the linguistic realisations of contextual choices. It seems generally accepted that the choices made among the categories of field, tenor, and mode cannot be assumed to be static in a single text, i.e. that once they are made, they hold good for the entire text. Instead, they are assumed to vary systematically in line with the purpose to be achieved in the text, local purposes being a reflection of some global purpose, and thus subordinate to it (cf. Hasan 1985c:57). Martin’s proposals seek to account for the changing choices in the register variables field, tenor, and mode in a single text in order to be better able to show how such choices determine, and in turn are realised by, linguistic choices in different metafunctional networks.

Purpose or goal, i.e. the ‘content’ of genre as a semiotic level rather than as a text type, is considered by Martin to be independent of the choices in field, tenor and mode, thus allowing for the possibility that two texts might be of the same text type or genre, expressed in terms of their generic structure, and yet make different choices in terms of one or more of the contextual variables field, tenor, and mode, and, vice versa, two texts might make the same choices in terms of field, tenor, and mode and yet represent different genres, i.e. have different generic structures. (See especially Martin 1984b for

an analysis of two pairs of texts demonstrating this possibility, thereby providing evidence for the contention that purpose or goal needs to be set up as underlying other contextual choices.)

In a review of the different register categorisations proposed at various times, Martin (1984d) demonstrates quite convincingly that it is indeed ‘purpose’ which is the wild card that has led to different categorisations of context, purpose being included variously under each of the three categories field, tenor, and mode as well as at times being accounted for under a fourth category, albeit at the same level of abstraction, viz. *ROLE* (Ellis 1965), *FUNCTIONAL TENOR* (Gregory 1967), and *PRAGMATIC PURPOSE* (Fawcett 1980). The ‘terminological confusion’ noted by Gregory (1967) to be reflected in different register schemas is very likely to have had its origins in the implicit recognition that the relationship of contextual categories to one another, and of contextual categories to linguistic realisations, is bound up with the social purposes inherent in the context of situation being characterised, and thus always to have been more than a ‘mere’ terminological issue. In a recent paper Gregory explicitly acknowledges the desirability of setting up an abstraction underlying the register variables field, tenor and mode to handle questions of genre. This new abstraction is referred to as ‘generic situation’ whose ‘complex communicative function’ is said to correspond to register ‘when language is the channel of communication’ (Gregory 1988:315).

Martin (1985a) – but see also Martin (1984a,b, 1985c) – formulates an explicit hypothesis concerning the determination of choices at the level of register, i.e. from among the categories field, tenor and mode, by choices at the underlying level referred to as genre. Following on from the argument that choices in field, tenor, and mode tend to vary systematically in a text, genre is set up as a second semiotic system at the level of context in addition to, and underlying, register primarily in order to *constrain* the possible register combinations that may be realised in any one text (Martin 1985a:250). In other words, the putative co-variation of different register choices with different local purposes in a text, which are themselves a consequence of a text’s global purpose, is now viewed as being the result of a choice in a higher level semiotic system called genre.

Following Hjelmslev (1943/1961), Martin views context as a *CONNOTATIVE SEMIOTIC SYSTEM* which differs from the *DENOTATIVE SEMIOTIC SYSTEM* of language

by not having an ‘expression plane’ of its own, a phonology as it were, but by being realised by another semiotic system, viz. language. Building on the Hjelmslevian notion of a connotative semiotic, systemic choices at the level of genre are therefore said to determine choices at the level of register, and choices at the level of register those at the level of language. Alternatively, it could be said that ‘language is treated as the phonology of register and register the phonology of genre’ (Martin 1985a:249-250); for a schematic representation of the relationship obtaining between these three semiotic systems see Figure 2-5:

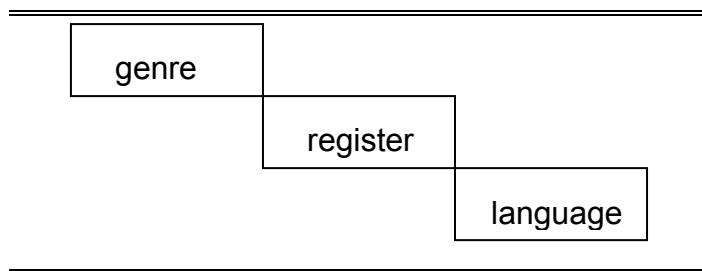


Fig. 2-5: Language in relation to its connotative semiotics: register and genre (Martin 1985a:250)

The concept of the probabilistic realisation of context is maintained simply by extending it to the realisation of genre in register choices, i.e. in field, tenor and mode, which in turn are realised in choices in language. By formalising context as a system of choices, coupled with the formalisation of language as a system of choices, the SFG model offers the possibility for stating the relationship between all realisational and instantiating categories in terms of tendencies – something as desirable between the categories of different, if closely related, semiotic systems such as language and context as between those at the strata of the linguistic system.

This two-stratal conceptualisation of context at the levels of register and genre, such levels being referred to as COMMUNICATION PLANES by Martin and thus distinguished terminologically from the LEVELS or STRATA of the linguistic system, recalls Malinowski’s (1935) proposal for a stratified model of context, relating his earlier ‘context of situation’ (Malinowski 1923) to an underlying, i.e. more abstract, CONTEXT OF CULTURE, in order to be able to fully understand a text. The attempt to account for some of the meanings that are ultimately realised in text by reference to culture is made on the assumption that the meanings which made an ‘exotic’ text opaque for Malinowski and, conversely, which make a text produced in a speaker’s

own culture accessible, have to do with the purpose the text serves in its own cultural context.

At this level of abstraction then, culture is identified with purpose – speakers' purposes which are habitually and recognisably expressed linguistically are in some sense taken to be culturally determined, and the model of context put forward by Martin attempts to capture these. Register on the other hand is simply another semiotic construct in a realisational chain of socio-cultural meanings, another resource for contributing to meaning-making, which is modelled at its own distinct level.

The determination of the linguistic choices realising text assumed in different models of register thus varies significantly between Martin's model on the one hand and most register models, including the Halliday/Hasan model, on the other. Whereas Hasan in particular *derives* a text's structural formula or generic structure, more precisely its generic structure potential (GSP), from its contextual configuration, Martin considers a text's generic or schematic structure to be the actualisation of a choice in a cultural system of agnate genres, i.e. of agnate or related social processes.¹⁰ And so, while both models recognise the same textual facts, they seek to account for them in different ways.

The ability to convincingly demonstrate the superiority of Martin's genre model of text over the Halliday/Hasan register model of text, such superiority here being defined as the ability to relate the same textual phenomena realisationally to their determining context within a SFG, ultimately rests on the ability to model the contextual choices involved in such a way as to be both *discrete* and *combinable*. In the first instance, this means a development of the register categories along the lines of a 'semiotic construct' suggested by Halliday (1977:200ff), ideally by utilising the concept of choice in a technical sense in order to test more rigorously Halliday's hypothesis that contextual choices, viz. those modelled at the level of register, are related realisationally to particular metafunctional linguistic choices. In the second instance, this means setting up the level of genre not only in such a way that goal or purpose is the determinant of generic structure but also that such goals or purposes can be motivated on the basis of choices other than those modelled in field, tenor, or mode.

¹⁰Gleason (1965: 195ff) suggested the terms agnate and enate to capture the different types of relationship between sentences which are based on minimally different structure and identity of lexis (agnation), e.g. the active and passive versions of a sentence, vs. those which are based on identity of structure and minimally different lexis (enation), i.e. where different lexical items belonging to the same word class occupy the same grammatical slot.

Since the major difference between the two models of text under discussion here, Martin's genre model and Hasan's register model, concerns the *direction* of the determination of generic structure, we will briefly examine the basis of the determination of generic structure in Hasan's model somewhat more closely. While Hasan (1985c:56ff) argues convincingly that it is not field choices alone which determine generic structure, it is impossible to ignore the fact that her definition of field as *social activity* which 'involves both the kind of acts being carried out and their goal(s)' (Hasan 1985c:56) provides the basis for inferring the generic structure potential of a text.¹¹

Moreover, this impression is strengthened by the distinction between obligatory and optional elements of structure, the obligatory elements being said to 'define the genre to which a text belongs' (Hasan 1985c:61) while the optionality of optional elements is said to 'arise(s) from the fact that their occurrence is predicted by some attribute of a CC [contextual configuration – G.P.] that is non-defining for the CC and to the text type embedded in that CC.' (Hasan 1985c:62). While the basis of the distinction between obligatory and optional elements is the contextual configuration or CC, i.e. the contributions made jointly by choices in field, tenor, and mode, the discussion of the service encounter text in Hasan (1985c:59ff) makes it quite clear that there is an unmarked association between obligatory elements and field on the one hand, and optional elements and tenor/mode on the other. It is choices in tenor and mode which lead to Hasan's observation that 'optional elements can be seen as having wider applicability', and it is choices in field which tell us 'what specific activity was going on' (Hasan 1985c:62), something optional elements, and therefore tenor and mode, cannot do.

In addition, *subject matter* or topic is recognised as a special aspect of field (see especially Hasan 1985b), its recognition as a separate abstraction depending on where the social action is located on a continuum of language-in-action to language-as-reflection (cf. also Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens 1964; Halliday 1977). The distinction between field as social action/activity and field as subject matter or topic turns out to neatly correlate with the relative success with which Hasan is able to *motivate* convincingly the generic structure, more specifically the generic structure

¹¹Halliday (1977) considered generic structure, variously referred to as 'rhetorical concepts/mode/genre', as determined by mode, a position he has since privately described as having been due to a 'slip'. His position on this issue may be assumed to be the same as Hasan's, viz. that generic structure is determined jointly by choices in all three register variables.

potential (GSP), of the texts analysed by her on the basis of a text's contextual configuration (CC). For example, the generic structure analyses of the service encounters of 'doctor's appointment making' (Hasan 1978) and 'greengrocer shopping' (Hasan 1979) can successfully be based on their CC since

for those occasions of talk where several semiotic codes act convergently, the role of language is ancillary, the environment pragmatic, it is possible to state a structure potential for an infinity of texts capable of occurring appropriately in that environment.

(Hasan 1984b:76)

Similar analyses of the traditional 'nursery tale' (Hasan 1984b,c) and also, though perhaps somewhat less so, that of a 'dissertation defence' (Hasan 1985b) on the other hand are clearly based not so much on a text's CC but on the text itself – as Hasan herself observes

all current accounts of the structure of the nursery tale – mine included – are very much more clearly beholden to the linguistic corpus of the genre than is the case with shopping or being interviewed by a doctor.

(Hasan 1984b:78)

It is this distinction between a context which is realised in both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic codes, and where the language of the realising 'text' typically plays an *ancillary* role, and a context which is realised totally linguistically, i.e. where the language is typically *constitutive* of the realising 'text', which turns out to be the source of difficulties for a model of text which seeks to explain generic structure in text of both kinds in terms of its being determined by jointly-made choices in field, tenor, and mode at a single contextual stratum.

Martin's (1984b, 1985a) proposals are designed to overcome the problems posed for an account of generic structure by the distinction between language-in-action, evidenced in the definition of 'field as social activity', and language-as-reflection, evidenced in the definition of 'field as topic', by both *redefining* field and *reformulating* its hypothesised realisational patterns in language. The aim is to remove the major responsibility for generating a text's generic structure from the contextual category field, something which it can only do convincingly in the case of language-in-action, and at the same time to relate the realisation of field to language in a principled way irrespective of whether the language of the text is ancillary to the contextual action or constitutive of it. The argument here is that since the distinction between language-in- action and language-as-reflection is due to different choices in

mode (see below), it should not become – by default – the deciding criterion in the determination of generic structure.

Following up Halliday's (1977) conceptualisation of context as a 'semiotic construct', Martin (1984b, 1985a) proposes that the level of context itself be formalised as a system of choices similar to language, in itself a proposal that is entirely consonant with much other work on register (cf. Hasan 1985c:55). The immediate aim is to redefine the contextual categories field, tenor, and mode in such a way as to make the choices at the level of context discrete and combinable in order to be able to account for their realisations in text as well as for a text's generic structure.

FIELD is defined as 'a *set of activity sequences* oriented to some global institutional purpose';¹² examples of fields given include dog showing, linguistics, sailing, medicine, etc. (Martin 1984b:4-5; emphasis added). Activity sequences are associated with enacting, and thereby defining, some field of human endeavour. Although such 'fields' are typically nominalised in taxonomies, e.g. a thesaurus, and thus turned into objects or 'things', here fields are considered to be constituted by sequences of activities or actions which each comprise 'a set of events and their attendant participants and circumstances in an expected sequence' (Martin 1984b:5). An area or 'field' of human endeavour such as the breeding & showing of pedigreed dogs, for example, includes many different nameable activities, such as breeding, whelping, nursing, rearing, feeding, showing, grooming, buying, selling, etc., which obviously, despite their being treated as single, unanalysed 'doings' in conventional naming practices, are themselves structured activity sequences. It is these which, collectively, define the field of dog breeding & showing.

TENOR is defined as a system of choices modulating *formality* (Poynton 1984) and stated in terms of three dimensions: *status* relations between interlocutors in terms of equality/ inequality (cf. Poynton (1985) who uses the term 'power' instead of 'status'); *contact* between interlocutors in terms of the degree of their involvement with one another, i.e. frequency and basis of involvement; and *affect* between interlocutors in terms of their attitude toward one another, i.e. ranging on a continuum from hate to neutral to love. In fact, Poynton (p.c.) stresses that while tenor is most obviously concerned with the relations between interlocutors, to some extent a speaker's relation to his or her text is describable in similar terms, most clearly so in respect of the choice

¹²The definition of field as 'social action with an institutional focus' was first suggested by Benson & Greaves (1981: 47).

of affect. While tenor is here defined as a constellation of choices which are elsewhere typically presented as a single choice in terms of politeness or formality, thus lending itself to a genuine systemic representation (see Poynton 1985), it restricts itself to what Halliday (1977) refers to as ‘social roles’ and does not also embrace the specifically linguistic ‘discourse roles’ of questioner, informer, etc. which are part of Halliday’s definition of tenor. Such discourse roles are here handled in the discourse semantics system of CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE.

MODE is defined as two kinds of *metaphorical distance* reflected in a text’s contextual dependency, such dependency being due to (i) a *spatial* distance which focuses on the distance between interlocutors in terms of the potential for aural/visual feedback and thus on interaction; and (ii) a *temporal* distance which focuses on the distance between language and that which is being encoded experientially, i.e. in terms of the above definition of field, an activity sequence.

The spatial distance thus develops the familiar distinction between channels or media usually stated in terms of an opposition between speech and writing into a much finer one ranging, on the one hand, from spoken interaction that is face-to-face to talk-back radio to television, etc. to, on the other hand, written interaction that assumes a ‘responsive’ interlocutor to varying degrees, from personal letters to questionnaires to written instructions at a ‘most response-demanding’ end to various forms of literature up to and including ‘stream of consciousness’ writing at a ‘least response-demanding’ end. The temporal distance on the other hand develops the language-in-action and language-as-reflection distinction referred to above, ranging on a continuum from language accompanying a social process at one end to reflection on the social process at the other end, i.e. from language that is ancillary to a social process to language that is constitutive of a social process.

The revised register categories are summarised in Figure 2-6 below:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| FIELD | – set of activity sequences oriented to a global institutional purpose; e.g. dog breeding, sailing, medicine, shopping |
| TENOR | – formality of interlocutors' relations as modulated by: 1. power – power and solidarity relations 2. contact – degree of involvement in relationship 3. affect – love-through-hate predispositions of interlocutors |
| MODE | – spatial and temporal 'distance' scales: 1. distance between interlocutors as affecting aural and visual feedback 2. distance between language and the social activity in which it plays a part (language-in-action to language-as-reflection) |

Fig. 2-6: Revised register categories (adapted from Martin 1984b; Poynton 1985)

The realisation of field in language is considered by Martin (1984b) to be achieved primarily through choices in a remodelled system of lexis, building on the work on lexical cohesion by H&H (1976). The hypothesis that options in field, tenor, and mode at the level of context determine options in language has generally been put forward in respect of choices in the systems transitivity, mood and theme, i.e. in respect of choices at the level of lexicogrammar. However, H&H's work on cohesion, essentially being concerned with the resources of English for creating texture – characterised, at its most general, by the concept of a 'cohesive tie' – already implies an extension of the concept of metafunction since the options in the metafunctions as currently formalised must make use of prior selections among semantic options in order to fill functional roles at the level of lexicogrammar. The systemic modelling of lexical choices at a discourse semantics stratum proposed by Martin (1984b) thus aims to facilitate the testing of the hypothesis that contextual choices determine linguistic choices in particular metafunctional system networks by informally extending the concept of metafunction from systems at the stratum of lexicogrammar to systems at the stratum of discourse semantics (see Martin (1984d) for a discussion of evidence for such an extension).

A systemic model of lexical choice, of the lexical potential of language, is designed to bring about what Martin (1981b, 1984d) refers to as metafunctional 'hook-up' of

contextual choices, specifically those in field as redefined by Martin (1984b), with their realisations in language. Whereas Halliday's (1977) hypothesis that choices in field determine choices in the experiential metafunction must at one level be read as choices in transitivity at the level of lexicogrammar, at another level this must of necessity include lexical choices at a discourse semantics stratum since they provide the lexical content of different choices made in the system of transitivity.

The systemicisation of lexis at the discourse semantics stratum is achieved in a system of LEXICAL RELATIONS, partially equivalent to what was described in H&H (1976) under the heading lexical cohesion, which makes a basic distinction between taxonomic and non-taxonomic relations. Taxonomic relations are described according to traditionally employed semantic criteria such as hyponymy, meronymy¹³, etc., e.g. *dog – poodle* (hyponymy), *dog – tail* (meronymy), and although there may be argument over the details of any such systemic representation of lexis the basic thrust is unlikely to be challenged (cf. Lyons 1977).

Non-taxonomic relations, on the other hand, seek to capture a type of relation between lexical items which does not fit traditional semantic criteria at all and thus tends to remain undescribed. The distinguishing feature of the lexical items in question appears to be that they 'go together' or COLLOCATE (Firth 1951b), e.g. *night – dark*, *sail – wind*, *knife – sharp*, etc. There has been relatively little interest in collocation among Firth's students and what there is has been *not* in expressing the relations between such items in terms of choice in the system but rather in terms of their statistical distribution in text, an interest taken up again recently by Sinclair (1987); see also Halliday (1966b); Sinclair (1966); Sinclair et al. (1970). The contribution of collocation to texture is also explored in a non-statistical fashion by H&H (1976).

In a move towards modelling all lexical choices systemically, including the intractable collocational ones, Martin firstly employs the very general semantic concepts of EXTENSION and ENHANCEMENT (Halliday 1985c) to account for a type of relationship between lexical items which resembles the multivariate structures found at the lexicogrammatical stratum, such as Process · Medium in *to handle – dog* (extension) or Process · Circumstance in *to keep (dog) – on your left* (enhancement). Such 'lexical structures', referred to as NUCLEAR RELATIONS, permit several lexical

¹³As far as I can ascertain, the term 'meronymy' for a part-whole relationship was first suggested by Jeffrey Ellis, presumably by analogy with 'hyponymy' which itself, according to Lyons (1977: 291), was coined by analogy with 'antonymy' and 'synonymy'.

items in the context of a text's realising some particular field to be considered a single lexical choice, although a complex item, and thus potentially related to other lexical choices, be they single or complex items. Such an approach has its analogy in the need to accommodate the 'lexical scatter' of items due to morphology, e.g. *go* – *went*, *describe* – *description*, etc., but it is here employed in order to handle the problem of CONGRUENCE between field and its realisation in text. (On the notion of congruence see also Halliday's 1985c discussion of GRAMMATICAL METAPHOR.)

A closely related approach is followed in respect of those items between which obtains a relationship of ELABORATION, for example between Process · Range in *do a triangle* (= *to walk (a dog) at a show in a certain pattern*); Classifier · Thing in *miniature longhair bitch puppy* (= *a single category of canine in the structure of the dog show*); and Event · Particle in *put up* (= *to declare (a dog) the winner in a show*). The difference between these structures and those characterised by extension or enhancement illustrated above is that while elaborating structures are constituted of two units at a lexicogrammatical stratum but are single units at a semantic stratum, extending and enhancing structures are also semantic structures.

Secondly, the concept of EXPECTANCY is invoked in order to explain the relationship between lexical items which in the context of a text's realising some particular field are understood to be related by a hearer or reader on the basis of the unmarked sequence of the process-like components of an activity sequence. For example, the lexical choices likely to be made in successive clauses in some text, such as *running (a dog)* – *setting up (a dog)* – *stacking up (a dog)*, are perfectly intelligible by reference to the sequence of those activities which realise some aspect of the field of dog showing, viz. a small part of an exhibitor's actions when showing a dog in the showing. The mutual expectancy of lexical items, their tendency to co-occur, is to a large extent a function of their realising the activity sequences of a text with a particular 'institutional focus'.

Whereas Martin considers the patterns of choices in a system of lexical relations at a discourse semantics stratum to constitute the realisation of field – the analysis of lexical relations in fact being designed to elucidate field choices in text – Hasan's analysis of COHESIVE HARMONY (Hasan 1984a, 1985c) is designed to measure a text's coherence in the sense of texture as the term is used by her, i.e. texture, comprising cohesion at text level as well as theme and information structure at clause level,

contrasted with structure (see discussion above). A text's 'cohesive harmony' is considered by her to be reflected in the patterns of interaction of so-called IDENTITY CHAINS and SIMILARITY CHAINS. Grossly oversimplifying, the two types of chain are characterised *paradigmatically* by linguistic items which are related referentially (in identity chains) or semantically (in similarity chains), while *syntagmatically* the linguistic items in either type of chain stand in various types of functional relation to one another as expressed in a functional grammar such as SFG, e.g. Actor–Process, Process–Goal, etc. Hasan's work on cohesive harmony is obliquely related to Martin's work on lexical relations since Hasan (1985b) considers texture to be that property of text which is the realisation of field in the specific sense of 'topic', and it is thus this aspect of field which is captured analytically in her analysis of cohesive harmony.

In practice, Hasan's analysis of texture bears a remarkable resemblance to Martin's analysis of lexis, the major difference being that while Hasan is concerned with the realisation of topic (as a subcategory of field) in text, more precisely with its manifestation in a text's texture, Martin's analysis is concerned with the discourse semantics system of lexis as a potential, serving as the major linguistic resource for the realisation of field, not making any distinction between field as social action/activity and field as topic or subject matter. At one level the difference between their approaches thus seems to amount to little more than different emphases, viz. on the actual vs. potential realisation of context in text, while at another level it is a very significant one since it concerns the difference between the realisations of generic structure, field and topic.

While the Halliday/Hasan model raises an interesting theoretical question concerning the relationship between the realisation of a text's texture and that of a text's structure in one and the same set of linguistic choices, the former considered the realisation of field in the sense of topic and the latter essentially the realisation of field in the sense of social action/activity, the Martin model seeks to provide an answer by making a clear distinction between the contextual choices which determine generic structure and those which determine texture. In Martin's model it is only what Hasan calls texture which is determined by field, realised in patterns of lexical choices at a discourse semantics stratum, while generic structure is determined neither by field nor jointly by field, tenor and mode, i.e. by a text's contextual configuration in Hasan's sense.

2.2.1 Two Competing Models of Text: An Evaluation

Since this study is in some sense – at least programmatically – concerned with investigating quantitative realisational patterns in order to test the hypothesis of the probabilistic realisation of context in language, the choice between the two models discussed above must rest on their respective ability to model and ultimately account for the variation between texts which we must expect to find at every level of context and language. It therefore has to be stated unequivocally that there is no quantitative evidence whatsoever to support the adoption of one model over the other for this study. There is not a single quantitative study which has tested the specific contextual hypotheses of either model. One of the earliest quantitative studies which does adopt a register model closely related to both the Halliday/Hasan and the Martin model, viz. Ure's (1971) study of lexical density in a number of texts which differ along a continuum of language-in-action to language-as-reflection, is still virtually alone in seeking to rigorously test some aspect of a contextual model. Yet even without the benefit of previous quantitative studies it is possible to point to two serious shortcomings of the models discussed, one concerning the contextual variable field, the other the concept of genre.

Regardless of the particular model, the most intractable problem for a contextual theory is how to convincingly model contextual variables in such a way as to not engage in unacceptable circularity by having the 'tangible' linguistic choices in a text *define* the contextual choices they are said to *realise*. (See Berry (1980, 1982) for a similarly based critique of Halliday's hypothesis.) Since field is the contextual variable most strongly implicated in any divergent modelling of generic structure, and therefore of text type or genre in the more conventional sense, we will limit ourselves here to field and ignore the modelling of tenor and mode.

The task of capturing the field choices in a particular text is undoubtedly aided by the systemic representation of lexis proposed by Martin, coupled with the hypothesis that it is the systems of lexical relations and transitivity in the experiential metafunction which realise field. Such an analysis may even illuminate the way in which the practitioners of a particular field actually construct their field, something achieved by Wignell, Martin & Eggins (1987) in their analysis of a high school text book on geography. What such an analysis does not do, however, is describe a potential of choices at the level of field – an account of the (typical) realisations of a field in one text, no matter how 'large' or representative, cannot simultaneously also be a

representation of all the activity sequences that are considered to constitute an ‘institution’.

Yet even if one text, let us say an imaginary encyclopaedic text on geography, were to encompass the realisations of all the potential choices in the field of geography there would still be no conceivable way in which some part of this text could be said to be realising a particular choice of field in the absence of a model of the potential ‘content’ of a text, i.e. ultimately the knowledge potential of speakers, without the linguistic choices found to have been made in the text being used to *define* the putative field choices underlying them.

Unfortunately, there are currently no models available in any discipline which convincingly represent the knowledge speakers access when producing – or comprehending – text. (See the sobering discussion of many different approaches to this problem in Brown & Yule (1983:68ff). Although Brown & Yule discuss the representation of such knowledge in text as a problem of capturing the ‘topic’ of a text – rather than of representing its field – their conclusion that topic is no more than an everyday summary of discourse content but which is incapable of being theoretically sufficiently well defined in order to serve as a useful concept in discourse analysis is hardly encouraging for any attempt at modelling the relation between speakers’ knowledge and its representation in text; see Section 3.3.1 for further discussion.) Yet without such models we are not only unable to state abstract choices of content independently, the terms of which should not imply the linguistic realisations of the choices they ‘name’, and predict their realisations in language, we are also unable to infer such choices on the basis of the only hard evidence there is, viz. linguistic choices in text. Real text realises many contextual choices in a single text which are meaningful only in a system of such choices, properly modelled in terms of either/or relations and at different levels of delicacy.

Of course, not only linguists but speakers generally make informed guesses as to what some text is about, and although they generally do so with great confidence they do not do so with the kind of precision needed for such judgments to serve as the basis for making predictions as to the precise linguistic realisations of such a choice of social activity/action and/or subject matter or topic, and thus for a replicable analysis of text(s). It is no accident that every single register-type analysis of text ever undertaken has either stated a text’s field informally, i.e. impressionistically, or relied on a simple

count of co-occurring lexical items forming patterns, such patterns being seen as indicative of a field choice at some primary level of delicacy (cf. Benson, Brainerd & Greaves 1988; Benson & Greaves 1987).

The lack of a model of field which would lend itself to determine reliably the field choice(s) of not just one text but of many, and not of brief written texts possibly belonging to some RESTRICTED REGISTER (Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens 1964:96) but of spoken ones of greatly varying length, is a disturbing fact for both the Halliday/Hasan-type register model as well as Martin's genre model. As a result it is simply not possible to undertake a quantitative investigation of text which is serious about the realisation of context in language, however modelled, and control and/or account for the choices of field in other than an informal way.

As far as generic structure or genre is concerned, Martin's model represents a seemingly elegant solution to a number of realisational problems, especially in respect of texts where language is constitutive of the text. The problem with his model, however, is that the variation observed to obtain in respect of linguistic choices in different metafunctions, interpreted by Martin to have been determined by choices in the systems FIELD, TENOR, and MODE, is simply being 'exported' to a different level of context, i.e. to genre as a semiotic level, and thus ultimately left unexplained. While the original motivation for this move was to achieve a greater degree of explicitness concerning the linguistic realisations of contextual choices in text, one of the consequences of Martin's stratification of context has been a strong descriptive focus by those working with his model on the 'deepest/highest' level of context and, simultaneously, an almost exclusive concern with texts of a particular kind, viz. those where context is realised both non-interactionally and entirely linguistically. This has been especially true for much work in an educational context where the texts studied are typically those whose language is both constitutive of the text as well as being produced monologically.¹⁴

Such work typically assumes the existence of text types or genres, say, recounts, anecdotes, narratives, fables, expositions, descriptions, etc., and contents itself with describing the generic structure of texts in terms of their choices of register variables

¹⁴As a result of the implicit assumption of culturally-determined genres, work in Martin's genre framework has attracted strong criticism from some educationists which focuses on what is seen as an obsession with fixed generic forms, i.e. generic structures, and their allegedly 'proper' realisation in language, register as a second contextual level not receiving much attention. And since much of this work is set in an educational context, the proponents of the genre model are seen as socio-cultural prescriptivists worse than traditional school grammarians. (See Reid 1987 for an overview of the debate, and especially Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987a for a statement of the work actually being done.)

and their realisations in language. The really interesting question pertaining to textual variability in a genre model, however, viz. what is the function of different yet closely related genres rather than what are their structural differences, is rarely asked. This is understandable since that question is only meaningful in an investigation of closely related genres produced in the same context, i.e. typically in a quantitatively-oriented investigation. It is only in studies which set out to capture and explain generic variability itself, i.e. the ‘constraint’ labelled ‘context of culture’ which is held to determine all other kinds of variability in the genre model, that a real appreciation of textual variation can be gained. By contrast, the need for such an explanation is not inherent in the Halliday/Hasan register model as its focus is on context of situation in the sense of a contextual configuration of field, tenor, and mode, and generic structure is not considered the source of all variation but its output.

The question of how best to model the realisation of context in language aside, the issue of whether generic structure is source or output of register-type choices, i.e. determines or is determined by field, tenor, and mode choices, is an important one and, as argued above in Section 2.2.1, it is one not to be decided one way or the other until quantitative evidence becomes available. However, in a recent discussion of this issue, Halliday suggested that what appears to be the ‘constant’, i.e. genre or register, depends on the perspective adopted: From a phylogenetic perspective, he argued, it is the context, i.e. register in the interpretation discussed here, which determines genre while from an ontogenetic perspective it is genre which determines register.¹⁵ In other words, the development of shared social processes, which end up being taken for granted as natural, takes place over a very long period of time, thereby effectively remaining outside the contributors’, i.e. a society’s speakers’, conscious awareness, while for a new member of society, such as a child becoming socialised into society, such social processes appear to be ready-made and handed down to, if not imposed on, the new member in an explicit and self-conscious manner.

Halliday’s suggestion lends itself to being interpreted in terms of the distinction between potential and actual, and their dialectic interaction, discussed in Section 2.1 above in the following way: Focusing on the potential, contextual choices of the register kind over time fashion the typical co-variation of linguistic choices, i.e. a

¹⁵The discussion followed the presentation of a paper by Jim Benson most aptly entitled ‘Genre and register: the tail wagging the dog?’ in the Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney, in May 1987 – the aptness of its title in the context of this study undoubtedly having been as unintentional as it will be seen as unavoidable once the reader reaches Chapter 3.

‘diatype’ (Gregory 1967), associated with a particular contextual configuration, a particular situation type, each time the system is in use, thus ultimately leading to a social process which is structured in that it proceeds by clearly defined, goal-oriented stages. In this way a generic structure characterising each text is arrived at – seemingly by magic yet merely reflecting the fact that once a genre is recognised in a culture, the configuration lying behind it is no longer noticed. Instead, the genre becomes a new ‘sign’, a (single) value in a new system at a different level of abstraction.

On the other hand, focusing on the actual, contextual choices of the genre kind are clearly perceivable structures which seem to have associated with them ‘natural’ register choices, and each time the system is in use the association between generic structure and register choices is reinforced, thus ultimately leading to the kind of rigidity which not only makes register choices predictable on the basis of a ‘prior’ generic structure, but which may also rule out ‘unnatural’ choices as culturally unacceptable. (The seeming naturalness of register choices may also be explained in terms of there being a far less conscious awareness of choices in register than of generic structure, and also of choices in language than in register, structure always being perceived more readily.) In this way a register configuration characterising each text is arrived at – seemingly by fiat yet merely reflecting the fact that the continual renewal of patterned linguistic choices in a given context encourages the members of a speech community to consider this as the application of rules rather than the exploitation of a resource.

Clearly there is no ‘right’ model which must be adopted for the kind of study intended here – as long as the evidence is still lacking to decide between models, any study needs to adopt and develop methods which may contribute to the provision of such evidence. What makes Martin’s genre model more suitable for the study of texts whose language is constitutive than the Halliday/Hasan register model is its assumption of the existence of genre, i.e. more precisely of generic structure, as the determining constraint of linguistic realisations. It is this which, in the absence of a usable model of field choices, permits the control of a single contextual constraint in such a way as to facilitate the study of textual variation, formally at the level of genre and of language, and informally at the level of register, viz. specifically of field. For this reason, the hypothesis put forward in Martin’s genre model will be treated here as a suitable scientific heuristic.

2.3 Text as Product vs. Text as Process

It is necessary to consider one more dimension of text which in some sense cuts across both the approaches favoured by Hasan and Martin and the type of text favoured by their approaches, i.e. texts that are, respectively, representative of language-in-action and language-as-reflection. The previously introduced opposition of system and text, where system equalled potential and text equalled actual, the two terms being largely synonymous with a paradigmatic and syntagmatic perspective respectively, may be augmented by a further opposition which focuses on the actual itself, i.e. on text. Adopting two complementary perspectives on the *same* phenomenon, named PRODUCT and PROCESS respectively, the former considers the text a static object that, having come into being, can be accounted for in terms of the relations between linguistic forms, whereas the latter perspective in some sense considers the text as it unfolds.

The product/process distinction is explicitly interpreted in terms of written/spoken language by Halliday, who stresses the fact that both product and process are perspectives on the one phenomenon, 'both [being] manifestations of the same system' (Halliday 1985d:79). The product/process distinction is valid at both a literal and a figurative level: Grammatically, written and spoken language represent phenomena differently, one as products, the other as processes, and this distinction is most prominently reflected in their employment of different grammatical resources, leading to different kinds of complexity as argued by Halliday (1985d), viz. the 'lexical density' typical of writing, represented largely by its emphasis on lexicalisation, specifically nominalisation, and the 'grammatical intricacy' typical of speech, represented largely by its emphasis on the binding properties of clause complex-type relations. (See also Section 4.2. for a discussion of the clause complex in speech.) Figuratively, of course, it is customary to see spoken language as a process and written language as a product (including spoken language written down, i.e. transcribed) simply because the written text is much more easily objectified qua text than the spoken one (cf. Halliday 1985d:76ff).

A quite different set of oppositions is argued for by Martin (1985a) who proposes a dual perspective on language in both its potential and its actual, i.e. 'actualised', representation. Glossing these perspectives STATIC and ACTIVE respectively, he proposes two sets of oppositions as resulting from such a cross-classification: SYNOPTIC SYSTEM vs. DYNAMIC SYSTEM capturing 'language as potential', and TEXT

vs. PROCESS capturing ‘language as actual’. The cross-classification of these two sets of oppositions is shown in Figure 2-7:

| | potential | actual |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| static | synoptic system | text |
| active | dynamic system | process |

Fig. 2-7: Static and active perspectives cross-classifying potential and actual (Martin 1985a:259)

These oppositions are interpreted here to mean that a synoptic system would model CHOICES, i.e. decisions concerning oppositions, whereas a dynamic system would model TIME, i.e. the making of those decisions in real-time. A synoptic system could therefore be said to be informed by a *logical priority* and a dynamic system by a *temporal priority*.¹⁶ The actualisation of a synoptic system would be seen, rather statically, as a ‘text’ whereas the actualisation of a dynamic system would be seen, rather more actively, as a ‘process’. Two familiar metaphors suggest themselves for an attempt at capturing the difference between the structural outputs of the two systems, viz. that while text is characterised by ORDER (of choices), process is characterised by SEQUENCE (of decisions); see Palmer 1964/1972 for discussion of these concepts in grammatical theory.

Martin makes the following points: (i) each text, i.e. each semantic unit of actualised, natural language, is simultaneously a (static) text, elsewhere referred to as product, and an (active) process; (ii) the text/process distinction, i.e. a distinction at the level of structure or actualised system, may not need to be invoked as long as a text appears to be synoptically successful, success being interpretable as a kind of stable realisation of a single underlying system; (iii) the synoptic/dynamic distinction, i.e. a distinction at the level of the system or potential, is crucial to the understanding of any actual text as an output of ‘two distinct but symbiotically interacting potentials’ (Martin 1985a:259).

In respect of the system, the potential, the two positions argued for by Halliday and Martin respectively appear to be incompatible: Halliday stresses the ‘one-ness’ of ‘the

same system', viz. language, underlying synoptic and dynamic representations of phenomena (Halliday 1985b:97), and thus admits only of a 'duality' of two perspectives on the one phenomenon. Martin, on the other hand, stresses the need for positing two systems to account for the one text, i.e. for structure, and thus proposes a 'dualism' of two underlying systems leading to one text.

In SFG system networks are employed to capture the 'logical priority' of choices realised in text, leaving the 'temporal priority' of choices unaccounted for. System networks are therefore synoptic in character like all grammars: the choices they model are 'stable' in the sense of *not* allowing for variability, e.g. variability over time, geographical space, social space, etc. The variability which a dynamic system in Martin's sense would seek to capture is of course not due to time in a diachronic sense; instead, it concerns the obvious fact that language is produced sequentially in real-time and that in any context of situation decisions need to be made as to what to do next. Martin (p.c.) suggests that the kind of 'transition network' employed in some computational models of language, although not actually designed to handle variability due to real-time constraints, is probably a good model of what a dynamic system might look like. (For an introduction to the notion of transition network, see especially Winograd 1983.) While those two types of network would model different aspects of language, and therefore obviously have different descriptive strengths, they are also clearly intended to be complementary.

The distinction argued for by Martin appears at first sight to be related to, or even identical with, the distinction between COMPETENCE and PERFORMANCE as formulated by Chomsky:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker–listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.
(Chomsky 1965:3)

But while the concept of grammatical competence most certainly equals Martin's concept of a synoptic system, one need not adopt the vulgar view of the concept of performance as the residual garbage bin for everything a model of grammar cannot

¹⁶My understanding of the synoptic and dynamic opposition owes much to discussions of Martin's paper with Chris Nesbitt.

account for in order to insist that Chomsky's performance does not equal Martin's concept of a dynamic system (see also Hymes 1971c).

There seems little need for the distinction argued for by Martin at the level of lexicogrammar since variation in (actualised) sequence, at least in English, is typically evidence of some systemic choice, for example word-order signifies a distinction between declarative and polar interrogative. And so while variability in a grammatical structure which can be accounted for systemically in fact constitutes evidence of some, perhaps more delicate, systemic choice, say the 'non-realisation' of the process due to ellipsis, variability in the realisation of elements at the level of grammar which cannot be accounted for systemically may well be said to be due to a 'performance error' in some sense, say self-interruption and subsequent 'non-completion' of a clause. (But see Section 4.2 for a detailed discussion of just such variability, involving continuous structural change, at the lexicogrammatical stratum which is considered to be 'grammatical' – rather than due to error – but needs explaining in terms of dynamic movement.)

The same, however, is not the case as far as choices at the level of discourse or generic structure itself is concerned. The argument for setting up a system that is different in kind from the usual synoptic-type system found in all grammars in addition to the synoptic one that models the relevant choices in terms of their logical priority, i.e. in SFG in the usual system network, is in principle based on the contention that there is further choice due to, at its most general, *interaction* between choices which is constrained by real-time considerations. Such interaction is typically found to be prominent in the actualisation of various discourse semantics systems and in types of generic structure where, to varying extents, relations between linguistic abstractions are not adequately captured by the concept of constituency characterising lexicogrammar.

Martin (1985a) presents arguments drawn from the modelling of choices in the discourse semantics systems of conversational structure and reference which show that the dependency-type structures that can be generated on the basis of synoptically conceived of system networks fail to a significant degree to account for the possible sequences of choices in text. For example, the 'cohesive tie' (H&H 1976) formed by two nominal groups in a text which are related anaphorically such that the second-mention of a participant can only be interpreted by reference to a first-mention, as in

There's a tiger over there and it looks like attacking (Martin 1985a:268), is not predicted by the synoptic model of participant choices.

Such text structures are clearly 'grammatical' and it is only when structures display evidence of 'repair', typically when produced dialogically – more generally speaking, 'interactionally', see below – that an explanation of the considerable variation in sequence possible at the level of discourse which does not imply systemic, i.e. synoptic choice, is likely but mistakenly to resort to the concept of performance. Martin's argument is simply that some systems, typically those at the level of discourse, although to varying degrees, are synoptically simple but dynamically complex and that both types of system are needed to account for their actualisation in text.

In respect of generic structure, the case for something like a dynamic system seems even stronger – at least where highly interactional text is concerned. The realisation of a social process that is interactional, be it by reference to the interaction of different modes of realisation in the case of language-in-action or generally to the interaction of interlocutors, irrespective of the language-in-action to language-as-reflection continuum, is likely to demonstrate a high degree of 'freedom' of sequencing of constitutive elements which cannot be explained in terms of systemic order, i.e. in terms of the synoptic modelling, of such elements. For example, the basic system underlying a service encounter at the local corner store is very simple synoptically yet its realisation of constitutive elements is extremely complex. Elements such as Greeting, Service Bid, Closing, etc., are subject to rules of sequencing, optionality, and recursion which result in a realisational potential of great and bewildering variability – yet seemingly without affecting the systemic status of the generic structure itself (see Ventola 1987).

On the other hand, the generic structure of a narrative may well be adequately captured in a constituency-like structure – provided, that is, it is realised non-interactionally: A jointly-told narrative, for example, may well bring out the need, at least according to Martin's proposal, for the setting up of a different, complementary system which would model choices informed by temporal priority, thus demonstrating that even a highly synoptic system potentially interacts with a dynamic one. Halliday, on the other hand, would seek to model the temporal priority of choices in text in terms of repeated 'passes' through a single system whose choices are modelled on the basis of their logical priority, each such pass making different choices and thereby arriving at

a constellation of choices which incorporate decision-making in real-time. This approach thus maintains not only the view of the ‘one-ness’ of the system, it also makes it possible to interpret Halliday’s view of the product/ synoptic vs. process/dynamic opposition in terms of different grammars of written (synoptic) language vs. of spoken (dynamic) language (Halliday 1985c:201-2).

Whether systems can in fact be written which genuinely model choices reflecting a temporal rather than a logical priority is a matter for future research, such systems obviously needing to be very different from the kind of system network conventionally drawn in SFG. Ventola (1987), for example, resorts to the flowchart or decision-tree notation used in computer science to model the real-time choices involved in realising certain types of service encounter. While she thereby succeeds in building time into the realisation of choices it is arguable as to whether a flowchart does in fact constitute a system of choices (cf. also Fawcett 1975; Fawcett, v.d. Mije & v. Wissen (1988).) (See Halliday et al. 1985 (= Halliday & Plum 1985); Plum 1986; Ventola 1987 for proposals for and critiques of different approaches to interactional text, including casual conversation.)

In respect of text, i.e. the actual, the dual focus on text introduced above may be related to the earlier discussion of the different models of register and genre in the following way: The distinction between product and process appears to coincide with the distinction between a text (= product) whose realisation is via language which is constitutive of the text, i.e. language-as-reflection, and a text (= process) whose realisation is via language which is merely ancillary to other modes of realisation, i.e. language-in-action. The crucial factor in this alignment of oppositions is the notion of ‘interaction’, in this case interaction between different modes of realisation. For example, a service encounter is easily conceived of as a kind of process since there is typically interaction between action and languaging which jointly realise the text or social process. On the other hand, a university lecture, for example, is more easily conceived of as a kind of product precisely because it typically is realised not only entirely linguistically but also monologically and, if delivered in truly traditional style, also seemingly without taking into account its audience.

Most accounts of text in the SFG model are, in Martin’s terms, synoptic ones which ignore any dynamic or real-time aspects of their realisation. This is as true for highly interactional, language-in-action type social processes, such as the service encounters

studied by Hasan (1978, 1979), as for equally interactional but language-as-reflection type social processes, such as the ‘naturally occurring conversation’, a so-called ‘dissertation defence’ in a university department, studied by Hasan (1985b). As far as the relatively non-interactional social processes are concerned, such as the reports, expositions, narratives, etc. studied by those working with Martin, it goes almost without saying that they are described entirely in synoptic terms.

In principle, a synoptic approach appears capable of accounting for all kinds of text with some degree of success, the measure of such success largely depending on how interactive in nature the text in question is. In fact, Hasan (1985b) implicitly claims that all text, including highly interactional text, can be accounted for synoptically in the form of a generic structure, a position also adopted by Lemke (1988) on the basis of a theory of text which is essentially action-based, language being only one semiotic mode of realisation (see also Lemke 1974, 1985).

But as both Halliday and Martin point out, all text is simultaneously both product and process, and provided the concept of interaction is made to encompass all kinds of interaction, ranging from that between speakers as well as between speakers and actions in the context of language-in-action to that between speakers, and even between a speaker and a real or imagined hearer, in the context of language-as-reflection, the distinction between product and process in a focus on the actual is a matter of perspective – either product or process will be foregrounded but both may be ‘perceived’ and must therefore be the consequence of some systemic choice, some potential, lying behind the text, however modelled. It is worth emphasising that Halliday’s single system approach does not imply that the process-like realisations are not realisations of systemic choices – such realisations are simply arrived at differently.

What is lacking in most work on generic structure in the SFG model to date, which almost universally takes a synoptic approach to its description, is a formal acknowledgment that dynamic features are even found in text that is least interactional, such as totally linguistically-constituted monologic text, i.e. an acknowledgment that all discourse is synoptic and dynamic at the same time and that both aspects may need to be accounted for in a particular description.

The hesitancy in coming to terms with the product/process duality as understood here seems to be due to the predisposition of human beings, be it cultural or otherwise in origin, to only ‘perceive’ a system behind texts which are typically realised in a

product-like fashion, and that means typically realised non-interactionally, and to consider those texts which are typically realised in a process-like fashion, and that means typically realised interactionally, as lacking any system behind them.

Whether in any given actual text the complementary perspective will be perceived will then depend on the counterpressures being exerted in the course of the realisation of either a synoptic or a dynamic system, to adopt the two-system approach by Martin: Since the unmarked realisation of a synoptic system is product-like, realisational pressures of various kinds, not necessarily ‘problems’, will bring a dynamic system into play, i.e. its choices will be seen to be realised. Conversely, it will be the relative absence of realisational pressures in the case of a dynamic system which will lead to its unmarked realisation in the form of a process-like text being stamped as a more product-like text, typically retroactively (see Plum 1986).

In summary, it may be said that Hasan’s register model accounts for those social processes best which are realised in text whose language is ancillary to other modes of realisation, i.e. which is language-in-action. However, while it is exactly these texts which are most in need of being described dynamically, Hasan describes them synoptically. Martin’s genre model is neutral to the language-in-action/language-as-reflection opposition and is therefore better able to account for social processes whatever their typical realisation in language. And although his own descriptive practice is largely synoptic, including for interactional conversational texts (cf. Martin 1984b), he argues for the need to develop dynamic descriptions even if his concept of dynamic systems is at this stage no more than programmatic and quite possibly at odds with the usual conceptualisation of the realisation of systemic choices in structure.

On the other hand, Ventola’s (1987) dynamic account of highly interactional texts, in itself a laudable development, need not have adopted Martin’s genre model in order to arrive at generic structures for her texts, i.e. in effect assume generic structures as the realisation of some cultural semiotic system and then proceed to demonstrate such structures on the basis of their realisations in language. Instead, Hasan’s register model would have permitted the generic structures of her texts to be inferred on the basis of the texts’ contextual configurations (CC), i.e. their choices among the contextual variables field, tenor and mode, since the structure of the social process of a service encounter is transparently realised in language-in-action, as well as interactionally. The cross-cutting dimensions of text would seem to warrant not only that models of context

and language be treated as valuable scientific heuristics but also that they be used eclectically.

The product/process distinction is one also employed by Brown & Yule (1983:23ff) in the form of their contrasting two approaches to the study of text glossed as text-as-product vs. discourse-as-process. Their understanding of the distinction, however, would appear to differ from both Halliday's and Martin's since the text-as-product approach is said 'not [to] take account of those principles which constrain the production and those which constrain the interpretation of texts' (Brown & Yule 1983:24) while the discourse-as-process approach is said to take those principles into account. A close reading of their discussion shows that what they are in fact contrasting is their reading of H&H's (1976) treatment of the text-forming resources of English as a description of text 'as a static object', named a text-as-product approach, with 'an approach which takes the communicative function of language as its primary area of investigation', i.e. in effect with an approach set in a contextual model of the kind discussed in this chapter, named a discourse-as-process approach (Brown & Yule 1983:24). There are certainly grounds on which Halliday's work may be criticised but neglect of 'the communicative function of language' can surely not be one of them.

On the basis of the discussion above the use of the term 'text' is bound to become confusing at this point. Halliday's use of the term text would allow us to speak of 'synoptic texts' and 'dynamic texts' (Halliday 1985b:97), in some sense equivalent to the product/ process perspective on text, whereas Martin's use of the term would commit us to using 'text' only in the sense of an 'actualised synoptic system', and to using the term 'process' for an 'actualised dynamic system'. In addition to those distinctions, 'text' is of course also used in other senses, e.g. semantic unit, structure, realisation of system, and others more. However, since 'text' is generally thought of synoptically whenever it is used in any of the above senses, the likely imprecision in its usage is unlikely to be harmful and therefore no attempt will be made in this study to strive for some greater terminological precision.

Chapter 3:

Data Design

3.1 Controlled Variability in a Corpus of Texts

The data design of this study seeks to accommodate the concept of text as the primary locus of semiotic variation within the basic design of the sociolinguistic interview as developed by Labov (1966a). The objective is to gain a large corpus of texts in the most economical way developed to date in sociolinguistic research. The area of interest, the domain of potential variation, is, as in the classic studies in the quantitative paradigm, the interaction of linguistic and social constraints. Within the terms of the model of context introduced in Chapter 2, the investigation of linguistic variation primarily means textual or generic variation across a range of contexts and the design of the data collection for the study of such generic variation is the subject of this chapter.

Social variation will be investigated by means of a conventionally stratified sample of interviewees, controlling for sex, age and class, without prejudging the interpretation of results by reference to concepts such as ‘code’ in the sense of Bernstein (1971, 1973) or ‘ideology’ in the sense of Martin (1986). The study seeks to gather a corpus of texts based on 50 interviews with native speakers of English, preferably Australian English. The sample will be discussed in Chapter 7 in terms of its composition, its reflection of the success of the interview as a method of collecting socially representative texts, and any socially conditioned generic variation.

3.1.1 Comparability vs. Differentiability

The success of a seriously empirical study of text which seeks to quantify textual variation, especially one which takes as one of its aims to be fully accountable for the variation found, will largely rest on the ability to obtain a sizable corpus of texts which are (i) *comparable* on the basis of holding the conditions of their elicitation constant; and (ii) *differentiable* on the basis of their ‘rhetorical organisation’, i.e. their genre, as well as of the experience which they represent in text, i.e. their field.

The importance of textual comparability is clearly recognised in studies which have sought to elicit text types by means of sociolinguistic interviews, be it as part of an

interview which served other goals as well, such as the study of phonological variation (cf. Labov 1966a; Horvath 1985), or where the elicitation of texts was the sole goal (cf. Linde 1974; Linde & Labov 1975). The simple and obvious expedient for the achievement of textual comparability has been to ask just one question, and to ask it in more or less the same way across all interviews.¹⁷

The issue of textual differentiation, however, has received little attention in the context of the design of sociolinguistic interviews so far since the study of text has not been to the fore in the variationist paradigm. The goal of collecting a range of generically differentiated texts in the one interview, which is then repeated many times, poses a number of fundamental methodological problems with implications for the ‘naturalness’ of the data that can be gathered in this way. (Perhaps one of the most successful text elicitation projects from the point of view of comparability, and a cross-cultural one at that, was not conducted in the manner of a sociolinguistic interview but as a straight elicitation of the retelling of a film ‘without language’ especially produced for the purpose, viz. the ‘Pear Stories’ project; see Chafe (ed.) 1980.)

3.1.2 Texts as Natural Discourse

Most interviews conducted in the quantitative paradigm are concerned with the study of phonological or low-level syntactic variation and as a consequence the goal of the interview is to record talk without significant textual constraint. This is put succinctly by Labov (1966a) for the research goals in his New York City study of vowel variation:

... every part of the interview serves a double purpose:

- (1) to measure the values of the five phonological variables in the context and style of that section, and
- (2) to gather the information which is the ostensible subject of the questions being asked.

In general, the first purpose is dominant, and the content of the questionnaire may be sacrificed to obtain better information on the variables.

(Labov 1966a:89)

¹⁷Labov’s dismissal of such a technique in the context of his polemic against a theory of ‘linguistic deprivation’ – ‘With human subjects, it is absurd to believe that an identical ‘stimulus’ is obtained by asking everyone the ‘same question’.’ (Labov 1969b: 200) – must be seen as a disparagement of the practices of educational psychologists in particular rather than as a general dictum to be observed absolutely by students of language since it is certainly contradicted by his own practice; cf. also Labov 1972b: 354, fn.2.

When a ‘text’ question is made part of the interview, as in Horvath’s (1985) study, it may of course *not* be sacrificed. The likely consequence of such a question being embedded in an interview which has as its hidden goal the elicitation of talk per se, typically for the study of phonological variation, is that the elicitation of the textually constrained response will be seen by both interviewer and interviewee alike to be part of an almost conversational interaction.

However, the ‘naturalness’ potentially, and ideally, to be achieved in this way is not without its problems, both in terms of a theory of text and for the quantification of textual variation. Horvath, for example, finds that the descriptions in her study fell into two groups of ‘dialogic’ and ‘monologic’ texts, the production of which correlated with socioeconomic class and perhaps also with ethnicity. Monologic texts are considered by Horvath (1985:147) ‘most likely to come from middle-class Anglos’ – a finding that has in itself serious implications for the usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview as a source of data for the study of linguistic variation in the speech community. The question of concern here, however, is with the nature of a dialogic text in a quantificational study.

3.1.3 Dependently vs. Independently Produced Texts

Dialogic texts are characterised by Horvath as a ‘type in which the major description was given in a question/answer format, i.e. was heavily dependent upon social interaction for its accomplishment’ (Horvath 1985:138). Such ‘dependently’ produced texts, i.e. texts characterised by a question/answer format in dyadic interaction, are undoubtedly also to be found in casual conversation between intimates, especially when involving an interactant who finds silence simply not an option in a conversation (cf. Tannen’s 1984:78 adoption of the term ‘crowder’ for such interactants). In the context of their production in an interview, however, the ‘dependency’ certainly appears to be at least partly the result of the interaction being an interview.¹⁸ While it is clearly of interest to discover that different strategies, i.e. monologic vs. dialogic, may be followed by speakers belonging to different speaker types within the context of the

¹⁸A further distinction needs to be made here between ‘dependently’ and ‘jointly’ produced texts. In the latter case a text is seen as produced by two or more speakers who are equally knowledgeable, i.e. who share the experience represented in the one text being produced, a situation in sharp contrast with the ‘questioning’ interviewer in the case of a ‘dependently’ produced text (cf. Watson-Gegeo & Boggs 1977). An example of a text which is in some sense both dependently as well as jointly produced is found in Becker, Dittmar & Klein (1978) where a Spanish interviewee’s limited command of the language of the interview, viz. German, leads to his being ‘assisted’ in the telling of his narrative in German by both interviewer and colleagues, the former without but the latter with knowledge of the events he attempts to relate. (See Section 5.4.2.1 for examples of jointly produced texts.)

sociolinguistic interview, the discovery itself leads us to a reconsideration of the question of comparability of texts in two respects.

One, are two texts, both of which are deemed to be instances of, say, a ‘tour’ as a type of description at a more delicate level of analysis, in fact two sub-types of tour – depending on whether or not they were produced monologically or dialogically? Since there can be no doubt that the linguistic realisations of two texts differing in this way differ, the question is an important one for a theory of text which attempts to be explicit about the linguistic properties of text. Two, if the quantification of textual variation includes a consideration of social factors, as is usually the case in studies set within the quantitative paradigm, can the linguistic realisations of a dependently produced text still be ascribed to the interviewee (as a type of speaker in terms of sex, age, class, etc.), and, if so, can it be compared with the linguistic realisations ascribed to the interviewee who produced text independently?

A perfect example of a dependently produced ‘narration’ is given by Labov (1966a:71-2) to illustrate the elicitation of casual speech within the sociolinguistic interview as pioneered by him. The text is produced in response to the interviewer’s question (W. Labov = WL) as to whether the interviewee had ever been in danger of death, more precisely, in response to the interviewer’s second question, which follows up on the interviewee’s (presumably) affirmative response to the initial question, reproduced below as example 3-1:

Example 3-1

WL: What happened to you?

I: The school I go to is Food and Maritime – that’s maritime training – and I was up in the masthead, and the wind started blowing. I had a rope secured around me to keep me from falling – but the rope parted, and I was just hanging there by my fingernails. I never prayed to God so fast and so hard in my life...

WL: What happened?

I: Well, I came out all right... Well, the guys came up and they got me.

- WL: How long were you up there?
I: About ten minutes.
WL: I can see you're still sweating, thinking about it.
I: Yeh, I came down, I couldn't hold a pencil in my hand, I couldn't touch nothin'. I was shakin' like a leaf. Sometimes I get scared thinkin' about it... but.. uh.. well, it's training.
(after Labov 1966a:71-2)

While the narration in 3-1 is not adduced by Labov as part of a theory of text, its status as a narrative, more importantly as *one* narrative, is implied by the very question in response to which it was given, viz. the prototypically narrative 'danger-of-death' question with its classic 'what happened?' cue. (See Section 3.2.1 for detailed discussion of this type of question.)

The work by Labov & Waletzky (1967), henceforth L&W (1967), and Labov (1972b) on 'narratives of personal experience' provides us with some well-known functional categories for the discussion of the text in 3-1; these are set out in Figure 3-1:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <u>Abstract</u> | summary of story, including reasons for telling |
| <u>Orientation</u> | placement of story: characters, actions, time, place, etc. |
| <u>Complication</u> | temporally ordered actions of story leading to some crisis |
| <u>Resolution</u> | further actions resolving crisis |
| <u>Evaluation</u> | appraisal of crisis, suspending action or interwoven with action |
| <u>Coda</u> | returning narrating to here & now |

Fig. 3-1: Narrative structure (after Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972b)

A consideration of the generic structure of 3-1 in terms of the narrative 'structural framework' (L&W 1967:20) postulated calls into question the unity of this narrative text. The first part of the response, up to the first follow-up question by the interviewer, may be seen to be a complete narrative in its own right, as its re-presentation as example 3-1a shows:

Example 3-1a

- [WL: What happened to you?]
I: NARRATIVE¹
Orientation
The school I go to is Food and Maritime – that's maritime training – and I was up in the masthead, and the wind started blowing.

Complication

I had a rope secured around me to keep me from falling – but the rope parted, and I was just hanging there by my fingernails.

Evaluation

I never prayed to God so fast and so hard in my life...

At this point the narrative, labelled narrative¹ in 3-1a above, may be considered complete – a conventional Orientation locates the story, a Complication represents the crisis without which the story would not be a tellable one in the first place, and an Evaluation underscores the acuteness of the danger survived by an almost formulaic wording that has come to imply extreme danger/fear/need in a world where praying to God is seen as an extreme measure to be taken only in extreme circumstances.

The lack of a Resolution to complement the Complication does not in the least jeopardise the text's status as a narrative-type text – the narrator evidently survived the danger, since he is here to tell the story. Of the two-part structure Complication ^ Resolution postulated by L&W (1967) as the 'reportable happening' of a narrative, only the 'complicating action is essential if we are to recognize a narrative' (Labov 1972b:370). The Evaluation here implies a positive resolution of the Complication, over and above the fact that the narrator has clearly survived. Within the terms of the schematisation put forward by L&W (1967) and Labov (1972b), the text as represented in 3-1a may therefore be considered a narrative.

But evidently the interviewer is not satisfied by the lack of detail concerning the events which might constitute the resolution of the crisis, formally the Resolution, and asks a follow-up question:

Example 3-1b

[WL: What happened?]

I: NARRATIVE (contd.)

Coda

Well, I came out all right...

Resolution

Well, the guys came up and they got me.

The follow-up question succeeds in getting the narrator to make the events of the story explicit. A Resolution now relates how the crisis was resolved, and a Coda bridges the whole narration to the here & now of the elicitation context. The only problem with

3-1b is that Resolution and Coda are misplaced, i.e. their normal sequence is reversed vis-à-vis one another.

The addition to the original narrative¹ results in an expanded narrative², comprising narrative¹, i.e. the text in 3-1a, and the continuation of narrative¹, i.e. the text in 3-1b. (The continuation in 3-1b could clearly not be considered a narrative text in its own right.) By slightly re-presenting the narrative, ignoring the problem of sequencing of the generic elements Resolution and Coda and adjusting the wording for their cohesive links accordingly, we arrive at a narrative²:

Example 3-1c

NARRATIVE²

Orientation

The school I go to is Food and Maritime – that's maritime training – and I was up in the masthead, and the wind started blowing.

Complication

I had a rope secured around me to keep me from falling – but the rope parted, and I was just hanging there by my fingernails.

Evaluation

I never prayed to God so fast and so hard in my life.

Resolution

Well, the guys came up and they got me.

Coda

Well, I came out all right.

Narrative² in 3-1c is not only perfectly unremarkable as far as its generic structure is concerned but that structure in fact corresponds to the 'normal form' for oral versions of personal experience' posited by L&W (1967) on the basis of taking 'a composite view of narrative performance' L&W (1967:40; emphasis in orig.) In other words, it corresponds to something like the canonical structure of narrative.¹⁹

The problem with this version, of course, is that this is not what was said. The fact that the interviewee's initial response to the interviewer's second cue question *What happened?* constitutes a return to the here & now of the elicitation context – note the almost puzzled tone of *Well, I came out all right* – demonstrates that giving an explicit account of all possibly relevant events constituting the 'main event' is not of primary importance. It is only due to the interviewer's demand for explicitness that the narrator

¹⁹While Labov (1972b) somewhat modifies the structure put forward by L&W (1967), this does not affect the general status claimed for it as his characterisation of narratives with such a structure as 'more fully developed types' and as 'fully-formed narrative' shows (Labov 1972b: 363).

becomes even aware of being expected to tell what for him is obvious and *not* worth relating.

At this point the interviewer begins to react to the narration, rather than continue the elicitation of the narration. As a result, the text clearly becomes a dependently produced text in Horvath's sense, i.e. 'heavily dependent upon social interaction for its accomplishment' (Horvath 1985:138) – provided, that is, the whole of the text given by Labov and re-presented as 3-1 is considered 'the text'. Once more, a case can be made out for at least part of this second addition being a continuation of a twice previously completed narrative, thereby resulting in narrative³.

While the interviewer's explicit question after further information *How long were you up there?* and the interviewee's response *About ten minutes* are not easily accommodated in a generic structure of a putative narrative³, and will therefore be ignored below, the interviewer's comment on the narration leads to its resumption:

Example 3-1d

[WL: I can see you're still sweating, thinking about it.]

I: NARRATIVE (contd.)

Part¹

Yeh, I came down, I couldn't hold a pencil in my hand, I couldn't touch nothin'. I was shakin' like a leaf.

Part²

Sometimes I get scared thinkin' about it... but.. uh.. well, it's training.

There is an obvious similarity between the Resolution in 3-1b – c and Part¹ in 3-1d, and similarly between the Coda in 3-1b – c and Part² in 3-1d. In fact, a rewrite of the actual narration in 3-1 in such a way as to incorporate all of the narrator's utterances into a single text would not only not stretch a hearer's credulity, it would also meet the canonical structure of a narrative. (The interviewee's one-clause response to the interviewer's question for specific information is the only possible exception to this.) The rewritten version in example 3-1e – re-presented as narrative³ – is contrasted with the actual narration as presented in 3-1 above:

Example 3-1e

NARRATIVE³

Orientation

NARRATION (actual)

The school I go to is Food and Maritime – that's maritime training – and I was up in the masthead, and the wind started blowing.

Complication

I had a rope secured around me to keep me from falling – but the rope parted, and I was just hanging there by my fingernails.

Evaluation

I never prayed to God so fast and so hard in my life.

Resolution

Well, the guys came up and they got me. I came down, I couldn't hold a pencil in my hand, I couldn't touch nothin'. I was shakin' like a leaf.

Coda

Sometimes I get scared thinkin' about it... but.. uh.. well, it's training. Well, I came out all right.

The school I go to is Food and Maritime – that's maritime training – and I was up in the masthead, and the wind started blowing.

I had a rope secured around me to keep me from falling – but the rope parted, and I was just hanging there by my fingernails.

I never prayed to God so fast and so hard in my life...

[What happened?]

Well, I came out all right... Well, the guys came up and they got me.

(([How long were you up there?]

About ten minutes.))

[I can see you're still sweating, thinking about it.]

Yeh, I came down, I couldn't hold a pencil in my hand, I couldn't touch nothin'. I was shakin' like a leaf.

Sometimes I get scared thinkin' about it... but.. uh.. well, it's training.

However, since narrative³ in 3-1e above is not how the narration reproduced as 3-1 unfolded, the question must be asked as to what kind of narrative (structure) the narration actually does represent.

It is possible to consider Part² of the continuation in 3-1d a second Coda, the fact that it is produced interactionally, i.e. in response to the interviewer's comment, being of little significance. In such a reading, however, Part¹ cannot be accommodated at all since its function could only be seen as a second Resolution. Conversely, all of 3-1d could be considered a second Coda, ignoring the fact that much of what is being said relates directly to the crisis, both in terms of its resolution as well as its evaluation. Most importantly, however, such a reading would ignore the most obvious, viz. the fact that the continuation in 3-1d effectively constitutes a 'replay' of (part of) what has

already been narrated. None of the functionally motivated interpretations of the generic structure of narrative put forward to date could easily account for this phenomenon.

Unlike the continuation 3-1b, which could be argued to lead to a narrative², the continuation 3-1d does not lead to a narrative³ encompassing all of the narration in the order in which it was produced. Instead, the continuation of the narration in 3-1d is best considered to represent a break with the previously twice completed narrative text. There are two distinct issues involved in the interpretation of texts such as 3-1, one concerning the (partial) repetition of the text as part of the same response, the other concerning the seeming omission of functional stages or elements of some putative genre, especially a narrative-type genre.

Firstly, it would appear that when an interviewee is encouraged to tell anew, to resume, or to continue a text which is considered by the interviewee to be the response-to-the-question, and thus a completed text, the addition results in a text which is odd generically, both in its totality and in its partial realisation. In fact, this phenomenon is probably not limited to actual elicitations of elaborations since the interactional context may be such as to exert pressure on the teller of a story, the giver of information generally, to elaborate and thus in a sense to repeat or 'replay'. For example, it was found in a small number of texts elicited in this study in response to the interview question most closely resembling Labov's 'danger-of-death' question, viz. Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?'), that a relatively minimal yet perfectly informative response was immediately followed up by one or more elaborations which resulted in a text that was generically odd, i.e. which did not succeed in integrating its several constitutive parts. (For further discussion of this question see below this chapter and also Section 6.2.2.)

Secondly, evidence will be presented in this study that the 'omission' of a Resolution in a narrative-type text is no accident, in fact that a distinct type of narrative texts is best posited to account for those texts which rely on the 'withholding' of a Resolution in order to achieve maximum effect in a context where the hearer can infer the resolution of the complicating events. Such an interpretation entails a re-interpretation both of the role of the Evaluation in narrative as well as an interpretation of the 'replay' of already narrated events in the context of such texts. (See Chapter 6 for discussion of ANECDOTE.)

The position argued for here is that texts such as 3-1 are likely to be misinterpreted both as single texts and as ‘natural’ texts if interpreted by reference to generic structure. It is contended that, on the basis of an example such as 3-1, the concept of a single text which is produced naturally by significant interviewer participation is open to serious question. The strategy followed in this study therefore was to focus on monologically, i.e. ‘independently’, produced texts in order to be able to formulate explicit hypotheses concerning the structural formulae of different genres without these being put under pressure by the phenomena of two-party negotiation of a text.

Undoubtedly, such generic hypotheses are likely to be modified in the light of work on text in the context of two or multi-party conversation – the contention underlying an investigation of text from a generic perspective is simply, yet very importantly, that a general model of discourse cannot be successful without understanding text as a generic phenomenon. The issue is not whether text in this sense or conversation is ‘primary’ but that any attempt to unravel the undoubted complexities of conversation without coming to terms with the unique complexities of genre is unlikely to advance much beyond the level of adjacency pairing and turn taking.

It follows from this approach that the question of ascribing patterns of linguistic realisations to one or two producers of text, i.e. to either interviewee or interviewee/interviewer, and the subsequent question of comparing those with the linguistic realisations of the single or independent producer, do not arise. Such a strategy appeared to be the safer one to follow in the light of what is currently known about textual realisations.

3.1.4 Interviewing for Texts

But while such a strategy may be sound in terms of the comparability of texts argued for, it does not solve the problem of textual differentiation in the context of a sociolinguistic interview conducted solely for the purpose of gathering texts. The problem is one of finding a way of conducting an interview whose ostensible purpose of ‘gathering information’ is also not its true purpose, just as this is also not the case in almost every other sociolinguistic interview ever conducted, but which nevertheless is as conversational as possible.

Such a goal is in principle not in conflict with the aim of gaining monologic texts – it is after all not unnatural in casual conversation for one speaker to take the floor and

be allowed by his co-conversationalists to complete a 'turn' without being interrupted by them, be it to aid or to hinder his talk, particularly when the talk is recognised as some one type of text, e.g. a narrative, a joke, etc. The strategy followed in the interviews in this study therefore was to aim at an alternation of dialogic and monologic phases, rather than an alternation of questions and answers, where the dialogic part was used to prepare for an answer in such a way as to make the giving of that answer monologically seem natural.

3.1.5 Diversity within a 'Single Interest' Group

The key to the necessary 'control' over both linguistic and social variables in the above sense, i.e. the key to both the access to the diversity wanted and to the controlled exploration of that diversity, was found in the focus on a 'special interest' shared by quite a number of people in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon society such as Australia. The special interest is the breeding and exhibiting of pedigreed pet dogs, also referred to as the 'dog fancy'. Members of the loose association of people following this interest, collectively also known as the dog fancy, often see themselves, in their own words, as members of the 'dog world', or as 'doggy people'. What they share in common is the intimate experience of a particular field, i.e. they share an 'institutional focus' (Benson & Greaves 1981). This institutional focus is not necessarily realised in their membership of a club – they are often *not* members of 'voluntary associations' at all and even when they are, such membership implies very little in terms of any shared personal experience. Instead, their common experience, which is typically focused on their hobby, is institutional rather than personal.

The advantages inherent in using the members of such a hobby group as a pool of potential interviewees relate primarily to the researcher's ability to build on the common experiences which may be assumed of dog fanciers in order (i) to explore different aspects of the field of dog breeding & showing, say rearing pups vs. finding, even choosing, buyers for them; and (ii) to explore different generic responses holding field choices constant, say a narrative vs. a description of dog showing. Taking advantage of such a potential for the 'exploration' of a speaker's field of experience of course depends on the interviewer's familiarity with it since, as Wolfram & Fasold (1974:50-1) point out, 'An interviewer who is not aware of some of the indigenous interests and activities of the community is at a serious disadvantage in obtaining relatively natural speech data.' Knowing the field well, and knowing it makes it

possible to get to know it well, provides an opportunity to better control the collection of data, without appearing to exercise such control, and thereby to increase the likelihood of gaining data of natural discourse even in the context of a sociolinguistic interview.

3.2 Generic Variation

The challenge for the design of a sociolinguistic interview concerned with exploring generic variation is twofold: One, to formulate elicitation questions which of necessity incorporate hypotheses about the relations between question and response, and between genre and field; and two, to formulate those elicitation questions in such a way as to have a reasonable chance of yielding ‘comparable’ responses across all speakers in the sample, i.e. comparable by virtue of having held the conditions of their elicitation constant, in order for the interview itself to be a cost-effective way of gathering textual data. The following discussion seeks to make explicit some of the assumptions underlying the elicitation questions used in this study.

The interview schedule seeks to elicit examples of two seemingly basic types of genre, viz. a narrative and an expository genre respectively, types of text explored in an incipiently quantitative fashion in Labov (1972b) on the one hand, and the work on ‘descriptions’ by Linde (1974) and Horvath (1985) on the other. Martin & Rothery (1981) suggested a typology of closely related genres within these two basic types on the basis of their work on writing in the primary school, work which involved among other things the generic quantification of a large corpus of children’s writing. It was in the light of these previous studies of text that I decided to investigate closely the following five generic types:

narrative-type: RECOUNT — NARRATIVE — THEMATIC NARRATIVE
expository-type: REPORT — EXPOSITION

For the purposes of the discussion at this point, Martin & Rothery’s genre ‘report’ may be assumed to be equivalent to the genre ‘description’ by Linde and Horvath. The differences need to be described by reference to some notion of ‘delicacy’ just as the different types of description of apartments and schools identified in both those studies, e.g. ‘tour’, ‘map’, ‘inventory’, etc., constitute an account at a greater level of delicacy.

The genres to be investigated are hypothesised by Martin & Rothery (1981:11) to be describable in terms of a structural formula or SCHEMATIC STRUCTURE, equivalent to Hasan's (1979) GENERALISED STRUCTURE POTENTIAL, as in Figure 3-2:

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| RECOUNT: | Orientation ^ Event ⁿ ^ Reorientation | | |
| NARRATIVE: | Orientation ^ [Complication ^ Resolution] ⁿ ^ (Coda) | | |
| THEMATIC NARRATIVE: | [Orientation ^ [Complication ^ Resolution] ⁿ] ^ <Theme> | | |
| REPORT: | General Classification ^ Description ⁿ | | |
| EXPOSITION: | Thesis ^ Argument ⁿ ^ (Conclusion) | | |
| <u>Key:</u> | ^ | = | 'is followed by' |
| | . | = | 'occur in either sequence' |
| | n | = | recursive |
| | () | = | optional |
| | [] | = | domain of recursing or sequencing |
| | < > | = | 'is included in' |

Fig. 3-2: Genres to be elicited in data collection (after Martin & Rothery 1981:11)

The major differences between the narrative genres may be glossed as follows: A recount is considered to be concerned with relating how the narrator gets – textually – from A to B to C, etc., i.e. its focus is on *time* per se. A narrative on the other hand adds an element of *crisis* where the narrative as a textual representation of experience structures that experience in terms of a lead-up to a 'problem' which then gets resolved. And a thematic narrative has an unstated *theme* as its focus, something that may be thought of as the 'moral' of a narrative. The major differences between the expository genres may be glossed as follows: A report is concerned with the *description* of events or things while an exposition is concerned with *explaining* events or things. It could be said that whereas a report gives an account of what in some sense is equally accessible to speaker and hearer, an exposition intrudes an angle on events or things which is uniquely the speaker's.

Some aspects of the narrative generic categories put forward by Martin & Rothery (1981) should be noted at this point. Firstly, their setting up of different narrative categories is a significant attempt at a more delicate analysis of generic structure in order to capture some of the variation between narratives noted by Labov & Waletzky (1967:40). Secondly, while the generic stage EVENT^N in recount quite transparently is

intended to be equivalent to a Complication in narrative but which is lacking in any crisis, the generic stage named REORIENTATION is intended to capture a 'return to some state of equilibrium' Martin & Rothery (1981:11). Whether that makes Reorientation the equivalent of Resolution in narrative will be the subject of a discussion in Chapter 6.

The objective of the data collection is thus explicitly stated as far as different genres are concerned, viz. to elicit textual responses which are hypothesised to meet certain structural descriptions. What is not explicitly stated is how such genres, more precisely the elicitation of such genres, are related to the field of dog breeding & showing, and the reason for this is simply that it is not at all clear how genre and field interact. It is largely for this reason that, with the exception of thematic narrative, several questions were formulated for the elicitation of each genre, each question making in effect a prediction about such interaction. A second reason for this strategy relates to the 'economy' of the interview, i.e. if one question does not work there is a second question to fall back on. Such a strategy in fact offers the potential for a post-hoc interpretation of the variability in responses which can be expected to be found across a large number of texts collected in this manner in terms of the interaction between genre and field.

Due to our lack of any real understanding concerning the interaction of genre and field a formal representation of field as a semiotic system, i.e. of field modelled as a system network of choices along the lines suggested in Martin's model, is premature at this stage. An informal exploration of 'what experience is associated with what type of textual representation' is likely to be more informative and should itself provide insights which may contribute to such a systemicisation of field in a differently focused study. Furthermore, the formulation of a particular question cue is no more than a 'best guess' as to how to direct a response towards a particular genre.

3.2.1 Interaction of Genre, Field, and Question

The last two points, essentially asserting that in spite of relevant work on text we do not really understand how to predict the form of a response with any degree of reliability, warrants some elaboration. Consider therefore the canonical form of Labov's justly famous 'danger-of-death' question. It was ostensibly aimed at eliciting a

narrative, the primary goal being the elicitation of casual speech for phonological analysis, and it was formulated as a two-part question:

[1] Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were in serious danger of being killed--where you thought to yourself, "This is it"?

If part 1 is answered affirmatively by the informant, this is followed by:

[2] What happened?

(after Labov 1966a:71)

The question cue 'what happened?' is generically not very specific. Although we may assume that it is likely to be responded to in a way which foregrounds temporally sequenced events, this is by no means certain. Evidence for the very substantial variability with which seemingly strongly directive questions in terms of genre are responded to will be presented in later chapters.

The reason for Labov's question being so successful in the elicitation of narrative-type responses must be sought in the cultural assumption shared by interactants that an experience which is constituted of an exciting, dangerous, funny, etc. event – more correctly, a sequence of events constituting the macro-event named as the 'experience' – is typically or 'best' told narratively. This is one possible way of providing the account of such an event with the necessary 'point' which in Labov's formulation makes the difference between a 'tellable' story and one that is received with a dismissive 'so what?' (Labov 1972b:366).

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, this question, like similar ones asked in the interviews conducted for this study, is very likely to be answered with some kind of extended text by the interviewee without awaiting part 2 if it is answered at all, i.e. other than by the interviewee denying having had such an experience. It is a question which predicts that the probing of an eminently tellable experience, viz. having been in a situation where one's life was endangered, is likely to result in a response which generically is of a narrative type and as such part 1 of the question implicitly directs the interviewee towards a narrative. The explicit question cue, ostensibly part 2 of a two-part question, is neither the cue for speaking nor the cue for a particular generic response.

If we contrast Labov's question with the questions asked by Linde and Horvath, which respectively asked interviewees to 'describe' his/her apartment or primary school, it is obvious that their questions explore very specific fields of experience

compared with the very general field in Labov's question, and that they simultaneously 'direct' the interviewee towards giving the response in a particular generic form. But not only was it found necessary to actually ask interviewees to 'describe' an apartment or school, Horvath also found that the actual form of the question cue itself varied considerably between interviews and interviewers, with a total of seven quite different forms being employed, ranging from an explicit 'Can you describe your primary school?' to 'Can you tell me what your primary school looked like?' to an implicit 'Can you remember your primary school?' (Horvath 1985:137). In other words, there does not seem to obtain any consensus among speakers concerning the relationship between a particular question cue and a desired generic outcome, and an attempt by Eggins (1982) to correlate type of question with type of response for Horvath's data set proved inconclusive.

It may indeed not matter how a question aiming to elicit generic types is asked – but if it does not, then the question as to what is likely to be a potentially significant variable conditioning responses generically simply returns us to the question of the relationship between the experience or field 'probed' and the likely form of response in the context of that field. However, to claim that talk about a given field only takes a certain generic form is clearly preposterous – it is quite obvious that most human experience *can* be talked about in a number of generically different ways. What is not obvious, except perhaps for matters of the kind explored in the 'danger-of-death' question, is what are the *favoured* ways of talking about some given field of human experience.

What is beyond any doubt, however, is that an interview schedule designed to elicit comparable texts for the purposes of an empirical study which seeks to lay some claim to being quantitative cannot afford to ignore the possible, even likely, interaction between genre, field, and question. In order to understand that interaction better, empirical research into text must strive for a greater degree of accountability for the likely variability in both questions and responses than has been the practice so far.

3.2.2 Formulating Interview Questions

On the basis of some knowledge of the field of dog breeding & showing, and of the interests and activities of members of the dog fancy, a number of elicitation questions were formulated after some initial trialling which reflect, however implicitly,

hypotheses concerning the relationship between the form of a question about some particular aspect of experience and the likely generic form of the response to that question. The questions are presented below not in their actual form – see Appendix A for these – but in the form of a gloss which attempts to bring out those aspects of genre, field, and question which are deemed relevant to the successful elicitation of particular genres.

recount

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>focuses on:</u> | specific but recurrent events |
| <u>field:</u> | (i) busiest time of day in connection with keeping dogs, having a family, going out to work, etc. (Q 7) (ii) the last litter produced without any complications (Q 4) |
| <u>cue:</u> | Can you tell me what you did/what happened – from beginning to end (of work done, of delivery of litter)? |

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of recounts is that since they are concerned with temporal sequence per se, focusing on a sequence of unremarkable events ought to bring this out without the interviewee being under any pressure to make an account of such events entertaining by representing it as crisis-focused. (Whether it is in fact a crisis which makes a story a ‘tellable’ one is a question which will be taken up in Chapter 6 in light of the texts collected.)

Rather than emphasising ‘tellability’ in some way, the question stresses an interest in the temporal sequence as such, the getting from A to B as it were, by adding the rider ‘from beginning to end’ in the CUE (see Section 3.2.3 below for discussion of the structure of the question as an elicitation device). This was done in the light of the experience gained in trial interviews that the recurrent nature of daily chores, but also of the ‘generic’ nature of a dog’s producing a litter, tended to lead to the responses being given as generalised descriptions. The added specification contained in the question cue is therefore an attempt at reinforcing the specificity of the experience of which the question is intended to elicit a textual representation. The implications of the perceived necessity to add such specification will be discussed in Chapter 6 as part of the discussion of the texts elicited.

narrative

focuses on: specific and unique events

- field:
- (i) how dog fancier became involved in the dog fancy (Q 1)
 - (ii) an emergency/accident involving the dogs (Q 6)
 - (iii) an exciting success in a dog show which came as a surprise (Q 10)
 - (iv) a funny incident involving the dogs, or people in breeding/ showing dogs (Q 8)

cue: Can you tell me what happened?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of narratives is that in order to achieve the telling of a 'pointful' story, the focus ought to be on events which carry the potential for the dramatisation of some key or 'macro-event' in them. The field events in (i) to (iii) are chosen on the basis of a prediction that most dog fanciers will not only have had such experiences but in fact find them perfectly relatable as part of their self-identity as 'doggy people'. The field event in (iv) is different in that it relies on the interviewee's interpretation of some event as funny. Such an interpretation is quite unlike considering a show success exciting, for example, since it goes outside the field of dog breeding & showing for the interpretation of some event.

The cue is the standard Labovian one for the elicitation of a narrative which assumes a 'happening' of some sort, i.e. a significant 'macro-event' (in some field) which itself consists of at least two events which are temporally sequenced. In the narrative questions in this interview schedule the happenings or macro-events are referred to explicitly as 'emergency/ accident' (ii), 'success' (iii) and 'incident' (iv) while the constituent events of a happening, i.e. the 'micro-events', are implicitly focused on in (i) which asks after the process underlying a single, nameable event.²⁰

²⁰The temporal sequencing often said to be criterial of narrative *telling* (cf. Labov & Waletzky 1967; Prince 1982, and many others) is of course a reflection of the implicit assumption that 'events' are temporally structured.

thematic narrative

focuses on: a hidden theme, a 'moral'

field: (i) a favourite story about the speaker's 'special interest', one that makes any point he or she cares to make (Q 11)

cue: Could you tell me?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of a thematic narrative is that since it does not seem possible to focus on any particular experience in the hope of gaining a narrative which thematises some underlying 'moral', it may as well provide the opportunity to test the folk-linguistic term 'story' for its strength to predict a narrative form. By explicitly eschewing any particular focus, except to focus on something that is in a very general sense 'favourite', the thematisation is left entirely to the interviewee. In this sense, the question aimed at obtaining a thematic narrative is similar to the narrative question which focuses on a 'funny incident'.

The cue question, however, is different since 'incident' focuses on an event which can be probed by a 'what happened?' while a 'story' is not very naturally probed in this way. The cue therefore is focused on the genre aimed at itself, the only one of all narrative cues in this interview schedule, by asking 'to tell (the story)' instead of 'to tell (what happened)'.

report (1)

focuses on: attributes (physical and psychological respectively)

field: (i) a mental picture of the ideal ... (labrador, kelpie, etc.), the breed the speaker aims to breed (Q 2)

(ii) a mental picture of the ideal buyer/owner of the breeder's pups/of pups of breed ... (Q 5)

cue: Could you describe that ideal for me?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of report (1) is that by focusing on a 'mental picture' of two distinct objects of description which are in fact not alike except by reference to some higher level of abstraction, it might be possible to gain descriptions which are generically alike. The cue is considered to be the most generically congruent way of asking for an account of a 'state of affairs' – since a 'mental picture' most obviously, and deliberately, makes a direct link to a pictorial representation. Such

representations are typically ‘described’ rather than ‘discussed’ or ‘reacted to’ as they might be non-congruently in a classroom exercise.

report (2)

focuses on: behaviour patterns

field: (iii) behaviour of a dog about to produce a litter, typically
 ‘alerting’ its owner in some way (Q 3)

cue: Can you tell me what your dogs do?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of report (2) is that behaviour which might be typically represented narratively as a series of specific actions or events can also be represented in a way more reminiscent of pictorial representations, stressing state rather than action. It is of some interest to know to what extent the habitual aspects of the field events, the habituality of which is underlined by the cue itself, is likely to constrain their representation in text.

report (3)

focuses on: ‘rules’ or customary ways of doing something

field: (iv) exhibiting a dog at a dog show (Q 9)

cue: Can you explain to me what you have to do?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of report (3) is that an ‘explanation’ of rules governing institutionalised behaviour will in fact amount to a description of what is a highly routinised sequence of actions. As in report (2), the habituality of sequenced events is to the fore, only in this case even more strongly since the events are in fact prescribed. But the choice of ‘explain’ in the cue introduces a potentially constraining generic element since it offers the opportunity for the interviewee to explain, comment, argue, etc. on the basis of the sequencing of events given by the field. The point of interest here is to what extent the organisation of the field is likely to determine its representation in text generically.

exposition (1)

focuses on: a point of view, a 'thesis'

field: (i) dog showing as 'sport' (Q 12)
(ii) children involved in dog showing (Q 13)

cue: What do you think of this?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of exposition (1) is that putting forward a thesis, as in (i), or in fact giving the interviewee the opportunity to put forward a thesis, as in (ii), will equally result in gaining an exposition, i.e. in gaining the statement of or agreement/ disagreement with a thesis and the presentation of arguments in favour of the thesis.

exposition (2)

focuses on: a hidden theme, a 'controversial topic'

field: (i) every big city has a so-called 'dog problem' (Q 14)

cue: What are your views on this?

The hypothesis underlying the elicitation of exposition (2) is that what is for a dog fancier dangerous territory will equally elicit a thesis and supporting arguments. The difference intended to be explored by this question in contrast to the two questions in exposition (1) is that the suggestion of a 'controversial topic' is open-ended.

3.2.3 Asking Interview Questions

Since the objective of the interview is to obtain texts which are both comparable and differentiable, and which can contribute to the creation of a corpus of such texts obtained from a number of interviewees, some attention has to be paid to the conduct of the interview. What is needed in order to make the sociolinguistic interview an effective and efficient means for the gathering of texts suitable for serious quantification is a way of making the interview 'replicable'. There is as little point in expending time and energy on an interview that yields texts which are not comparable or differentiable as there is in conducting an interview which does not yield answers to the questions asked – though perhaps a great deal of quite possibly interesting talk. The discussion in this section therefore seeks to make explicit what it is about the asking of questions, reflected in their structures, which might ensure a degree of success.

The ‘danger-of-death’ question used by Labov (1966a) to elicit narratives serves as prototype for the question forms in the interviews in this study. Its two-part structure may be considered to comprise two elements of a generalised question structure: A first question seeks a COMMITMENT by the informant to having had some particular experience. If the commitment is made, i.e. the question answered affirmatively, it is followed by a second question which seeks to cue the response desired:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Commitment:</u> | Have you ever ... ? |
| Response ¹ : | (Yes) |
| <u>Cue:</u> | What happened? |
| Response ² : | (Well, I ...) |

In addition to these two elements, a third element is proposed here named SUPPOSITION. It is to account for the fact that many questions in this interview schedule are premised on an assumption that the interviewee has had potentially some particular experiences. In doing so, they make use of the interviewer’s knowledge of the field of dog breeding & showing. In such questions the interviewer proposes a topic in respect of which the complete interview question, including any generic constraint, is asked. The Supposition delimits the field of the question by either statement or question as in the following examples:

Example 3-2

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>Supposition</u> | Every big city seems to have a so-called ‘dog-problem’, you know, unwanted dogs that get destroyed in large numbers every year, dogs annoying people in different ways |
| <u>Cue</u> | I wonder what your views on this are? |

Example 3-3

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>Supposition</u> | What is the busiest time of day for you, considering the dogs, the children ... ? |
| <u>Commitment</u> | Was it like this today/yesterday ... ? |
| <u>Cue</u> | Would you tell me what you did this morning/yesterday ... from the time you started until you were finished? |

Suppositions can be denied by the interviewee, thus leading to a ‘zero-response’ in terms of the interview schedule, but due to the interviewer’s implicit assumption that

there is a certain field of which the informant does have experience the chances of gaining a response as such, and one that is constrained for field, are greatly improved.

The generalised structure of the elicitation questions (Q) used in the interviews in this study to obtain responses (R) which are constrained for genre and field consist of the elements Supposition \wedge Commitment \wedge Cue and, categorially, in that order. But since one element alone may in fact lead to a response, it is only the presence of one element – any one element – which can be stated as obligatory. Just such a situation has already been asserted to be common by reference to strongly narrative questions, claiming that these are likely to be answered without awaiting a Cue. However, it is exactly in this area of the interaction of genre, field and question that the role of a Cue question is of considerable interest: If we find that some questions are consistently answered without awaiting a Cue *and* answered generically consistently while other questions either require a Cue for them to be answered at all or for them to be answered the same way generically, then we are likely to gain some insight into the interaction spoken of before – and some understanding of what might be a ‘natural’ genre in the context of a certain field.

The generalised, categorial structures for all interview questions are outlined in Figure 3-3 below; the numbers referring to the actual questions correspond to the questions as shown in the interview schedule reproduced in Appendix A. The elements are shown together with their congruent realisations in terms of choices in MOOD. Structures which are alike in terms of the elements predicted to be *typically* realised are grouped together. Although, as pointed out above, there is no true optionality of any one structural element, in terms of the likely elicitation success it is the case that some questions can be asked without needing the support of a prior Supposition. This kind of optionality is reflected in Figure 3-3 by making a distinction between Q types 2a and 2b, and 3a and 3b, respectively.

Figure 3-3 represents the potential for the utilisation of the interviewer’s knowledge of field in the attempt to gain responses to a given set of questions from all interviewees. The more knowledge of field he has the more able he is to manipulate the interviewee into responding to the question. Since it must be the objective of any one interview to obtain the maximum number of texts possible in order for the sociolinguistic interview as such to be an efficient tool for the gathering of textual data which is both ‘comparable’ and ‘differentiable’, the interviewer must endeavour to

forestall an interviewee's rejection of a question as not applicable to him or her. The interviewer, however, must tread a fine line between on the one hand assuming an interviewee's experience of field where he cannot really be certain of this, and, on the other hand, enquiring, hesitantly as it were, if the interviewee does have a certain field experience where it is reasonable for the interviewer to assume such experience.

For example, a Q structure of type (4) applied inappropriately to Q 6 is bound to fail: 'Can you tell me what happened last time you had an emergency here?' is likely to result in an indignant rejection of the supposition that emergencies are part of the breeder's normal experience. Conversely, an enquiry as to whether emergencies have occurred is unlikely to be rejected and as a result the typically cooperative interviewee is very likely to present whatever experience might fit such a question as the stuff of an appropriate response. By contrast, a type (1) structure applied equally inappropriately to Q 13, for example, may be just as dysfunctional: 'Do you have an opinion regarding children's involvement in dog showing?' would give interviewees an opportunity to refuse to commit themselves to the experience and thereby a chance to reject the question as inapplicable to them although they may very well have an opinion on the matter.

| field predictability | elicitation type | question structure | genre predicted | Q # |
|--|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| <div style="text-align: center;">high</div> <div style="text-align: center;">low</div> | 1 | Commit [^] Cue _{polar wh} Commit [^] Cue _{polar imp} | narrative them.narrative report | 6, 10 11 5 |
| | 2 a | (Supp _{wh}) [^] Commit [^] Cue _{polar imp} | recount | 7 |
| | 2 b | Supp _{decl} [^] Commit [^] Cue _{polar wh} | narrative | 8 |
| | | Supp _{decl} [^] Commit [^] Cue _{polar imp} | report | 2 |
| | | Supp _{wh} [^] Commit [^] Cue _{polar imp} | recount | 4 |
| | | Supp _{wh} [^] Commit [^] Cue _{polar wh} | narrative | 1 |
| | 3 a | Supp _{decl} [^] Cue _{wh} | report exposition | 3 12, 14 |
| | 3 b | (Supp _{decl}) [^] Cue _{imp} | report | 9 |
| | 4 | Cue _{wh} | exposition | 13 |

Fig. 3-3: Generalised structure of elicitation questions

gathering is concerned, all that matters is that the interviewer does not by his own conduct of the interview increase the chances of ‘zero-responses’.

The structure of the elicitation question must therefore explore the upper limit of what the interviewer can reasonably assume to be an interviewee’s experience of field which can be ‘mined’. The interviewer’s ability to predict field is low, and thereby his ability to control is *weak*, where a Cue depends on the interviewee’s prior affirmation that there is indeed something to tell/report/describe/explain etc., i.e. in a type (1) structure as, for example, in Q 6:

Example 3-4

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Commitment</u> | Have you ever had an emergency ... ? |
| <u>Cue</u> | What happened? |

An intermediate stage in the ability to constrain field, halfway between high and low predictability of field, is marked by the presence of Supposition since this permits the topic to be introduced as if the interviewee’s experience of field were known to the interviewer, i.e. in a type (2) or type (3) structure as in Q 8:

Example 3-5

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| <u>Supposition</u> | I’m sure there’s also a lighter side to breeding dogs. |
| <u>Commitment</u> | Can you think of a funny incident involving your dogs, or the people in showing ... ? |
| <u>Cue</u> | What happened? |

The certainty with which the interviewer is able to predict an interviewer’s field experience is high, and therefore his ability to constrain is strong, where neither the supposition underlying the elicitation question need be made explicit nor a Commitment to the Supposition be obtained, i.e. in a type (4) structure as in Q 13:

Example 3-6

| | |
|------------|--|
| <u>Cue</u> | What do you think of children being involved in showing? |
|------------|--|

While a minimal response such as *That’s okay by me* is not uncommon, it is invariably followed by arguments to back up the initial response and the elicitation question is never rejected with a *No comment* or *I have no thoughts on the matter*.

The range of the interviewer's certainty of an interviewee's experience of field, shown in Figure 3-3 in terms of the interviewer's ability to predict field from 'high' to 'low', is to a large extent synonymous with the likelihood of obtaining a response to a given elicitation question, thus bearing out the point made above that knowledge of the institutionally focused activities of the community from which the informants are drawn greatly increases the chances of eliciting data.

3.3 The Interview in terms of a Stratified Model of Context

The design of the interview is an integral part of the design of the data, in fact it could be claimed that it is entailed by the data design. The interview is therefore briefly discussed in this section for its register aspects, building on the model of genre and register introduced in Chapter 2.

The most striking difference between genre and register, in very general terms, is that while generically the objectives of the interview are to achieve a degree of 'controlled variability', i.e. different text types instances of which are comparable across all interviews, in register terms the objectives of the *conduct* of the interview must be to keep all interviews constant. Such constancy can of course be no more than an ideal since at one level even a single interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee is likely to vary in the course of that interaction. In terms of a series of interviews to be conducted, the objective of 'constancy of conduct' has to be realistically restated as aiming at a similar dyadic relationship between one and the same interviewer and a number of different interviewees and *not* at invariant behaviour by the interviewer. Due to the obvious fact that the relationship between interviewer and different interviewees will be based on the different attributes each brings to a unique interaction, i.e. physical, social, etc., the sameness and therefore registerial comparability needs to be achieved by reference to more abstract concepts than, say, sex, age or class.

3.3.1 Field

The field of the interview may be considered to be that of the dog fancy (but see the discussion of tenor under 3.3.2 for the implications of a dual field applying in this situation) – the 'topics' explored concern both what constitutes the hobby in terms of its 'activities', i.e. the breeding, rearing, selling, caring for, showing, training, etc., of

dogs, as well as in terms of its ‘objects’, the animals, the people, the paraphernalia typically associated with both activities and objects, etc.; see Figure 3-4a:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| FIELD | |
| <u>dog fancy:</u> | breeding and exhibiting of pet dogs |
| <u>‘topics’:</u> | personal involvement |
| | dog world vs. outside world |
| | aspects of breeding and showing |

Fig. 3-4a: Register description of interview – field

The characterisation of field choices in this study is based on an essentially informal – and implicit – description of the dog fancy, closely resembling the ‘ethnography’ of the ‘culture of dog handlers’ by Greene (1971), partially reproduced in Spradley & McCurdy (1972:81-2) as examples of ‘a great many category systems that could be studied in the culture of dog handlers’. Greene’s listing of ‘domains’ includes many disparate sub-fields, both of an activity and an object kind, such as ‘ways to place in benched shows’, ‘ingredients in dog shampoo’, ‘different “personalities” a dog can have’, ‘things that can disqualify a dog’, and so on.

As argued in Chapter 2, it is considered theoretically premature to attempt a systemic representation of the field of dog breeding & showing at this stage; furthermore, such a systemicisation lies outside the scope and concern of this study. Many problems remain to be solved before a network of field choices, say in the form of a network that seeks to model the choices involving in one way or another the interaction of humans with ‘animals’, using the term loosely, could be used to predict the lexicogrammatical realisations of such field choices. Nevertheless, in order to provide a context for the following critical remarks just such a systemic network of field choices is presented in Figure 3-4b:

TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text

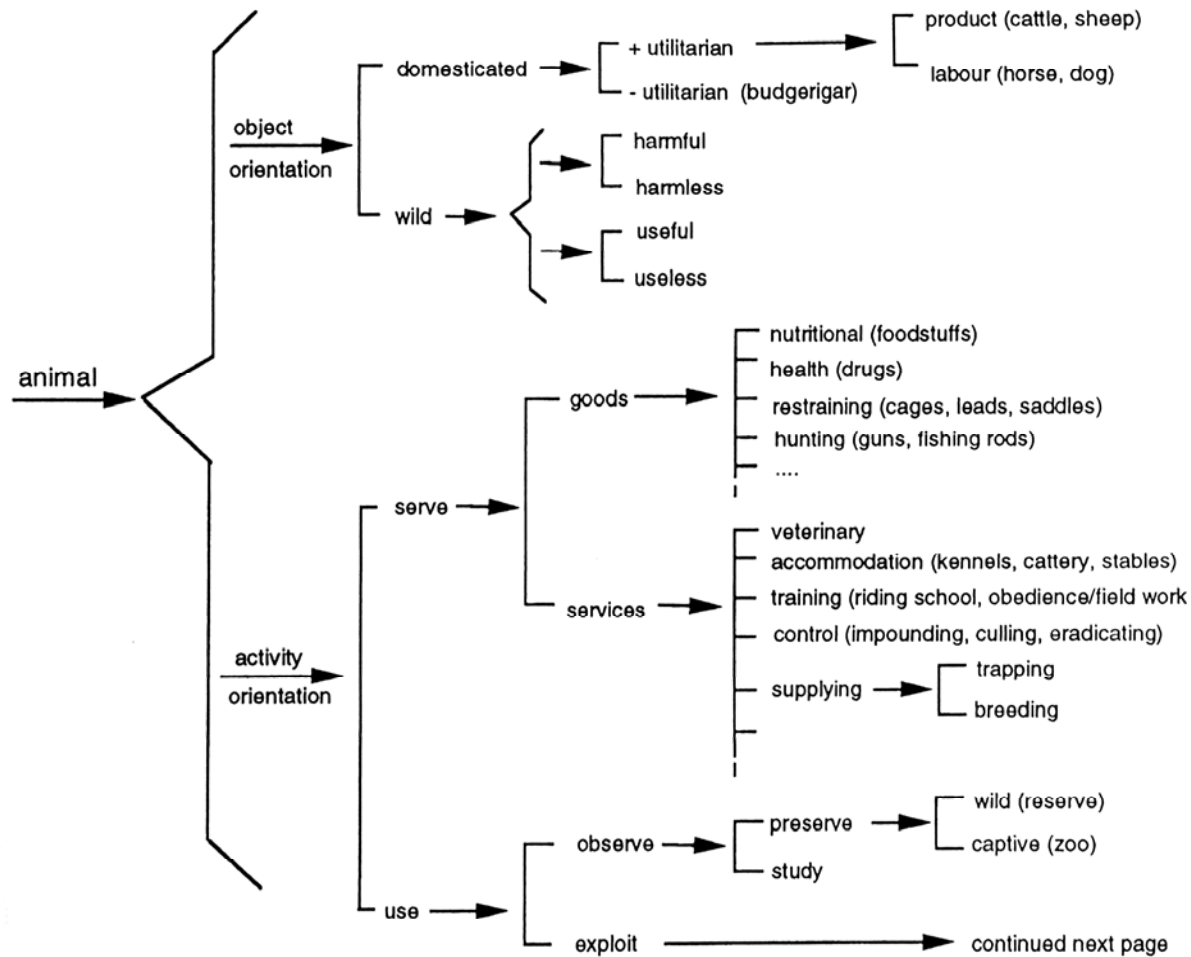


Fig. 3-4b: Field network – animal (p.1)

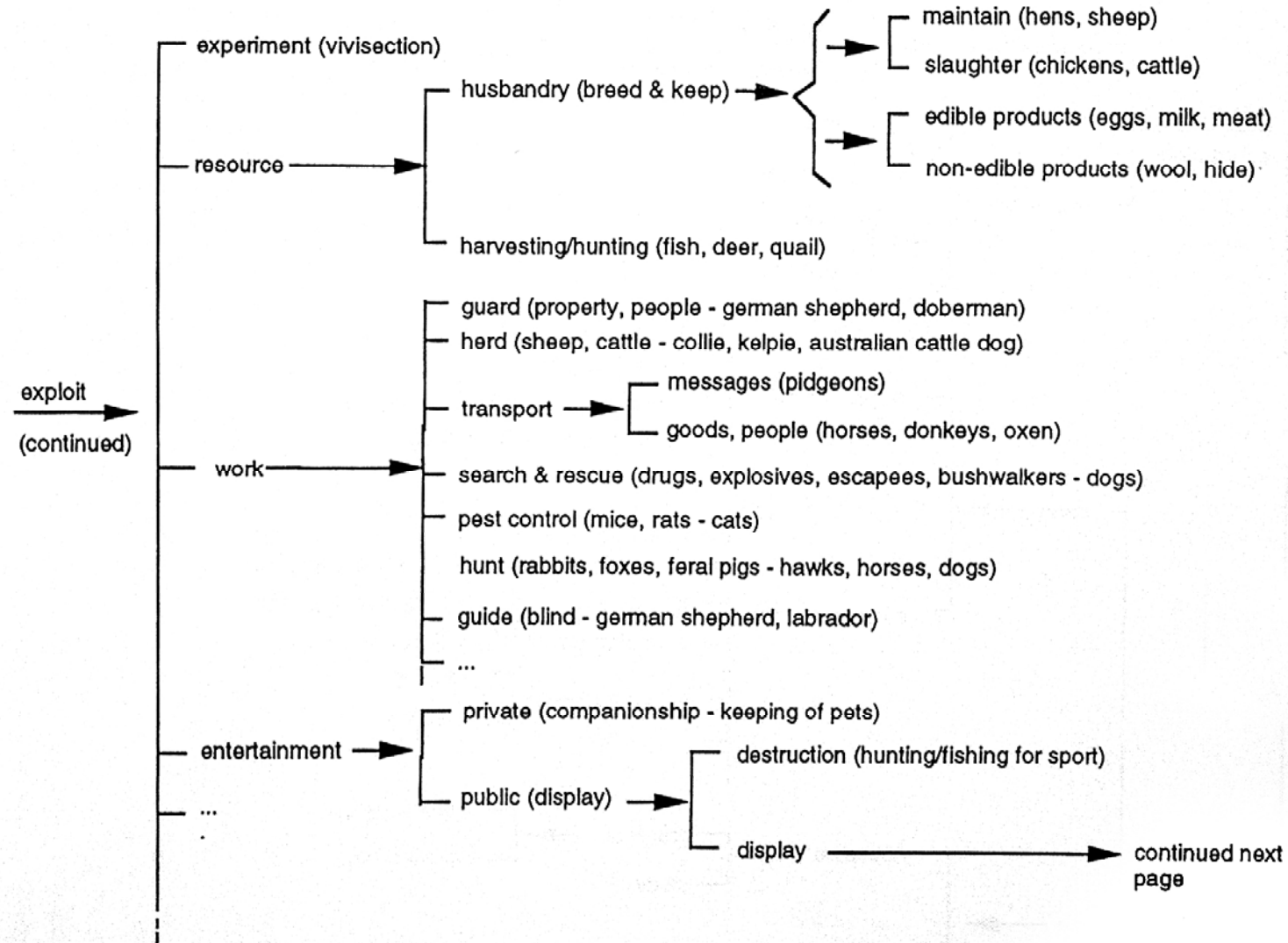
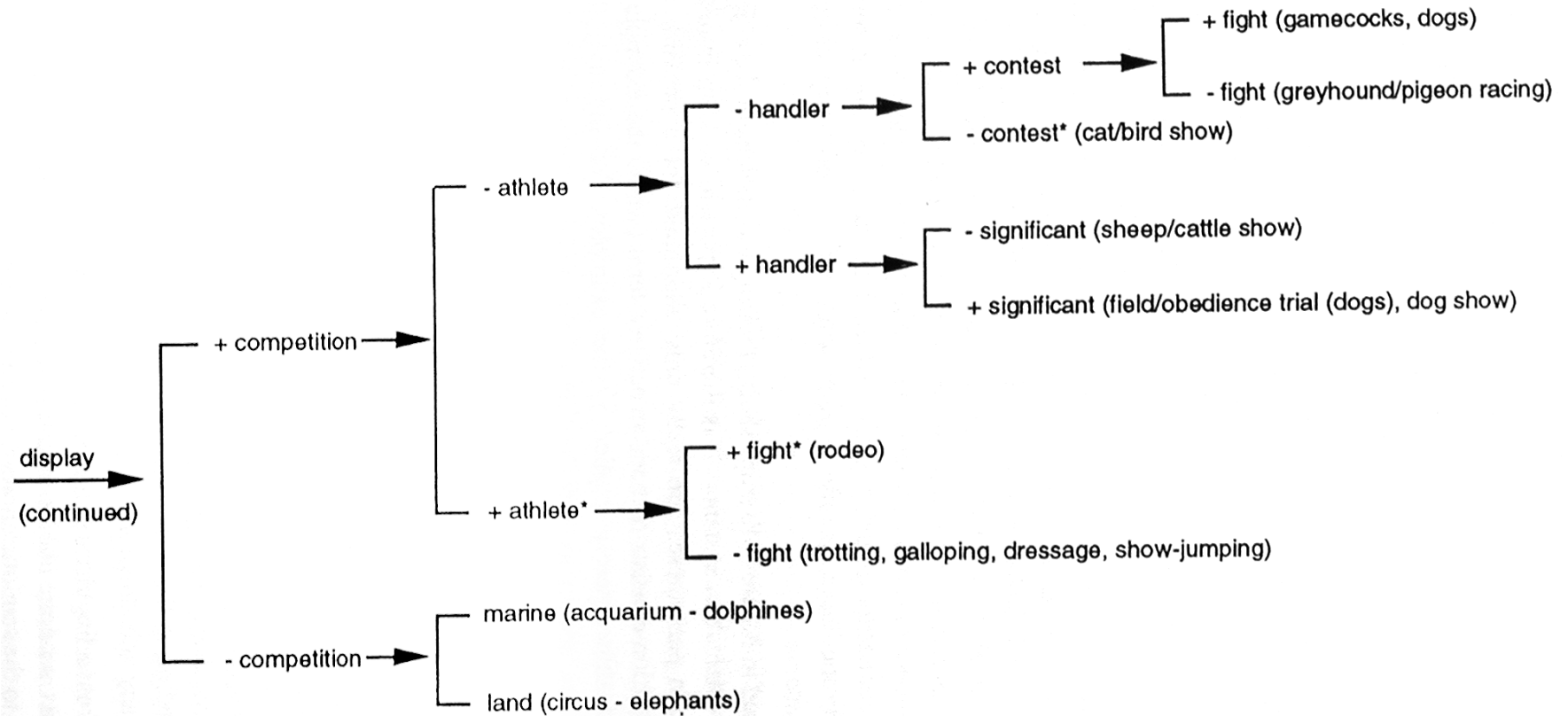


Fig. 3-4b: Field network – animal (p.2)

TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text



- * Notes: [fight] = physical, potentially destructive of participants
 [contest] = against time/standard/opponent ('faster/better than x')
 [athlete] = sportsman/woman

Fig. 3-4b: Field network – animal (p.3)

The ANIMAL network in Figure 3-4b adopts the descriptive strategy of making a fundamental systemic opposition between an orientation towards *object* vs. *activity*. (This strategy was originally suggested by Martin as a way of modelling field choices directly but has since been reworked by him as a way of capturing lexical relations generally (Martin 1984b); see Section 2.2 for discussion.) The OBJECT ORIENTATION system focuses on animals in a folk-taxonomic approach; the system needs to be developed further to a level of delicacy at which choice is no longer a viable principle since at some point different kinds of animal (species? sub-species?) are likely to combine as a group with some feature in the activity system. The terminal feature in the object orientation system is thus a type of animal or group of animals. The ACTIVITY ORIENTATION system focuses on activities into which animals enter without the choices being specific to the type of animal. The network thus reflects the fact that the objects and activities are relevant to one another but are at the same time conceptually distinct, i.e. the choices in the two conjoint systems are truly combinable.

The aim of the descriptive strategy followed, informed by the goal of being useful for the purpose of textual analysis, is to strike a balance between the great degree of generality of a network which lacks the common focus of ‘animal’ and the extreme specificity of a network which does not cross-classify objects and activities by having them in conjoint systems but which instead treats co-selections as single choices which are in contrast with one another in a single system. The more general system would lead to showing widely different texts as being agnate (which they probably are at some level of generality) while the more specific system would show only very closely related texts as being agnate.

The network presented in Figure 3-4b stops short of wiring the choices in the object orientation and activity orientation systems. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the examples given in parentheses are really only shorthand for a network of options whose entry condition consists of both an activity term (where the example is shown) and an object feature (merely implied by the example). For instance, the possible realisation ‘kennel’, shown as a realisation of the feature ‘accommodation’ implies the selection expression

[activity: serve: services: accommodation / object: domesticated: +utilitarian: labour]

which would in turn operate as a conjoint entry condition to a more delicate system describing the commercial activity of kennelling dogs as a system of choices agnate with the domestic kennelling of a pet dog.

As is evident from the network presented in Figure 3-4b, not only does such a network potentially encompass an enormous range of activities, and thus pose practical problems of achieving its descriptive goals, but there are also two very different theoretical problems standing in the way of achieving even a very limited description, i.e. limited either in delicacy or in domain.

The major problem from a linguist's point of view concerns *redundancy*, i.e. the fact that choices, both abstract semiotic choices and lexicogrammatical ones that stand in a realisational relationship to the semiotic choices, need to be stated over and over again. While this is partly a problem of delicacy, and which can therefore be addressed using delicacy as a constraint on the choices to be specified, it is very largely a problem of similar activity sequences, realised in similar if not identical choices in lexis and transitivity, being found to constitute choices at many different points in a network such as that in Figure 3-4b as well as in (unwritten) field networks which attempt to capture very different choices but 'overlap' with choices in the network entitled ANIMAL on what might be called 'thematic' grounds. (Cf. also Lemke's (1985:283ff) concept of 'abstract thematic systems', which are said to constitute part of the 'semiotic system defining the meaning relations within and between the various recognized kinds of social practice in a community'). An example of the former source of redundancy would be the showing, competitive or otherwise, of different species of animals, say dogs vs. cats, while an example of the latter source of redundancy would be the 'showing' of humans vs. animals since all such displays are in some sense contests based on beauty, speed, strength, i.e. prowess in some area, on some kind of natural or acquired accomplishment.

The major problem from a semiotician's point of view concerns the degree of *cultural specificity* such a field network ought to have. Perhaps one of the best theoretical accounts of how animals 'mean' differently in different cultures is found in the classic paper by Leach (1964) yet anecdotal evidence of misunderstandings arising out of the different cultural status of animals is abundant. For example, when four (non Anglo-Saxon) men killed and cooked a dog in a suburban backyard in Melbourne they

brought the wrath of neighbours, dog lovers at large, the court and the national press down upon them since eating dogs in a society which essentially keeps them as pets and/or as working animals is likely to outrage the natives of an Anglo-Saxon society and in turn lead to them being accused of racism (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 8/3/83).

But the problem extends beyond cultural differences to, in principle, all choices in a field network since there always will be co-selections of choices, such as [eating] plus [dog] in the above example, which are culturally ‘impossible’, i.e. which are instances of marked behaviour stamping the doer/speaker an outsider to a greater or lesser extent. Such cultural ‘disjunctions’ (see Lemke 1985:292ff), i.e. impossible/unlikely combinations of choices in a semiotic system, are often the target of satirists and are clearly recognised as marked and therefore the stuff of jokes (see the discussion of Woody Allen’s satire in Benson & Greaves 1981). After all, much if not (almost) anything is sayable even if the said is currently unacceptable!

More importantly, however, since semiotic systems such as a culture change by combinations of choices becoming more/less likely – “possible/impossible” simply being an everyday overstatement of the endpoints of a continuum which statistically ranges from very likely to very unlikely – it should not be the descriptive responsibility of a network of field choices to rule out what are the currently highly unlikely, seemingly even impossible, combinations of choices. That responsibility is considered to lie with the semiotic system of genre in the model underlying this study, where choices at that level determine the culturally possible or likely combinations of choices in the semiotic system of register. The problem faced by a semiotician in drawing a network of field choices, which is but one system in a system of register, may therefore be restated as concerning not so much the cultural ‘scope’ of the network as the need to rethink systemically what is currently, including by the current writer, generally thought of ethnographically.

Although field would appear to be the most easily constrained of register variables, in trial interviews two factors were found to affect what was achievable in terms of field: (i) since different specialisations within the dog fancy lead to differences in what dog fanciers actually do, e.g. dog showing vs. obedience training vs. field trialling, some questions may be too specific to be answered by a large number of interviewees; (ii) some questions were rejected by a majority of informants as inapplicable or as probing experiences not worth talking about, thereby calling the usefulness of the

interview in doubt. However, the inability to elicit a response to some question in the interview schedule does of course not affect the data itself – for this reason the control of the field variable is more important to the success of the interview as a method of data collection than to the study of generic variation.

An attempt was also made to go outside the field of dog breeding & showing in order to compare data which invoked the contrast between interviewees' simultaneous membership of a 'single interest' group and of the speech community at large. It was found, however, that at least some interviewees showed a marked reluctance to engage in talk about topics clearly unrelated to their particular hobby. Two reasons may be advanced for this: One, interviewees are simply more at ease with questions that relate to a field about which they are knowledgeable; and two, they expect the interviewer's stated objectives for interviewing – gaining a kind of 'social portrait' of the people behind the dogs – to be reflected in the questions asked.

The correlation between suspicion of the interviewer's true motives and the interviewee's 'style of speech' which Labov (1966a:90) noted is also impossible to overlook in this study. The interviewee who prefaces a response to a question focusing on a different field with *I don't see what this has got to do with dogs* queries the interaction at that point and the introduction of a different field becomes dysfunctional. If such a limitation on what can be talked about in a sociolinguistic interview were found to be a general phenomenon, it would have important implications for research methodology in the study of functional variation.

3.3.2 Tenor

The tenor of the interview is stated in Figure 3-5 in terms of the systems set up in a systemicised account of tenor by Poynton (1984). In essence, choices have to be made by the interviewer which not only result in any one interview being successful in terms of the stated objectives but which are capable of being maintained across all interviews. These choices concern POWER, AFFECT and CONTACT.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| TENOR | | | | | | | | | |
| POWER: | <p>equality</p> <p>(result of 'compensatory inequality' between inner & outer situation of field)</p> <p>Outer Situation: research via sociolinguistic interview</p> <table> <tr> <td><u>interviewees:</u></td><td><u>interviewer:</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>lay person / outsider</td><td>vs. expert / insider</td></tr> </table> <p>Inner situation: dog breeding & showing</p> <table> <tr> <td><u>interviewees:</u></td><td><u>interviewer:</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>expert / insider</td><td>vs. lay person / outsider</td></tr> </table> | <u>interviewees:</u> | <u>interviewer:</u> | lay person / outsider | vs. expert / insider | <u>interviewees:</u> | <u>interviewer:</u> | expert / insider | vs. lay person / outsider |
| <u>interviewees:</u> | <u>interviewer:</u> | | | | | | | | |
| lay person / outsider | vs. expert / insider | | | | | | | | |
| <u>interviewees:</u> | <u>interviewer:</u> | | | | | | | | |
| expert / insider | vs. lay person / outsider | | | | | | | | |
| AFFECT: | <p>positive</p> <p>(result of assuming role of 'sympathetic outsider' – outer situation of field)</p> | | | | | | | | |
| CONTACT: | <p>first & last time</p> <p>(result of chain referral within dog fancy – outer situation of field)</p> | | | | | | | | |

Fig. 3-5: Register description of interview – TENOR

In respect of POWER in particular it is useful to recognise that a sociolinguistic interview actually constitutes two situations at once, viz. the 'outer situation' of the interview (with a sociolinguist interviewer and a social subject as interviewee), and the 'inner situation' of the dog fancy (with a dog fancier as one of its members and an interested non-member, respectively interviewee and interviewer of the outer situation). The distinction being made here in respect of the power dimension of tenor derives from the fact that there are two fields being accessed simultaneously in this situation, viz. overtly the field of dog breeding & showing, i.e. the ostensible subject of the interview (the inner situation), and covertly the 'field' of research, which is left undefined if not 'hidden' but is somehow understood to be sociological.²¹

²¹The 'hidden' field, the hidden agenda as it were, is in its relationship to the ostensible field not unlike the interactional practices of teacher and students described by Christie (1984, 1985) as 'curriculum genre' are to their manifestations in the genres and fields explicitly explored by teacher and students in the classroom. The relationship between the overt and the covert in the educational context, where the teaching and learning of 'knowledge' determined by adult society, i.e. at its simplest the content of school subjects, has to be accomplished without making the rationale behind what is considered essential knowledge explicit, is of great importance to an understanding of the role of language in education and thus constitutes an important part of any scholarly enquiry which deals with classroom texts. By contrast, the relationship between the overt and the covert in the context of a study of textual variation such as this, while potentially interesting to a student of the sociology of language, can and in fact must be ignored here for reasons of economy.

The distinction is made by Halliday (1978c:26) in the context of role playing in the classroom, with students simulating job interviews:

In that situation two distinct things are happening at once, the one being a projection of the other. The teacher is conducting a class; this sets up a certain relationship between teacher and class, and another relationship among the classmates themselves.

(Halliday 1978c:26)

Similar in the context of the sociolinguistic interview, there is a dual relationship between the two participants: the conduct of an interview which sets up a relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and the exchange of information (at one level) about the dog fancy which sets up a relationship between a member and a non-member of the dog fancy. A similar duality needs to be recognised in works of fiction, whose field of discourse may be said to be 'on two levels: the social act of narration, and the social acts that form the content of the narration' (Halliday 1977:203).

While the distinction between inner and outer situation could be maintained in respect of all three tenor dimensions, and of course formalised for field, it is of most interest here, since most consequential, in respect of power. The interviewee is the acknowledged expert/insider in terms of the field of dog breeding & showing while the interviewer is the lay person/ outsider here. The role of lay person/outsider assumed by the interviewer is a necessary one in order to be able to ask the ostensibly information-seeking questions in the interview schedule. That the role is assumed rather than real is an unfortunate subterfuge necessitated by the requirement to have a certain degree of insider's knowledge in order to be a good interviewer in the first instance.

The basis of interviewees' implicit judgment as to what constitutes the difference between lay and expert person in the field of dog breeding & showing was important for the possibilities it offered the interviewer for reinforcing the assumed role: Since interviewees always felt that organisational details of the dog fancy needed explaining while the rather richly developed technical lexis peculiar to the field did not, it was always easy to remind the interviewee of the outsider's role being played by the interviewer by questioning seemingly everyday lexis which was being used in a technical sense. For example, displaying some discomfort at the use of the term bitch denoting 'female dog' on the obvious grounds of wishing to avoid the common connotation of the term outside the dog fancy usually succeeded in getting the interviewee to make the interviewer's outsider status explicit.

In terms of doing research by means of conducting a sociolinguistic interview, however, the roles of interviewee and interviewer are reversed: Here it is the interviewer who is, within the unstated but subtly acknowledged rules of interviewing, the expert/insider while the interviewee is the lay person/outsider.

The reciprocal rights and obligations of interviewer and interviewee are clearly perceptible in the patterns followed in interview after interview: The interviewer has the right to ask, and set, the questions while the interviewee has (accepted) the complementary obligation to respond. Equally, however, the interviewee has the right to be heard and the interviewer the obligation to listen. The tacit acceptance of these rights and obligations as reflections of the ‘interview’ nature of the interaction, as well as of the assigned roles of interviewer and interviewee, is made very clear by the almost total absence of any questions being asked by interviewees. Conversely, whenever the interviewer tried to be ‘informative’ by making contributions akin to the often lengthy responses elicited from interviewees, these were essentially treated by the interviewees as lying outside the interview, i.e. they were listened to politely but only minimally responded to. The roles of interviewer and interviewee are thus both respected by the interviewee as well as expected by him or her to be essentially adhered to.

In order to de-emphasise the power inherent in the right to ask the questions, a power most clearly based on hidden knowledge in the form of a pre-determined set of questions in an interview schedule, I tried to rely as little as possible on a copy of the schedule. I eventually learned to conduct the entire interview from memory, thereby being able to give the appearance of asking questions spontaneously, at times reacting to something just said and at other times appearing to embark on a different topic altogether. While it is perhaps not possible to quantify the effects of increasing the interviewer’s role as ‘participant’ and correspondingly decreasing it as ‘observer’, such a strategy undoubtedly contributed to achieving the equality of power aimed at.

In respect of the affect dimension of tenor a role of ‘sympathetic outsider’ was adopted in recognition of the fact that although the dog fancy as a group is happy to be considered a world apart from the rest of the community, it is important for the interviewer not to be too closely identified with those opposed to it. Members of the dog fancy often see themselves as belonging to a beleaguered ‘anti-society’ (Halliday 1976b) with an alternative perception of a small but important part of an otherwise

shared cultural reality. Such self-perception is strongly hinted at in the revealing term ‘dog world’, members of which are said to be ‘doggy’, i.e. dog-loving. Although dog fanciers at times happily report that some of their own friends think them and their activities crazy, silly or ridiculous, it doesn’t behove the interviewer to imply any common bond with the non-understanding, and often said-to-be hostile, outsider. The interviewer has to show himself to be a ‘sympathetic’ outsider by expressing empathy or ‘positive affect’ (Poynton 1984), i.e. by expressing interest, surprise, compassion, etc.

In respect of the contact dimension of tenor it may be said that the interview is a ‘first & last’ meeting between strangers who have no expectations of a developing or ongoing relationship.

3.3.3 Mode

The mode of the interview is stated in Figure 3-6 in terms of the systemicised account of mode by Martin (1984b). Most generally put, mode choices are concerned with contextual dependency which is here accounted for as different kinds of ‘distance’. A distance dimension of SPACE, pertaining to the kind and degree of ‘feedback’ which obtains between the interactants, characterises the interview as interaction. A distance dimension of TIME, pertaining to the relation between language and what it is used to talk about, characterises the interview as representation of experience.

| MODE | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| SPACE: <u>face-to-face</u> : | quasi-conversation |
| TIME: <u>language-as-reflection</u> : | reconstruction of experience |

Fig. 3-6: Register description of interview – MODE

In respect of the SPACE dimension of mode, the interview is conducted ‘face-to-face’ like all sociolinguistic interviews, but unlike some interviews, e.g. those conducted on radio. Due to the objective of obtaining texts produced by one interactant alone, i.e. neither dependently produced texts (in conjunction with the interviewer) nor jointly produced ones (in conjunction with a third party present at the interview, typically a partner in the dog fancy), feedback by the interviewer was largely to be restricted to back-channel cues (Duncan 1972; Yngve 1970) during responses to

questions in the interview schedule, from eye contact to body posture to facial and other gestures to paralinguistic vocalisations to minimal verbalisations. No such constraint was to be observed in the dialogic phases of the interview, i.e. those phases within which question & response were embedded. Feedback was thus ‘managed’ in terms of a hidden agenda.

A further potential constraint affecting the interview as a kind of ‘quasi-conversation’ derives, as in all sociolinguistic interviews, from the open tape-recording itself. It was also the case in the interviews in this study, as observed time and again by other researchers making use of the sociolinguistic interview, that the fact of recording seemed to be quickly ignored by interviewees. One possible reason for this is that the recordings always took place in the interviewees’ own home, i.e. in a familiar setting.

In respect of the time dimension of mode, the interview encourages ‘language-as-reflection’ on experience rather than ‘language-in-action’. In other words, rather than observe, for example, the actual showing of a dog at a dog show, and record the language accompanying such an activity, the activity of the interview is talk itself. The experiences represented in the context of a meeting for the purpose of ‘talking’ may be seen as ranging from reconstructions to constructions of experiences, i.e. from reconstructing personal experiences in text to constructing texts that stand in a ‘meta’ relationship to experiences.

The responses aimed at are not to be seen as being produced in some kind of cultural vacuum – in fact, the whole point of designing the space and time dimensions of mode in the way described above is to be able to elicit texts which may qualify as instances of ‘natural discourse’ despite their production in the context of an interview. For this to be the case the cultural assumptions underlying conversation must continue to hold, the achievement of which is clearly dependent on all the register variables jointly contributing to overcoming the effects of what Labov (1972e:209) called the ‘observer’s paradox’ inherent in any such study, i.e. the effects of systematic observation on everyday speech.

Chapter 4:

Towards a Synoptic Account of Text

While our primary concern in this chapter is to demonstrate that a synoptic perspective on text does not do violence to the nature of the data which constitutes the large corpus of spoken texts forming the basis of discussions and analyses in subsequent chapters, and that therefore such data is suitable for the empirical investigation – and quantification – of high-level abstractions such as generic structure and of its lexicogrammatical realisations without sacrificing accountability, a secondary concern is to provide a dynamic perspective on text which is complementary to the synoptic one adopted in this study generally. Although we will argue that the corpus texts not only can be dealt with in a synoptic perspective but in fact are most usefully considered synoptically, at least some texts exhibit features which challenge the adequacy of a synoptic analysis and call for a complementary dynamic perspective on the same text.

The ‘dynamics’ characterising text is considered to be one of continuous change, such change reflecting choices that are made on the basis of an immediately prior choice (see also discussion in Section 2.3). What we will seek to do in this chapter is provide an interpretation of such change at various levels of linguistic description with a view to its significance for a model of text, i.e. for a model of generic structure. While we will be demonstrating the general validity of a synoptic perspective in a study of this kind, we will at the same time – by default so to speak – be illustrating the limitations of such a perspective on text and therefore be arguing the need for a complementary dynamic perspective.

In order to clarify which aspects of the production of spoken texts in real-time are considered to warrant a discussion in dynamic terms we will ultimately have to exclude those ‘dynamic’ aspects which are essentially irrelevant to the texts as texts, i.e. irrelevant at the semantic level of text. Firstly, we will therefore briefly consider those aspects of text which largely characterise spoken language but which are not serious candidates for a dynamic perspective on text, i.e. essentially those phenomena that are typically not represented in a transcription of spoken language. Secondly, we will then at some length consider changes at the level of lexicogrammar which involve changes in structure, specifically ‘about’ the clause, i.e. changes which do indeed call for a dynamic account of ‘texting’ but which are of no consequence for a model of generic

or text structure. Thirdly, we will consider textual phenomena (usually at clause level, and often extending over several clauses) which reflect the essentially interactional nature of text production, i.e. an awareness of an interlocutor, in its real-time realisation of generic structure but do no more than lead to a kind of ‘perturbation’ of generic structure. And lastly, we will discuss an example of genuine dynamic change of generic structure, i.e. in a sense the equivalent of continuous structural change at the level of lexicogrammar.

4.1 Idealisation in the Transcription of Spoken Texts

Although certain aspects of the spoken texts in the corpus may be seen as evidence of a product/process distinction in at least one interpretation of this distinction – since they pertain to differences between the written and spoken language – these need not seriously be considered for a complementary dynamic perspective on text. In the main, these aspects are either not part of the writing system of English at all, such as intonation, rhythm, pitch, voice quality, etc., or they are ordinarily not represented in written language, i.e. considered to be *not* part of what a written record of languaging looks like, such as phenomena of hesitancy, of checking or confirming that the communication channel is still open, of self-correction, etc., all of which may be vocalised and even verbalised.

While the former set of phenomena is one that could of course be transcribed by the use of special systems of notation, i.e. of a notation over and above the conventional resources of the writing system, the conventional omission of the latter set of phenomena is clearly a case of idealisation in the transcription of the spoken language to the written. Such idealisation largely concerns lexicogrammatical phenomena, usually below clause level, which are typically not transcribed. (The following discussion will in fact extend to some intonational features whose omission in transcription is not actually part of an idealisation of the spoken language.) At what point the conventional omission of linguistic features, both verbal and non-verbal, let alone of non-linguistic and paralinguistic ones, yields at best a ‘translation’ of the spoken into the written, and at worst leads to a misrepresentation of it, must depend on the goals of the analysis for which the transcription is undertaken. For the purpose of facilitating the discussion, those aspects of a conventional idealisation in transcription which do have some significance for generic structure will be discussed in Section 4.3 below.

It is contended here that although the texts reproduced in this study (see especially Volume 2) are clearly edited in transcription, a judicious idealisation of spoken language when represented in written form does not constitute a misrepresentation of the essentially ‘synoptic texts’ (cf. final paragraph of Chapter 2) in question, potentially leading to the making of false claims about such texts, however implicitly. Any loss of information suffered in such an idealisation is of little or no consequence to the study of text. In other words, the evidence of real-time production of spoken texts, which is abundant, does not have to be accounted for in a dynamic perspective complementary to the synoptic one adopted throughout this study.

Many of the phenomena which are commonly recognised as being typical of spoken language are so regarded since they appear to be absent from the written language. Hesitation phenomena such as the familiar *um* and *ah*; false starts and self-corrections at all levels and ranks of the linguistic system; elaborations introduced by *I mean*, and similar phenomena are rarely represented in writing since such evidence of the production of text is typically edited out before a written draft is allowed to be seen by its intended readers. (See Halliday 1985d:100-101 for a nice illustration of what the written equivalent of the ‘warts & all’ school of transcription of spoken language would have to be like.)

At one level, the transcription of most of those features typically associated with the spoken language often only results in ‘exoticizing’ (Halliday et al. 1985:17) spoken language by reference to an unstated norm embodied in written language. At another level, however, exoticised speech has lead linguists at times to conclude that speech – certainly casual, conversational speech – is essentially ungrammatical, i.e. that, especially at the level of sentence structure, it does not conform to accepted notions of well-formedness. (See Brown & Yule (1983:14ff, 142) for a fairly representative espousal of this position.) The issue of the supposed ungrammaticality of speech will be taken up in Section 4.2 below.

Similarly, it is argued here that such phenomena are of little interest in the study of text. For example, nothing is to be gained by including every instance of self-correction in the complete text reproduced as example 4-1:

Example 4-1 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 32)²²

OBSERVATION²³

Event Description/Comment

I just bought a dog off someone, ~~another-~~ I had a dog in the first place, then ~~bought another-~~ I bought a bitch off someone and they were sort of suggesting shows, you know, and ~~+-~~ I could just take your (('my')) dog out to see what happens, you know, and ...

Coda

You just get sort of conned in it and all.

Self-corrections generally do not affect the generic status of a text and their transcription would merely adversely affect the readability of the text, at times to the point of rendering a text boring and nearly unintelligible no matter how enjoyable it might have been to listen to, as the final element of structure of the text in example 4-2 shows:

Example 4-2 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 45)

RECOUNT

...

Reorientation

~~And eh-~~ And that was the start of it, you know; I ~~had a-~~ had a litter and next thing I ~~wa-~~ I'm ~~right-~~ right into it.

The decision not to transcribe faithfully a self-corrected wording may at times lead to either the loss of some lexical information, as in example 4-3a, or to some minor rewording in order for the text to be intelligible. Some instances of correction, especially where a wording 'fades out', as well as some false starts, need to be transcribed since a later clause may build on the very wording in the earlier one and would itself become difficult to understand without it, e.g. a pronominal reference to a fully lexical item in an abandoned clause at an earlier point. Example 4-3b illustrates the need to lexicalise such a pronominal reference in the same clause, the co-referential items being shown with dotted underline:

Example 4-3

- (a) ~~My husband-~~ ~~eh no,~~ my brother, he used to show dogs and he said ...

²²Any examples adduced in Volume 1 which are (partial) reproductions of texts included in Volume 2 are given with a reference to Volume 2 in the form of (Vol.2 – Q no./I no.).

²³The genre observation/comment described by Martin & Rothery (1981) will be renamed OBSERVATION in this study, and its generic stages EVENT DESCRIPTION (rather than Observation) and COMMENT respectively following a suggestion by Barbara Kamler and Merle Elms in the School of Education, Deakin University, Geelong; see Chapter 6 for discussion.

- (b) ~~The judge has kind of said em- he's~~ [\Rightarrow The judge's] pointed to the centre of the ring ~~em~~, "rottweiler number so and so," you know.

However, while none of the above instances of evidence of text-in-production is of any great import in a synoptic account of text, there is a special case to be made out for the occasional transcription of a 'false start' since it may in fact signal the dynamic realisation of generic structure and such cases will be discussed as evidence of generic perturbation at the level of text in Section 4.3 below.

Hesitation phenomena, whether vocalised or not, i.e. whether realised as *em*, *eh*, etc., as in 4-3a, or as pausing, are not usually found in writing. Since in speech a whole range of phonological and paraphonological features typically not represented in writing, and of which pausing is only a relatively minor one, potentially carry important information about choices realised both at the levels of linguistic and of generic structure, their transcription must depend on the goals of the analysis at any given point. For example, intonation and rhythm are important in the realisation of certain types of CLAUSE COMPLEX relations (see below this chapter, especially Section 4.2, and also Chapter 8) while pausing, pitch, and voice quality are more important in the realisation of generic structure, specifically in signalling the beginning/end of a text (see Chapter 5).

Since the transcription of texts in this study has been in the interests of demonstrating generic structure, intonation and rhythm have not been transcribed at all whereas pausings have been indicated in order to show both the speaker's signalling of the end of a text, by a single or multiple sequence of '...', as well as throughout the text since this provided a convenient means of indicating the spontaneous production of spoken text without affecting the readability of those texts.

Other phenomena associated with the spoken language are more specifically part of conversation, e.g. speakers' overt 'channel-checking' with their hearers via the ubiquitous *you know*, in itself the direct equivalent of the 'back-channel' messages sent in turn by hearers both vocally via *mm*, *mm mm*, *mm-hm*, *aha*, *yes*, *really*, etc., and gesturally via nodding, head-shaking, and all sorts of body movements including gazing or the maintaining of 'eye contact' as one of the least transcribable but most important means of keeping a communications channel open. These phenomena may well be included in representations of conversation for dramatic purposes just as they may constitute the primary interest in studies concerned with interaction per se, and

therefore get transcribed in great detail, as for example in the work of ethnomethodologists.

The two representations of the same recount in example 4-4 below, one including the work done by both interactants to maintain an open channel, the other excluding it, demonstrates that while certain features of this work, for example the interviewer's almost unfailing back-channelling to the interviewee's high rising tone (HRT), indicated by ↑, is of some interest for a study of seemingly non-dialogic interaction in an interview situation, in a study of text they are for the most part of little interest.²⁴

Example 4-4²⁵(see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 15)

RECOUNT (a)

Orientation

I: We used to go to the dog shows with him.

GP: With him.

I: Mm.

GP: Right.

I: But we never used to stay around the dogs; we all used to always be off playing with the other exhibitors' kids.↑

GP: Yeah.

RECOUNT (b)

Orientation

I: We used to go to the dog shows with him. But we never used to stay around the dogs; we all used to always be off playing with the other exhibitors' kids.

²⁴In a quantitative study of Australian Questioning Intonation (AQI), i.e. of the use of high-rising intonation (HRT) in statements, it was found (i) that the interactive meaning of AQI was such as to 'it usually receiv[ing] a minimal, perhaps nonverbal response from the interlocutor, with the floor basically continuing to be held by the speaker for a further substantive turn' (Guy et al. 1986: 27); and (ii) that the likely reason for the higher probability of the use of AQI in the case of descriptive and narrative text types than in other types of text, often shorter and more interpersonally oriented ones such as 'fact', 'opinion' and 'explanation', was the need to achieve 'listener involvement' in the construction of these types of text (Guy et al. 1986: 43). On the other hand, there is no suggestion that the use of AQI is directly relatable to the realisation of generic structure.

²⁵In all examples cited in Volume 1 speakers are only identified as 'GP', i.e. the interviewer and current writer, and 'I', i.e. the interviewee.

Record²⁶

I: And then I got started with the cattle dogs now. My sister bought a red cattle dog ↑

GP: Aha.

I: and she was going to get rid of himw

GP: Yeah.

I: because he was tearing up all the stuff in the backyard. ↑

GP: Aha.

Record (contd.)/Reorientation

I: So I took him and I've got him and that's how we started to show him; we started showing him.

GP: Yes.

Coda

I: And that's it.

Record

I: And then I got started with the cattle dogs now. My sister bought a red cattle dog and she was going to get rid of him because he was tearing up all the stuff in the backyard.

Record (contd.)/Reorientation

I: So I took him and I've got him and that's how we started to show him; we started showing him.

Coda

I: And that's it.

While the representation of phenomena such as HRT and the interlocutor's typical response to it would have succeeded in underlining the generally interactional nature of all meaningful languaging, whether the language production is ostensibly dialogic or monologic, it is not a point worth making insistently at the cost of jeopardising the reading of these texts. Furthermore, since the focus of this study is not on interaction per se but on generic structure, it is transcriptively more important to keep the construction of that structure in focus.

4.2 Continuous Change in Structure at the Level of Lexicogrammar: The Clause Complex in English

Any concern with lexicogrammatical patterns in speech inevitably raises the question of the grammaticality of speech. As mentioned in Section 4.1 above, the view that speech is defective in some way is not uncommonly held; for example Brown & Yule (1983:142) argue specifically against the position expressed by Labov (1966b), as quoted by Linde & Labov (1975:926, fn.8), that 'about 75% of utterances in most

²⁶The stage named Event¹ by Martin & Rothery (1981) in their genre recount will be renamed RECORD in this study; see Section 6.2.1.1 for discussion.

conversations are well-formed by any criterion (when rules of ellipsis and general editing rules are applied, almost 98% would fall in this category).’ The position taken here accords in principle with Labov’s, being based in the first instance on the analysis of a fairly large corpus of spoken data. Although the corpus is constituted of monologically produced texts which are clearly *not* instances of ‘casual’ or ‘domestic conversation’ (Crystal 1980:153), it will become evident with the description of the data and its elicitation in subsequent chapters that an argument that the speech of the interviewees is uncharacteristic of ‘real’ spoken language on the basis of it having been ‘highly influenced by written language’ (Brown & Yule 1983:15) cannot be sustained.

Just such a category of speech, however, is set up by Brown & Yule (1983) in a reductionist argument aimed at supporting a characterisation of spoken language which is ultimately based on a very restricted variety of speech, viz. speech produced under the most adverse conditions as regards the contextual variables handled in a model of language such as a Hallidayan register model – variables such as the task attempted, the topic dealt with, the social relations obtaining between speaker and hearer(s), the productive relations between text, speaker, hearer, and that which is being represented, and so on. While there can obviously be argument over the likely degree of grammaticality of a particular instance of speech on the basis of the degree of its conversationality, let alone its casualness, but neither one necessarily implying the other, an argument for setting up distinct categories of language which oppose not only written and spoken language but also varieties of spoken language depending on their conversationality and casualness, however these may be defined, will be much harder to sustain.

The argument concerning the grammaticality of speech must turn on the model of linguistic structure applied to speech, and for the purpose of most discussions of grammaticality this comes down to a choice between models of sentence vs. clause. For example, Crystal (1980:159-60) concludes his discussion of a number of examples of conversational speech adduced to demonstrate the supposed ungrammaticality of much of conversational speech with the suggestion that a clause-based model could have avoided the analytical problems found in his data. His alternative proposal of a model of ‘Clause+connective+Clause...’, however, appears to constitute a retreat to a position which is as insidious as the one which simply considers speech ungrammatical since it views speech as a mere stringing together of single clauses, and not necessarily of clauses linked structurally by such connectives.

A true alternative to a model of the sentence is put forward in Halliday's (1985c) analysis of the clause complex; see also Huddleston et al. (1968). Clauses, like the structures at other ranks on a rank scale of English, i.e. groups/phrases, words and morphemes, are considered to be able to form complexes via a choice of recursion in a system of TAXIS that has also been referred to as 'logical' metafunction, leading to a structure whose constituents are bonded by relations of parataxis and/or hypotaxis; see Figure 2-3 in Section 2.1.1. While set up as a structure at the same rank as the clause, the clause complex is thus able to account for the functional organisation of the sentence as it is more traditionally conceived of. In fact, Halliday considers the traditional sentence a constituent of writing and the clause complex more fundamentally a constituent of grammar. It therefore follows that the clause complex as a grammatical construct is as applicable to the written language as it is to the spoken, an analysis of a stretch of languaging as (written) sentence generally reflecting an unmarked interpretation of the clause complex lying behind it. Only a brief introduction to the clause complex analysis is possible here, sufficient to facilitate the following discussion; see also Chapter 8 for some observations on quantitative aspects.

The relations which hold between clauses, which structure them as complexes, are analysed according to two primary dimensions simultaneously, one capturing the *interdependency* of clauses through the categories of PARATAXIS and HYPOTAXIS, the other the *logico-semantic* relations between clauses through the categories of EXPANSION and PROJECTION.

The categories of the system of TAXIS characterise all 'logical' structures in language, i.e. all such structures are either paratactic or hypotactic, and in functional terms tactic patterns define the UNIVARIATE structures found at any rank, thus defining complexes at any rank. In the most general sense parataxis concerns 'the relation between two like elements of equal status' whereas hypotaxis concerns 'the modifying relation ... between a dependent element and ... the element on which it is dependent' (Halliday 1985c:195). An important difference between Halliday's analysis of taxis and traditional analyses of coordination and subordination concerns the fundamental distinction which is made between

... embedding on the one hand and the 'tactic' relations of parataxis and hypotaxis on the other. Whereas parataxis and hypotaxis are relations BETWEEN clauses (or other ranking elements), embedding is not. Embedding is a

mechanism whereby a clause or phrase comes to function as a constituent WITHIN the structure of a group, which itself is a constituent of a clause.

(Halliday 1985c:219; emphases in orig.)

This distinction between hypotaxis and embedding is often obscured in grammars operating with categories of coordination, apposition and subordination and for this reason the analyses presented in this chapter as well as the results of the quantification of clause complex relations presented in Chapter 8 are not readily translatable into traditional ones.

The categories of the system of LOGICO-SEMANTICS characterise the relations which hold between any pair of paratactically or hypotactically related clauses, for example between the (two) successive clauses of equal status in the case of parataxis, and the (two) modifier/ modified clauses of unequal status in the case of hypotaxis. The clauses in a clause complex related in this manner are referred to as primary and secondary clauses. The two principal types of logico-semantic relations postulated, expansion and projection, are further subcategorised as follows: In the case of expansion, the secondary clause is said to expand the primary clause by (i) ELABORATION (restating, specifying, commenting, exemplifying); (ii) EXTENSION (adding, excepting, alternating); and (iii) ENHANCEMENT (qualifying by time, place, cause or condition). In the case of projection, (i) a primary clause of a verbal process type is said to project a verbal event through a secondary clause in a system of LOCUTION while (ii) a primary clause of a mental process type is said to project a mental event through a secondary clause in a system of IDEA.

The notational conventions employed and the clause complex relations resulting from the simultaneous choice in the systems of logico-semantics and taxis are exemplified in the Notational Conventions.

While the clause complex model was found eminently suitable overall for the description of the spoken data in this study, a small residual number of both clauses and clause complexes appear at first to be ungrammatical. (Such clauses constitute circa 2% of the total number of nearly 5000 clauses analysed, i.e. a proportion roughly equal to that estimated by Labov 1966b to be ungrammatical in conversation.) However, as the following discussion of these instances of seeming ungrammaticality demonstrates, most such instances, including a number which are very close to the problems of ‘indeterminate connectivity’ and ‘intercalation of structures’ discussed by Crystal (1980) as constituting problems for a sentence-based analysis, can be explained

by reference to a concept of continuous structural change, similar to the dynamic perspective taken in Section 4.4 on generic structure. Such an approach of course necessitates a rethinking of the typically synoptic grammar of the written language, something rarely undertaken by those who measure speech against the norms of writing.

A dynamic perspective may be taken on certain lexicogrammatical patterns in spoken English, specifically those concerning the relations (i) between ranking, i.e. non-embedded, clauses forming a clause complex; (ii) between ranking and non-ranking, i.e. embedded, clauses; and (iii) between functional elements at clause rank. The relations between these various units of grammatical structure are ideally captured in terms of the relations postulated by Halliday (1985c) to account primarily for the clause complex since

The clause complex is of particular interest in spoken language, because it represents the dynamic potential of the system – the ability to ‘choreograph’ very long and intricate patterns of semantic movement while maintaining a continuous flow of discourse that is coherent without being constructional. This kind of flow is very uncharacteristic of written language. Since grammatical theory evolved as the study of written language, it is good at synoptic-type ‘product’ representations, with constituency as the organizing concept, but bad at dynamic-type ‘process’ representations, which is what are needed for the interpretation of speech.

(Halliday 1985c:201-2)

All such patterns involve grammatical structures, i.e. synoptically conceived of patterns of relations between the constituent elements of some structure, and the contention here is that much of what is considered ungrammatical in spoken English – or considered to be due to performance problems – is in fact highly functional in the context of its ongoing production.

In the most general terms, the continuous structural changes in question are explicable as motivated by the provision of information at the precise point at which it becomes relevant to do so. We find that information may be added, reiterated, made more – or less – specific, or linked to disparate yet related information. Although assigning instances of continuous structural change to categories labelled in terms of the above generalisations is likely to demonstrate, as almost always in similar undertakings in linguistics, that categories ‘leak’, i.e. that the generalisations underlying them are fuzzy, the following discussion should be seen as a first attempt at generalising from a messy set of phenomena usually dismissed as not worthy of

discussion, the contention here being that in order to appreciate the systematic, if not systemic nature, of the patterns involved a dynamic perspective on spoken language is needed to complement a synoptic one.

4.2.1 Providing Additional Information: The Role of Conjunctions and Reprise

There are a number of distinct though closely related types of ‘perturbation’ of the expected structural relations between ranking clauses in clause complexes all of which may be loosely said to be concerned with providing additional information. Most, though not all, employ a paratactic conjunction – more often than not *and* – to signal a change in the tactic relation between clauses. The following types of ‘disturbance’ are exemplified in this section:

1. Tactic switch in rising dependency ($\beta \rightarrow \alpha$) – ex. 4.5
2. Tactic incompleteness (orphaned β clause) – ex. 4.6
3. Tactic continuation of preceding clause (orphaned clause element) – ex. 4.7-9
4. Tactic continuation of preceding clause (relexification) – ex. 4.10/11
5. Tactic perturbation as signal of continuity – ex. 4.12
6. Role of reprise in tactic perturbation – ex. 4.13/14
7. Continuous structural change – ex. 4.15

Between related ranking clauses we often find that a beta clause in a hypotactic clause complex characterised by ‘rising dependency’, i.e. by a $\beta \wedge \alpha$ sequence, is followed by an α clause which, on account of its being introduced by *and*, signals that it is structurally unrelated to the preceding β clause. This phenomenon is illustrated in example 4-5, the pivotal conjunction being shown with a dotted underline:

Example 4-5

And then I got very nervous and I freaked out a bit and trying to get Khan set up and that and I was generating my feelings into the dog and he’s getting scared and didn’t know what was going on and on.

The question facing us here is whether the phenomenon constitutes a switch in taxis, with the hypotactic β clause being recoded as a paratactic clause now followed by another paratactic clause, or the orphaning of the β clause. While the line between the two interpretations may be a fine one to draw, we propose to argue that (i) where it appears to be the case that the β clause has ‘its expectation met’ by a paratactic clause

we shall treat it as a ‘switch in taxis’; and (ii) where there is clear discontinuity between the two clauses we shall treat it as a case of ‘tactic incompleteness or orphaned β clause’. The decision will have to be made on experiential grounds; by contrasting 4-5 above, which is interpreted to be an instance of a switch in taxis, with 4-6 below, which is interpreted to be an instance of tactic incompleteness, we may begin to develop a sense of the continuity of the phenomena in question.

Setting out 4-5 in clause complex notation in 4-5a below, the switch in taxis will be indicated by “ \rightarrow ”, i.e. the switch from the expected tactic relation pertaining to a particular secondary clause to the relation actually found to obtain, the clause being numbered relative to the other clauses in the clause complex. A complementary retroactive switch of the primary clause will be indicated by “ (\rightarrow) ”.

Example 4-5a

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|--|
| (1.1) | ¹ | and then I got very nervous |
| (1.2) | +2 | and I freaked out a bit |
| (1.3) | +3x β (\rightarrow 3) | and trying to get Khan set up and that |
| (1.4) | 3 $\alpha \rightarrow$ 4 | <u>and</u> I was generating my feelings into the dog |
| (1.5) | +5 | and he’s getting scared |
| (1.6) | +6 α | and didn’t know |
| (1.7) | 6’ β | what was going on and on |

Such taxis switches, which can only be in the direction from hypotaxis to parataxis or else they could not be recognised as such, are simply part of the ongoing dynamic of spoken language. Getting to the point at which a strongly signalled dependency structure is expected to be completed with an alpha clause, i.e. in clause (1.4), the speaker instead continues to *add* to what has been said before, the switch from a pattern of clauses of unequal status to one of clauses of equal status being signalled by the paratactic conjunction *and*. The switch to a paratactic relationship is in harmony with the logico-semantic relationship of addition because adding information is in one sense what the entire clause complex does in the structure of the text.

A phenomenon clearly related to a taxis switch, though not a true switch itself, results in a structure not being completed rather than being tactically changed by the use of a pivotal *and*, leading to an orphaned structural element. This is illustrated in example 4-6 – 6a below for a clause complex structure which begins with a rising dependency or $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence:

Example 4-6

But in fact, after she'd pruned us down to three, the afghan, me, and the whippet, and we had to go round and round but keeping her advice in mind I didn't go too fast – I just went at the dog's pleasure.

Example 4-6a

- (1.1) $x\beta$ ||| but in fact, after she'd pruned us down to three, the
afghan, me, and the whippet ||
- (1.2) $\beta=2$ || and we had to go round and round ||
- (1.3) $\beta+3\alpha$ || but ...
- (1.4) $\beta 3x\beta$ 3keeping her advice in mind 4
... I didn't go too fast ||
- (1.5) $\beta=4$ || I just went at the dog's pleasure |||

Whether clause (1.2) is analysed as a paratactic elaboration following the enhancing beta clause in (1.1) or as a true change in taxis from a hypotactic beta in a rising dependency sequence, i.e. a true secondary clause, to a paratactic 'secondary' clause, assuming a retroactive change of (1.1) to a primary clause in a paratactic structure, is not particularly important since the outcome is the same experientially and tactically: Experientially, we are never told what actually did happen after she'd pruned us down to three, the afghan, me, and the whippet; the content foreshadowed in the orphaned beta is not supplied until six clauses later in the next but one clause complex. Tactically, the beta clause in (1.1) is effectively left without its alpha, i.e. the dependent element is left without the element on which it is dependent, resulting in an orphaned beta clause.

Similar structural change in which *and* plays a pivotal role may lead to an orphaned clause element, rather than an orphaned beta clause, as in example 4-7 – 7a below:

Example 4-7

My first showing with Khan, the first time he'd been in the ring, and that was the first time I'd ever showed a dog, too, so it was new for him and it was new for me, and I didn't know what to do and he didn't either.

Example 4-7a

- (1.1) 1 ||| my first showing with Khan, the first time he'd been in the
ring, ...
- (1.2) $+2^1$ 3and that was the first time I'd ever showed a dog, too ||
- (1.3) $2x2^1$ || so it was new for him ||
- (1.4) $22+2$ || and it was new for me 4

- (1.5) $+3\alpha$ || and I didn't know ||
 (1.6) $3'\beta$ || what to do ||
 (1.7) $+4$ || and he didn't either |||

The clause element orphaned in (1.1) functions as a marked circumstantial Theme in a clause which could have been expected to be completed with (1.5) but without the paratactic *and*. Once again, the *and* acts as a pivot, relating (1.5) to the immediately preceding clauses rather than to the clause element that is three clauses removed. The dynamic movement from one element of structure to another results in a clause complex which is ill-formed when considered a 'static edifice of structural constituents' (Halliday et al. 1985:31) yet perfectly well-formed when each movement is considered related to its immediately preceding and following movements. The ongoing structural change is entirely functionally motivated, and an explanation that seeks to invoke performance difficulties of some kind for such phenomena, perhaps along the lines of memory limitations, is essentially misdirected.

One further example makes essentially the same point but provides some additional evidence for the argument advanced here:

Example 4-8

But after all, judges say they are judging on the day and on the day – this judge was from England – and she felt that I had the best bitch puppy.

Example 4-8a

- (1.1) 1α ||| but after all judges say ||
 (1.2) $1'\beta$ || they are judging on the day ||
 (1.3) $+2\alpha 1$ || and on the day ...
 (1.4) $2\alpha=2$ 3this judge was from England 4
 ... and she felt ||
 (1.5) $2'\beta$ || that I had the best bitch puppy |||

Once again, the clausal element *and on the day* orphaned in (1.3) functions as a marked circumstantial Theme in an alpha clause oddly completed with *and she felt* – oddly not so much on account of the, from a synoptic point of view, 'intrusive' *and* but rather on account of the referential pattern involved.

What is of particular interest in 4-8 – 8a is the way in which the judge judging this particular contest is introduced. The first mention of the judge, in the entire text, is in

(1.4) with *this judge*, the second mention in (1.3) with *she* – in terms of constituent structure preceding yet linearly of course following the first mention. In other words, the subject of the clause (1.3) is realised by the pronominal *she* by anaphoric reference to the previous, fully lexical, introduction of that participant. While it is not unusual for a participant to be introduced pronominally into a text, assuming a sharing of the text's context, in cases such as the one illustrated in 4-8 – 8a the pronominal reference builds naturally on the lexicalised introduction into the text of a specific judge rather than on *judges* generally in clause (1.1).

(Whether such structural change is shown as actually resulting in an orphaned clause element as far as the coding of the clause complex is concerned, something being done in (1.1) in example 4-7a, or whether the discontinuous elements of the synoptically-defined clause are coded as constituting a proper clause, ignoring its oddness, as in (1.3) in example 4-8a, is not germane to the issues raised here. For a discussion of the coding of the clause complex relations see Chapter 8.)

Although most instances of the kind of continuous structural change discussed above that are found in the corpus have paratactic *and* in a pivotal role, the same kind of change may also be illustrated with a paratactic *but* performing the same function:

Example 4-9

One of the dogs I'd been exhibiting – he's retired from showing now but he was in his time the top-winning basset hound in this country.

Example 4-9a

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--|---|
| (1.1) | ¹ | | one of the dogs I'd been exhibiting (2)... |
| (1.2) | ⁼²¹ | | he's retired from showing now |
| (1.3) | ²⁺² | | <u>but</u> he was in his time the top-winning basset hound in this country (4) |

The introduction of additional information, via what constitutes an interpolation grammatically, leads once again to a clause element, viz. the likely Subject of (1.1), being orphaned since the clause itself is never completed.

An example of great grammatical complexity, effectively demonstrating the much greater 'grammatical intricacy' typical of spoken language vs. the greater 'lexical density' of written language (see Halliday 1985d), similarly results in a clause not

being completed without this being in the least felt to be ungrammatical by either speaker or hearer:

Example 4-10

She told me a little of the history of the dog and at that stage my husband had always said he wanted a dog anyway, one of these days, a pet, and it just occurred to me when she was talking about the pet – she was not into showing but just suggested, “wouldn’t it be fun to show a dog,” or something to that effect, I don’t know – but something prompted me to have a look into that aspect of it and my husband said, “Oh, why not? Hobby!”

Example 4-10a

- | | | | |
|--------|---------------|---|--|
| (1.1) | 1 | | she told me a little of the history of the dog |
| (1.2) | x2 α | | and at that stage my husband had always said |
| (1.3) | 2“ β | | he wanted a dog anyway, one of these days, a pet |
| (1.4) | +3 α | | and it just occurred to me ... |
| (1.5) | 3x β 1 | 3 | when she was talking about the pet |
| (1.6) | 3 β =21 | | she was not into showing |
| (1.7) | 3 β 2+2 | | but just suggested |
| (1.8) | 3 β “31 | | wouldn’t it be fun 1to show a dog 2 |
| (1.9) | 3 β 3+2 | | or something to that effect, I don’t know 4 |
| (1.10) | +4 | | <u>but</u> something prompted me to have a look into that aspect of it |
| (1.11) | +5 | | and my husband said |
| (1.12) | “61 | | oh, why not? |
| (1.13) | 6=2 | | hobby! |

Clause (1.4) is here interpreted as potentially, and most likely so in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, to have been completed analogously to clause (1.10) by combining two processes or verbal groups in a verbal group complex, i.e. as not constituting two distinct clauses related by taxis (see Halliday 1985c:ch.7). Consequently, clause (1.4) is orphaned while clause (1.10), which in some sense constitutes a restatement of (1.4) in experiential terms, is not grammaticalised as a restatement or elaboration of the earlier clause at all but simply continues where the enclosed clauses leave off, and does so in a completely relexified form.

Such relexification may be much more substantial, amounting to a complete change of ‘real-world’ participants realising grammatical participants in transitivity, as in example 4-11 below, relevant items being shown with dotted underline:

Example 4-11

So we decided then – it was coming on Christmas time – and I thought, ‘well, I’ll buy Jean a nice birthday present’.

Example 4-11a

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|---|---|
| (1.1) | α^1 | | so <u>we decided</u> then ... |
| (1.2) | $\alpha = 2$ | 3 | it was coming on Christmas time 4 |
| (1.3) | $\alpha^1 \rightarrow +3$ | | and I <u>thought</u> |
| (1.4) | ‘4 | | well, I’ll buy Jean a nice birthday present |

Although the dynamic change in clause (1.3) relative to clause (1.1) is perfectly interpretable by reference to the interpolation, i.e. the enclosed clause (1.2), the relationship between (1.1) and (1.2) is not nearly as straightforward as the analysis in 4-11a makes out. Intonationally, for example, the first two clauses are spoken on a single tone group on an essentially level tone, simply suggesting that there is more to follow. Semantically, this makes no sense since the speaker (plus unnamed other(s), presumably *Jean*) did most certainly not decide that *it was coming on Christmas time* but perhaps more plausibly that *Christmas time*, being also the time of *Jean’s birthday*, was an appropriate time for the acquisition of a puppy, serving as the kind of present which is as much intended for its giver as its ostensible recipient. The speaker is thus able to bring together a great amount of information in a seamlessly changing structure, accomplished by a relexification of certain functional roles at clause rank, i.e. from *we* to *I* and from *decided* to *thought*, without, however, changing the functional roles themselves. (For analysis of transitivity see Halliday 1985c.)

However, not every instance of a grammatical interpolation followed by a paratactic *and* is to be considered an instance of continuous structural change, and this may be illustrated with example 4-12 – 12a below.²⁷

Example 4-12

But anyway, about two days after that ~~her two- two of her-~~ two big boys came down – they were about seventeen – and to let us know that Mummy said not to be worried that the bitch would have puppies because even though they ran in her yard all day she locked them up separately of a night.

²⁷This must also be one of the funniest examples given by a member of the dog fancy of what it means to be a genuinely ignorant, albeit well-meaning, outsider.

Example 4-12a

- (1.1) α^1 ||| but anyway, about two days after that two big boys
came down ||
(1.2) $\alpha=2$ || they were about seventeen ||
(1.3) $x\beta\alpha$ || and to let us know ||
(1.4) $\beta'\beta\alpha$ || that Mummy said ||
(1.5) $\beta\beta''\beta\alpha$ || not to be worried 1 that the bitch would have puppies2
||
(1.6) $\beta\beta\beta x\beta x\beta$ || because even though they ran in her yard all day ||
(1.7) $\beta\beta\beta\alpha$ || she locked them up separately of a night |||

The paratactic *and* does no more than signal continuity of the enhancing beta clause (1.3) following the interpolation of an elaborating clause (1.2) to the alpha clause (1.1) – the clause complex is not structurally changed by what may be considered, from a synoptic perspective of grammar, a solecism.

The same is true for the paratactic *and* in example 4-13 below yet it is worth closer consideration on account of its added feature of ‘left dislocation’ or reprise²⁸:

Example 4-13

An insurance man – in those days the insurance man used to come around to the house to collect the insurance – and he’d been bailed up for two hours on the verandah.

Example 4-13a

- (1.1) ¹ ||| an insurance man
(1.2) $=2\alpha$ 3 in those days the insurance man used to come around to
the house ||
(1.3) $2x\beta$ || to collect the insurance 4
and he’d been bailed up for two hours on the verandah |||

The *and* in 4-13 also merely signals continuity, in this case between the two discontinuous elements of a single clause (1.1); furthermore, the left dislocation or reprise of *insurance man* – *he* provides additional support for an interpretation of such simple marking of continuity. In sharp contrast to the referential pattern observed to obtain in 4-8 – 8a above, the pronominal *he* in the second part of the discontinuous

²⁸The term ‘reprise’ was suggested by Halliday (p.c.) for a phenomenon that is variously described as ‘left dislocation’, ‘subject reduplication’ or ‘double subject’, ‘pronominal apposition’ and ‘pleonastic pronoun’. Reprise is suggested as a more general term than ‘left dislocation’ since that fails to distinguish between the left movement where a clause element is repeated, typically a full nominal group followed by an anaphoric pronoun, and the left movement of a clausal complement which is not repeated, as for example in *A really terrific doberman I saw at a show only yesterday*. The terms ‘subject reduplication’ or ‘double subject’ on the other hand ignore the fact that functional clause elements other than subject may be repeated, e.g. in *My young dog, I showed her only last week*.

clause (1.1) refers anaphorically to the specific participant introduced in the first part and not to the general participant introduced in (1.2). In fact, the difference between the referential patterns illustrated in 4-8 vs. 4-13 is that the phenomenon of reprise in the context of an interpolation may function to change the original structure dynamically, as in 4-8, or simply aid in maintaining the original structure synoptically, as in 4-13.

The possibility of reprise functioning in both these ways may even be illustrated with a single example:

Example 4-14

He was one of these dogs that no matter what fence you put in he'd like to hop out and go walkabout.

Example 4-14a

- (1.1) α ||| he was one of these dogs
 1that ...
 (1.2) $=\beta$ 3 no matter what fence you put in 4
 ... he'd like to hop out and go walkabout2 |||

If the reprise, realised by anaphoric *he*, is ignored – or rather simply interpreted as a marker of continuity – the clause complex in 4-14 presents no problems due to continuous structural change since, as the analysis in 4-14a shows, *that ... he'd like to hop out and go walkabout* is a perfectly embedded clause. (The pattern in 4-14 arguably constitutes an instance of a true reprise by virtue of the relationship of identification between *he* and *one of these dogs* in the first part of the discontinuous clause (1.1), where *one of these dogs* serves as the fully lexicalised nominal group to which *he* in the following, second part of the same clause, refers anaphorically.)

On the other hand, if *he* is considered in its own right at its place of occurrence a dynamic perspective suggests the now familiar phenomenon of structural change:

Example 4-14b

- (1.1) α ||| he was one of these dogs
 1that ...
 (1.2) $=\beta$ ($\rightarrow x\beta$) 3 no matter what fence you put in ||
 (1.3) α || he'd like to hop out and go walkabout (2) |||

The enclosed or interpolated clause (1.2), becomes the point of departure for a new clause which is structurally a ranking clause rather than an embedded clause, viz. clause (1.3). This ‘jump in rank’, as one might call this particular kind of continuous structural change, leaves not only clause (1.1) orphaned but also the linking *that* which introduces what clearly was going to be a defining or restrictive relative clause, i.e. an embedded clause, to *He was one of these dogs*, viz. *(that) [woul]’d like to hop out and go walkabout*.

The enclosed clause (1.2) has in fact become a structural element facing in two directions at once, Janus-like, in the entire clause complex structure, serving retrospectively – looking back to (1.1) from the vantage point of itself – as an elaborating beta to the preceding alpha (1.1); and serving prospectively – looking ahead to what is to become (1.3), again from the vantage point of itself – as an enhancing beta to the succeeding alpha (1.3). As a result, the embedded clause *(that) [woul]’d like to hop out and go walkabout* ‘jumps’ in rank and becomes a ranking clause itself, equal in status to the enclosed clause *no matter what fence you put in*.

(The Janus-like clause (1.2), facing in two directions at once and therefore marked twice for clause complex relations in 4-14b, is part of a different pattern of clause structures involving continuous structural change which do not also involve the reprise of clause elements. These will be discussed below in Section 4.2.3 on the reiteration of information.)

A further example of such a jump in rank from a non-ranking clause to a ranking clause due to the interpolation of additional information in the form of a ranking clause illustrates both the structural complexity involved as well as the smoothness and naturalness with which the dynamic change is accomplished:

Example 4-15

I think the fact that he’d just given up football – which he’d been playing for ... oh twenty years, you know, since he was a kid, professional football – he’d given that up and didn’t have a hobby, and there was a sort of that gap and this just sort of provided an interim thing and a family thing that we could all participate in.

Example 4-15a

- (1.1) α ||| I think the fact 1that he’d just given up football ...
(1.2) $=\beta^1$ 3 which he’d been playing for ... oh twenty years, you know
||

- (1.3) $\beta=2$ || since he was a kid 5professional football64
 (1.4) $\alpha \rightarrow 2$ || ... he'd given that up ||
 (1.5) +3 || and didn't have a hobby ||
 (1.6) +4 || and there was a sort of that gap ||
 (1.7) +5 || and this just sort of provided an interim thing and a
 family thing 1that we could all participate in2 |||

In contrast to the reprise in 4-14, in 4-15 it is a simple repetition of the defining relative clause *he'd just given up football* in clause (1.1) – which literally defines the *fact* most likely to function as subject in clause (1.1) – by *he'd given that up* following the interpolation which becomes the jumping-off point for a dynamic change. (Additionally, the repetition does of course incorporate a true reprise of its own in the pattern *football – professional football – that.*)

The structural changes demonstrated in 4-14 – 15 are indeed continuous – and may readily be seen as such providing the analyst does what both the speaker and the hearer do at the time of production, viz. 'move with' the language as it is being produced without expecting the completion, let alone 'correct' completion, of some structural edifice the erection of which may have been signalled at an earlier point in the stream of languaging.

Instances of reprise, however, are often explained in terms of some notion of grammatical complexity which is being avoided, as the following quotation makes clear:

In very loose and informal speech, a reinforcing or recapitulatory pronoun is sometimes inserted within a clause where it stands 'proxy' for an initial noun phrase ... It is not uncommon for long noun phrases which are nonfocal to be thus treated in familiar speech, a *convenience* alike to hearer (in receiving an early statement of a complex item) and speaker (*in not having to incorporate such an item in the grammatical organization of his utterance*).

(Quirk et al. 1985:1310-1; emphases added)

Examples such as 4-14, however, and also some of the other examples adduced above in support of a concept of continuous structural change as part of the dynamics of spoken language, especially 4-15, cannot satisfactorily be explained in terms of the complexity of grammatical organisation, and any deliberate, however unconscious, avoidance on the part of the speaker nor in terms of 'topic marking ... to relate the

marked utterance to some specific topic raised in the prior discourse, i.e. to perform a discourse-deictic function' as asserted by Levinson (1983:88).

The motivation for the cases of structural discontinuity illustrated above, which at the point of their occurrence are essentially interpolations in the ongoing discourse, often resulting in enclosed clauses from a synoptic perspective, seems to be the provision of additional information. (The one exception to this would appear to be 4-14, quite possibly because it is part of a different pattern altogether.) But since that information is functionally integrated with the preceding information in the construction of the text it is only natural that it should in turn lead to a seamless continuation which builds on the additional information and ignore the fact that it is an interpolation which 'interrupts' a grammatical structure and therefore demands a return to that structure. What drives the production of text at any one point seems only partly controlled by grammatical, i.e. synoptic, considerations.

On the other hand, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that such interpolation of information need not lead to dynamic structural change at all, no matter how long and complex the synoptic structure being built up is, something the intricate and many-layered (in 'depth') example 4-16 shows quite convincingly:

Example 4-16

Then when my girls got sort of off my hands – well, when I'm saying "off my hands", I had been married about ten years at the time and that made the girls what? say Susan would've been about six and Cathy about three and one of them was getting off to school – Graham won some money, with the pigeons, and whenever he won a race he always gave it to me and we just sort of put it in a jar, and he said to me, "what are you going to do with your winnings?"

Example 4-16a

- | | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|--|--|
| (1.1) | $1 \times \beta 1$ | | then when my girls got sort of off my hands |
| (1.2) | $1 \beta = 2 \times \beta$ | | well, when I'm saying "off my hands" |
| (1.3) | $1 \beta 2 \alpha 1$ | | I had been married about ten years at the time |
| (1.4) | $1 \beta 2 \alpha + 21$ | | and that made the girls what? |
| (1.5) | $1 \beta 2 \alpha 2 = 2$ | | say Susan would've been about six and Cathy about three |
| (1.6) | $1 \beta 2 \alpha + 3$ | | and one of them was getting off to school |
| (1.7) | 1α | | Graham won some money, with the pigeons |
| (1.8) | $+ 2 \times \beta$ | | and whenever he won a race |

- (1.9) $2\alpha 1$ || he always gave it to me ||
(1.10) $2\alpha+2$ || and we just sort of put it in a jar ||
(1.11) $+3$ || and he said to me ||
(1.12) 4 || what are you going to do with your winnings? |||

Similarly, it is not the case that the dynamic changes being discussed here generally concern cases of breakdown and subsequent repair; in fact, a nice example of repeated breakdown involving repair shows a speaker quite ‘capable’ of starting all over again and producing a synoptically most accomplished structure, a single yet complex (via embedding) identifying clause of two equal parts related by lexical *be*:

Example 4-17

~~Because you- The first thing you got to do when you- to realise I think-~~
The first thing you must do when you start to breed dogs is to realise
your dog’s faults, you know.

Example 4-17a

|| the first thing 1α you must do || $x\beta$ when you start to breed dogs2
is
 1 to realise your dog’s faults2 you know ||

But having said that speakers are certainly capable of synoptically accomplished repair, we should also acknowledge that intricate clause complex structures may at times, though surprisingly rarely, be produced which, though not uninterpretable, are probably ungrammatical by any criteria. Such infelicitous structures are illustrated in examples 4-18a – b below, 4-18a being given with its immediately preceding text to facilitate its interpretation.

Example 4-18

- (a) And my husband and I agreed that they’re a small version of a
labrador.
Well, a short coat, easy to keep reasonably clean, and can fit in a
car a little better, and also because prior to that being in the country
we had more area.
- (b) We have got to the stage where our five-year breeding program
has got to where we’re starting that we feel giving us benefits – the
lines are coming through, the features are getting there.

And lastly, neither reprise nor repetition as such, illustrated in examples 4-19a – b and 4-20 respectively below, whether involving hesitation or even overt repair,

necessarily lead to dynamic change in the absence of any concern with managing information. (Reprised and repeated items are shown with dotted underline.)

Example 4-19

- (a) The few people we met em ... they were involved with the woman we bought our dog off.
- (b) So ~~we got~~ we started off in dobermans and eh ... the one that we did get eh ... she had like a skin irritation.

Example 4-20

And I fell in love with- – I'm an animal lover for a start – fell in love with the dog and said, "isn't it lovely"?

As observed in the context of a discussion exploring the notion of a 'grammar for casual conversation', the dynamic structural changes of the type described above, rather than representing some kind of breakdown, instead

maintain the progression of the text, including its grammatical progression – the dynamic of the clause complex; and they pose no problem of interpretation. The 'problem' with them is simply that our conscious understanding of grammar has not yet caught up with the full potential of the grammar of spontaneous speech.
(Halliday et al. 1985:32)

The common misinterpretation of dynamic change as the result of some problem in the production of text, essentially interpreting such structural change as the by-product of some kind of repair mechanism, is most likely to occur in the context of the provision of additional information.

4.2.2 Changing the Level of Generality: The Role of Lexis

We find that the tactic relation of some clause to a preceding clause in a clause complex may be changed in the course of the production of that clause by the provision of lexicalised information in order to make the information given previously either more, or less, general. Such changes typically occur in the environment of hypotactic elaborating relations, with the clauses occurring in their unmarked sequence of $\alpha^{\wedge}\beta$. Unlike in the cases of adding information discussed above, however, there is no question here of any interpolation, any kind of self-interruption, providing the trigger for such changes; instead, as in example 4-21 below, the change is so smooth that it only becomes evident when looking back over the clause:

Example 4-21

And she's a red bitch, which a lot of judges won't put up reds – they're biased against reds, some of them, not all of them, but some of them.

The progressive change in 4-21 reflects a change in the domain of the elaboration in the primary clause from a particular *red bitch* to all *reds*, i.e. all red dogs regardless of their sex. In other words, the level of generality changes from specific to general. The dotted underline indicates the two items which mark the two different tactic relations, respectively *which*, implying hypotaxis, and *reds*, implying parataxis. Since the occurrence of both items in one clause is ungrammatical on a synoptic reading on account of their realising mutually exclusive choices in a single system of taxis, the occurrence of both must be considered to lead to one tactic relation overriding the other progressively.

Indicating the change in taxis in a second column, with the retroactive change of the tactic status of clause (1.1) relative to clause (1.2) shown in brackets, we may analyse the clause complex relations of 4-21 as in example 4-21a below:

Example 4-21a

| | | | |
|-------|------------|-------------------|---|
| (1.1) | α | $(\rightarrow 1)$ | and she's a red bitch |
| (1.2) | $=\beta 1$ | $\rightarrow =2$ | <u>which</u> a lot of judges won't put up <u>reds</u> |
| (1.3) | $\beta=2$ | $\rightarrow =3$ | they're biased against reds |
| (1.4) | $\beta=3$ | $\rightarrow =4$ | some of them, not all of them, but some of them |

While tactic relations are clearly affected by the dynamics of continuous structural change they are nevertheless in evidence, albeit in a grammatically infelicitous way. On the other hand, the phenomenon of either clause or clause constituents being orphaned by a dynamic change, as in the examples of additional information discussed in Section 4.2.1 above, has a near equivalent in the type of change exemplified in 4-21 – 21a – where the change from hypotaxis to parataxis is accomplished within the one clause – in that logico-semantic relations end up being suppressed.

An attempt at demonstrating all the putative logico-semantic relations involved in a clause complex in which some of them are suppressed is made in a re-presentation of the crucial three clauses of 4-21 – 21b. The items formally marking the tactic change are enclosed in curly brackets; conversely, their omission in the reconstruction is indicated by empty curly brackets.

Example 4-21b

and she's a red bitch
{which} a lot of judges won't put up {reds} they're biased against reds

- (i) α ||| and she's a red bitch ||
 $=\beta 1$ || which a lot of judges won't put up { } ||
 $\beta=2$ || they're biased against reds || ...
- (ii) 1 ||| and she's a red bitch ||
 $+21$ || { } (and) a lot of judges won't put up reds ||
 $2=2$ || they're biased against reds || ...
- (iii) α ||| and she's a red bitch ||
 $=\beta 1$ || which a lot of judges won't put up ||
 $\beta=21$ || (i.e.) a lot of judges won't put up reds ||
 $\beta 2=2$ || they're biased against reds || ...

A completely explicit rendering of the logico-semantic relations involved would have to postulate not only an additional such relation but also, obviously, an additional clause as shown in 4-21b (iii). Such dynamic change does then not only constitute a move from one structure to another, most clearly in respect of its tactic relations, but in fact also subtly subsumes two different structures in one, viz. in respect of its logico-semantic relations.

Two similar examples may just be cited without any further discussion since the dynamic changes proceed in essentially the same fashion, the difference between them perhaps being that example 4-22 illustrates a change in the level of generality concerning the information given, i.e. similar to 4-21, whereas example 4-23 illustrates a kind of reiteration:

Example 4-22

And she got a challenge which was, you know, just so unreal to beat a bitch that was in full coat.

Example 4-22a

and she got a challenge
{which} was, you know, just so unreal {to beat a bitch that was in full coat}

- (i) α ||| and she got a challenge ||
 $=\beta$ || which was, you know, just so unreal { } |||
- (ii) 1 ||| and she got a challenge ||
 $+2$ || { } (and it) was, you know, just so unreal 1to beat a bitch
 1 that was in full coat 22 |||

- (iii) α ||| and she got a challenge ||
 $=\beta 1$ || which was, you know, just so unreal ||
 $\beta=2$ || (i.e.) it was unreal 1to beat a bitch 1that was in full coat22 |||

Example 4-23

And you're more or less not there to win, which is lovely to win but I didn't expect it – I went there so the public could see my dogs.

Example 4-23a

and you're more or less not there to win
{which} is lovely {to win}
but I didn't expect it
I went there so the public could see my dogs

- (i) α ||| and you're more or less not there to win ||
 $=\beta$ || which is lovely { } || ...
(ii) 1 ||| and you're more or less not there to win ||
 $=2$ || { } (it) is lovely to win || ...
(iii) α ||| and you're more or less not there to win ||
 $=\beta 1$ || which is lovely ||
 $\beta=2$ || (i.e.) it is lovely to win || ...

The above examples demonstrate that a clause which from the traditional grammarian's point of view is ungrammatical may function perfectly successfully in the larger structure of a clause complex. That such clauses do so without straining either the production of the text – there is no hesitation, no break in the rhythm, no change in the intonation contour to set the two contributing structures apart – or its comprehension can only be explained by the fact that at any given point, whether looking ahead from the conjunction marking a particular tactic relation or looking back from some lexical item(s) effecting a change in that tactic relation, they appear perfectly grammatical.

4.2.3 Reiterating Information: The Role of Janus Clauses

We find that a ranking clause in a clause complex may play a dual role in the same clause complex by facing Janus-like in two directions at once, thus potentially functioning tactically and logico-semantically differently relative to preceding vs. succeeding clauses, i.e. prospectively vs. retrospectively. While formally such clauses are like the clause doubly related tactically in example 4-14 – see especially the reanalysis of clause (1.2) in 4-14b – the general motivation for such two-directionality

of clauses appears to be the desire to immediately reiterate information just given, specifically ‘information’ which encapsulates the key point of the text which the particular structure partially realises.

Two examples, both of which involve some considerable grammatical intricacy, must suffice to illustrate such a pattern of reiteration:

Example 4-24

And it’s probably something that I’ll never forget – to think that we invited someone for dinner on that occasion, so close to a whelping, and she had to whelp while I was trying to cook dinner and be a host to a dinner party she decided to have her litter.

In this example, the crucial, pivotal ‘clause’ is itself a clause complex, viz. *while I was trying to cook dinner and be a host to a dinner party*. It can be shown to be the clause (complex) which begins a new tactic pattern that is itself only clearly understood when looking back from the last clause in the matrix complex. The re-presentation in 4-24a seeks to bring out the dynamic movement involved, which in a sense begins with a structure *a* and ends with a structure *b*, not at all unlike the example of dynamic movement at the level of generic structure to be discussed in Section 4.4 below. (The clause-level ‘Janus’ element is shown enclosed between left and right-facing arrows ‘← →’.)

Example 4-24a

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| (1.1) α | | and it’s probably something 1that I’ll never forget2 |
| (1.2) $=\beta 1$ | | to think that we invited someone for dinner on that occasion, so close to a whelping |
| (1.3) $\beta+2\alpha$ | | and she had to whelp |
| (1.4) $\beta 2 \times \beta 1$ | $\rightarrow \beta (+) 3 \times \beta 1$ | ← while I was trying to cook dinner |
| (1.5) $\beta 2 \beta +2$ | $\beta 3 \beta +2$ | and be a host to a dinner party → |
| (1.6) | $\beta 3 \alpha$ | she decided |
| (1.7) | $\beta 3 \alpha' \beta$ | to have her litter |

The prospectively produced – synoptically speaking – clause complex is notated in column 1 while the retrospectively produced one is notated in column 2. While the Janus clause (1.4) is of necessity marked twice for clause complex relations, it does not signal the end of the prospectively produced structure since clause (1.6) forms part of

the beta clause via the nested paratactic extension, specifically addition. On the other hand, once the end of the beta clause has been reached, i.e. with clause (1.5), the prospectively produced clause complex cannot really be considered continued in a synoptic perspective. Instead, the clause complex structure is best considered continued – and completed – by the structure looking back from clause (1.6), extending back to (1.4) inclusive.

Following a similar strategy to that adopted in the discussion of examples 4-21 – 3 in Section 4.2.2, we will attempt to demonstrate the logico-semantic relations considered to be ‘fused’ in such a dynamic change by considering the ‘moving’ pattern of clause complex-type relations pertaining to the key clauses:

Example 4-24b

and she had to whelp

← while I was trying to cook dinner and be a host to a dinner party →
she decided to have her litter

- | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|--|--|
| (i) | α | | and she had to whelp |
| | $x\beta 1$ | | while I was trying to cook dinner |
| | $\beta+2$ | | and be a host to a dinner party |
| (ii) | $x\beta 1$ | | while I was trying to cook dinner |
| | $\beta+2$ | | and be a host to a dinner party |
| | $\alpha\alpha$ | | she decided $\alpha'\beta$ to have her litter |
| (iii) | β | | and she had to whelp |
| | $x\beta 11$ | | while I was trying to cook dinner $\beta 1+2$ and be a host to a dinner party |
| | $\beta=2\beta 1$ | | (i.e.) while I was trying to cook dinner $\beta 2\beta+2$ and be a host to a dinner party |
| | $\beta 2\alpha\alpha$ | | she decided $\beta 2\alpha'\beta$ to have her litter |

The putative elaborating relation brought out in 4-24b (iii), which could ordinarily be expected to be realised in some paraphrase rather than in a perfect repetition of the primary clause, is suppressed in the actual structure in 4-24. On the other hand, the two explicitly realised, i.e. marked, hypotactic interdependencies, must strain any exclusively synoptic account of clause complex relations in text.

A second example similarly demonstrates the speaker reiterating key information, in many ways equivalent to the ‘point’ of the story in Labov’s terms, but unlike in example 4-24, in example 4-25 below the lexical content of the information needs to be retrieved from elsewhere in the text:

Example 4-25

I felt my bitch puppy was immature, she had a lot of growing to do, she lacked coat – which the elder dogs had – and it was such a surprise, I can honestly say, as I was sort of bending over, setting my dog up, she said, “I’ll have the silver-dapple”.

The *it* = *surprise*, the two items being related in an identifying relationship, refer to the surprising awarding of a first place in a context, a dog show, such awarding being verbally realised – performatively – by the judge’s words *I’ll have the silver-dapple*, and it is by considering this referential chain that the clauses *she said*, “*I’ll have the silver-dapple*” may be seen to be a reiteration of the information given in the same clause complex.

The continuous structural change observable in this clause complex revolves around the wording *as I was sort of bending over, setting my dog up*, again a clause complex as in 4-24, i.e. it is the clause (complex) which faces Janus-like in both directions at once. The change itself is tracked in 4-25a below by mapping out the putative tactic and logico-semantic relations underlying such change. (The clause *I can honestly say* is ignored in the analysis below since it is a metaphorical clause-rank realisation of modality, specifically of a modal adjunct such as *honestly* or *to be honest*, and not a projecting clause.)

Example 4-25a

and it was such a surprise, I can honestly say
← as I was sort of bending over, setting my dog up →
she said, “I’ll have the silver-dapple”

- (i) α || and it was such a surprise, I can honestly say ||
 $x\beta\alpha$ || as I was sort of bending over ||
 $\beta x\beta$ || setting my dog up ||
- (ii) $x\beta\alpha$ || as I was sort of bending over ||
 $\beta x\beta$ || setting my dog up ||
 $\alpha\alpha$ || she said || $\alpha'\beta$ I’ll have the silver-dapple ||
- (iii) β || and it was such a surprise, I can honestly say ||
 $x\beta 11$ || as I was sort of bending over || β^{1+2} setting my dog up ||
 $\beta=2\beta 1$ || (i.e.) as I was sort of bending over || $\beta^2\beta+2$ setting my dog up ||
 $\beta^2\alpha\alpha$ || she said || $\beta^2\alpha'\beta$ I’ll have the silver-dapple ||

As in the instance of reiteration of information via a clause in a clause complex given in example 4-24, the pivotal clause (complex) in the continuous structural change is hypotactically related to both the preceding and the succeeding discourse. (Whether

such Janus clauses are in fact clauses or clause complexes inside another clause complex is irrelevant.) It would appear that the sequencing flexibility of hypotactically related clauses, i.e. their being able to be realised in either an $\alpha^{\wedge}\beta$ or a $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence, which is one of the features which distinguishes hypotactically from paratactically related clauses in a clause complex, is crucial to dynamic change at clause rank.

4.2.4 Presenting Closely Related Information: The Fusion of Two Clauses

The last type of continuous dynamic change to be illustrated takes place at the rank of the clause itself, i.e. not between clauses in a clause complex. We find that single, seemingly grammatically odd, clauses such as the first of the two clauses in the otherwise well-formed clause complex in example 4-26 below can be interpreted satisfactorily as a ‘fusion’ of two clauses in a single structure which are related by clause complex-type relations.

Example 4-26

It's that particular dog is still in the yard; it's a shocking specimen.

Clauses such as *it's that particular dog is still in the yard* are invariably produced on a single tone group and without any pausing, hesitation, or break in rhythm, thus without any intonational evidence of there being a structural relationship between two grammatical units, such as clauses, whose unmarked realisation intonationally is on separate tone groups. (See Halliday (1967c, 1970b) for analysis of intonation in English.)

Instead, evidence for the perfect fusion of two clauses is provided by the functional status of the wording which faces Janus-like in two directions at once, in example 4-26 by *that particular dog*, as brought out by the re-presentation of 4-26 in 4-26a below:

Example 4-26a

it's ← that particular dog → is still in the yard

- | | | | |
|------|-----------|--|--|
| (ia) | 1 | | it's that particular dog |
| | =2 | | that particular dog is still in the yard |
| (ib) | 1 | | it's that particular dog |
| | =2 | | it's still in the yard |
| (ii) | α | | it's that particular dog |
| | = β | | which is still in the yard |

The Janus element in the original clause structure can be seen to be a fully functional element at clause rank in the structures of both the fused clauses, viz. Complement in the first clause and Subject in the second, realised in a nominal group structure. In this respect, such fused clauses are more like clauses in clause complexes which are instances of reiteration, where a complete clause functions ‘twice’ in the structure of the clause complex, rather than the markers of tactic change, such as single lexical or grammatical items which ‘bridge’ from one type of structure to the next, i.e. which are instances of giving additional information or which change the level of generality of information.

As far as the clause complex-type relations considered to underlie the two fused clauses themselves are concerned, we observe that while the logico-semantic relation between the two putative clauses can, on the basis of the experiential content of the actual clause in 4-26, only be one of elaboration, the tactic relation between them cannot be inferred from the actual structure. Although the full lexical repetition of 4-26a (ia) is less likely than the anaphoric pronominal form of 4-26a (ib), there is nothing to suggest that the paratactic (ib) is more or less likely than the hypotactic (ii).

While the type of ‘synoptic solecism’ found in clauses of this kind is therefore also capable of being interpreted as dynamic change, the motivation for such change has to be found in the fact that information is being introduced at clause rank which itself leads to the presentation of related information, the second instance effectively overriding any structural planning associated with the first instance. Importantly, however, it is in fact a wording which has functional status at clause rank which is pivotal in such dynamic change, serving as a Janus element in the single clause actually produced, and as a functional element in its own right in each of the two putative clauses said to be fused.

Other instances of such fusion of clauses, being brought about in exactly the same way as 4-26, have the Janus element functioning in various roles at clause rank, for example as a Circumstance of Place:

Example 4-27

And ... anyhow, we went on then to the next day there was a double show at Coonabarabran.

Example 4-27a

we went on then to ← the next day → there was a double show at Coonabarabran

- (ia) ¹ ||| we went on then to the next day ||
 ⁼² || the next day there was a double show at Coonabarabran |||
- (ib) ^α ||| we went on then to the next day ||
 ^{=β} || where there was a double show at Coonabarabran |||

While once again the logico-semantic relation between the two putative clauses fused in 4-27 is most likely an elaborating one, the tactic relation between them may be either paratactic or hypotactic, in the re-presentation in 4-27a (ib) the suggested conjunction *where* marking abstract rather than literal space (cf. Halliday 1985c:205).

Two instances of dynamic structural change via the fusion of two clauses which have the same simple functional roles of clause elements as examples 4-26 and 4-27 respectively are 4-28a – b below:

Example 4-28

- (a) And that ... that's ← the only thing that they know → is the Sydney royal.
- (b) And I cried ← for months and years → I'd remember that dog.

On the other hand, more complex examples may be found. Example 4-29 below involves the distinction between an embedded and a non-embedded, i.e. 'ranking' clause, pertaining to the Janus element while example 4-30 below has an interpersonal *I think*, i.e. a metaphorical clause-rank realisation of modality, enclosed within the second of the two fused clauses:

Example 4-29

And this is what they have to hang by their tails in trees.

Example 4-29a

and this is what ← they have to hang by → their tails in trees

- ¹ ||| and this is 1what they have to hang by2 ||
⁼² || they have to hang by their tails in trees |||

Example 4-30

And ... I pulled him out of the table-drain and we continued on to the next town I think was Wilcannia.

Example 4-30a

and we continued on to ← the next town → I think was Wilcannia

(ia) ¹ ||| and we continued on to the next town ||
=2 || the next town 3I think 4 was Wilcannia |||

(ia) ^α ||| and we continued on to the next town ||
=β || which 3I think4 was Wilcannia |||

But whatever the functional role at clause rank that can be recognised for the Janus element, in both clauses, the significant fact is that the wording which faces in both directions at once does indeed constitute such a functional element at clause rank, thus making the dynamic move from one clause to the next a natural one.

Undoubtedly the phenomenon of fusion at clause rank is much more characteristic of speech than are some of the other phenomena discussed in previous subsections. Fusion of clauses may in fact be genuinely limited to speech, the complete suppression of the clause complex-type relations of taxis and logico-semantics being more ‘tolerable’ in speech than in writing. Yet that this particular phenomenon can be shown to be part of those ‘dynamic’ patterns which are prominent in speech is entirely explicable in terms of the dynamic unfolding of a spoken text, where ‘the last thing said’ in real-time may in fact become the starting point for a subsequent grammatical choice made within the logic of a system network, thereby overriding a previous systemic choice in a synoptically-conceived grammar, whether at the level of lexicogrammar or at the level of generic structure.

4.3 Generic Perturbation in Spoken Texts

Although the texts under focus in this study are essentially monologically produced, this does not imply an absence of interaction between speaker and hearer as pointed out above. But while the interactionality of texts is manifested at all levels of the linguistic system, as well as paralinguistically, the most interesting aspects of such interaction for a study of text are those which have the potential to be reflected at the level of generic structure. At its simplest, speakers frequently ‘discontinue’ whatever they are saying, provide what often amounts to further, seemingly background, information and then resume where they had interrupted themselves before, often by repeating the discontinued prior wording verbatim.

The amount of material ‘inserted’ in this way in a slot created by the speaker himself may range from no more than a clause or two as in example 4-31 to quite a substantial number, often in different clause complexes, as in example 4-32; the initial and repeated wordings are shown with dotted underline.

Example 4-31 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 30)

|||(1.1) We’re sitting here one day || (1.2) ~~and~~ and the wife- I took a typewriter up || (1.3) ~~and~~ and the wife said || (1.4) she’d like a miniature dachshund |||

Examples of interactionality, viz. those provided by the interviewer’s vocalised and verbalised back-channelling – which themselves are irrelevant to generic structure – are included in example 4-32 below, and these are enclosed in double curly brackets.

Example 4-32 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 45)

GP: How did you get into that? Do you remember? Into breeding and showing dogs as it were?

I: RECOUNT

Synopsis

|||(1.1) ~~Well, that ... well that comes back to-~~ ||| [see (8.1)]

Orientation

(2.1) Like, I’ve always loved dogs, you know, always loved dogs |||
{{yeah}}

(3.1) ~~But we always~~ We lived ~~in-a-~~ in a flat at Bondi || (3.2) so, you know, I couldn’t have a dog, {{mm}} you know || (3.3) and every dog in the street used to be my best friend ||| {{yeah}}

Record

(4.1) And so, like, ~~when I was-~~ when I moved out of home, you know ||
(4.2) and actually I moved into a house || (4.3) and I got a dog || (4.4) and I had a irish setter {{aha}} for a while |||

(5.1) And ... then ~~I~~ I went up the coast for a while || (5.2) and I left that dog with my sister |||

(6.1) And she’s got (the) kids and that ||

(7.1) The dog got friendly with the kids || (7.2) and the kids, you know, with the dog {{mm mm}} || (7.3) and so I ended up leaving her the dog with them |||

(8.1) ~~And- and it kind-~~ This comes back to the landscaping bit again {{yes}} || (8.2) because we were landscaping this lady’s house at Rose Bay {{yeah}} || (8.3) and she had two rottweilers ||| ... (text continues)

The phenomena illustrated in 4-31 – 32 have generally been described as examples of ‘self-(initiated) repair’ or ‘self-correction’ (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977), with the speaker supplying additional, often background, information in a repair of ‘the sequencing of his/her message’, such additional information being said to occur in ‘Sequencing brackets [which] mark digressions from the main theme of the discourse.’ (Shimanoff & Brunak 1977:161). One interpretation of this bracketing of additional information is that speakers realise that information which is important to the comprehension of the text at the point reached in the telling has not yet been supplied (Polanyi 1978). In this sense, the self-repair could indeed be said to be the repair of an ‘error’ in the telling of, say, a narrative.

In an alternative interpretation, made in the context of narrative texts, Polanyi suggests that far from being repairs or self-corrections, such self-interruptions are part of

an unconscious narrative strategy which allows speakers to produce full, “textured” versions of story materials in a social and rhetorical tradition which prefers straightforward, “the facts nothing but the facts” exposition.

(Polanyi 1978:628)

She suggests that these so-called self-corrections are in fact ‘true starts’ which allow the speaker who has broken into the flow of a normal conversation to continue beyond a brief turn with an elaborated version of a narrative. In other words, a ‘true start’ is a device for gaining an extended turn under the guise of supplying further information essential to the comprehension of what has been said up to this point. In this way then hearers, being on the whole polite enough to permit a speaker to correct an ‘error’, become the captive audience of a story teller.

While the interpretation of self-corrections as ‘true starts’ has some attraction – as Polanyi points out, the incidence of alleged forgetfulness is too high to be truly credible – there are at least two reasons why the ‘true start’ explanation cannot really be accepted as holding generally either. One, such self-corrections occur commonly in the corpus texts of this study, i.e. in texts *not* produced in the context of a normal conversation where the speaker had to fight for a turn but rather was expected to produce an elaborated response to an interview question; and two, they not only occur at the beginning of a narrative text, where the supplying of background information necessary to the comprehension of a narrative makes good sense, but at other places as well.

The two instances of self-correction in example 4-33 below would seem to provide evidence that neither of the interpretations suggested above, i.e. neither the need to provide background information essential to the comprehension of a narrative-type text at a certain point in a form of ‘bracketing’ nor the desire to create space for the telling of a narrative-type text, is sufficient, or at least sufficiently general.

(The realisation of a generic stage by another generic stage, or indeed at times by an entire generic structure or genre, is considered a case of EMBEDDING. The term is restricted here to a structural phenomenon at the level of generic structure, used by analogy with embedding in grammar; see Section 4.2. (See also fn.2 Chapter 6 on the distinct phenomenon of FUSION.) Embedding is indicated by the indentation of the generic stage(s) in question. For example, in 4-33 below the stage Orientation in the anecdote is considered to be realised by a recount, itself constituted by the stages Orientation ^ Record; see Section 6.2.2 for discussion of ANECDOTE.)

Example 4-33 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 11/I 40)

GP: What’s the funny story?

ANECDOTE

Abstract

I: The funny story, truly, I should’ve thought of it, it leaves that
springer story for dead.

Orientation:

RECOUNT

Orientation

I mentioned earlier we had an old Mercedes.

Anyrate, so- We- Friends of ours- We were after a dog like-
[see Record below]

When you said earlier on about the perfect cattle dog, I think that a good solid stocky dog with an even-marked head and – like that’s a patch over each eye – and a spot on his tail, you know, a dog like that, a beautiful dog proportion-wise, you know, you can sell him for a hundred, a hundred and fifty dollars more than what you would a normal dog. There’s just, you know, that much difference in them.

Record

Anyrate, so this friend of ours knew that we were after a dog
with an even head so he put us on to this guy. We went over and this guy had this dog for sale and he wanted a hundred and fifty dollars for him. I said, “yeah, righto, okay,” you know.

The only catch was for the hundred and fifty dollars you bought the dog, you bought his mother, you bought his grandmother and two kennels.

So that was okay; we didn't mind. The kennels were completely dismantable.

So, "righto, okay". So, I walked into his yard; this was the first time to have a look at them, and the dog was crazy – there is no two ways about that. We saw the female, like the mother of the pup, and like he wasn't a pup – he'd be about eighteen months old.

Anyrate, so she bit me. So "righto," you know, "ha ha," big joke, and anyrate, so we finally said, "yeah, righto, okay, we'll buy him."

And this is during the week and I said, "we'll be back on Saturday then to pick the dogs up, and the kennel and everything and go home," see.

Crisis

And so ... got out there, gave the guy his money. I got the dog, Jasper his name was, and took him out, put him in the Mercedes, went back in to get his mother and Thelma came running down into the yard and she said, "quick", she said, "you better get out there." She said, "Jasper's gone berserk in the Mercedes."

Reaction

And there's this mongrel; every time you touched the car he'd run round the car – this is on the inside – tearing the upholstery. And he's standing there and he's got all saliva drooling out of his mouth and he's got all beautiful Mercedes seat stuffing hanging out of his mouth. And we tried and tried and tried. And even the guy that sold him to us wasn't game enough to try and get him out of the car. ((laughs))

Final Event (abandoned)

Eventually, after about a quarter of an hour [see Final Event (resumed) below]

Reaction (resumed)

And he tore every seat in the car; he tore the door trims ...

Coda

Like looking at it now, it's so funny, you know. If you'd 've seen this dog standing on the, you know, back seat; like he's got his back legs on this part ((pointing to part of chair)) and he's got his front legs on there and he's just biting it, biting the back of the seat. And that was just so funny, you know.

Final Event (resumed)

Eventually, you know, we wound up ... you know, we got them all home.

While the self-correction in the Orientation in 4-33 does provide background information which could be claimed to be essential to the comprehension of the narrative-type text at that point – though hardly motivated by the need to create space for the telling of the text – the self-correction in the Final Event stage in the same text, equally leading to the provision of ‘further information’, can in no sense be claimed to be necessary to the comprehension of the text at that point.

An alternative interpretation of the self-correction in the Final Event stage may be sought in the generic structure of the text being produced here. The anecdote is essentially completed with the final lines of the Reaction *And we tried and tried and tried. And even the guy that sold him to us wasn't game enough to try and get him out of the car* and the succeeding Final Event, both in its abandoned and in its resumed form, merely provides information as to the eventual outcome of the sequence of events. The Final Event stage completes for the sake of completing an account – it is not an integral part of what makes the text a successful anecdote.

The Coda on the other hand, while also an optional generic stage and not essential to the telling of an anecdote, is not so much concerned with the giving of information – although in this text it does indeed provide additional information about the actions of the main actor, the ‘crazy dog’ – but instead with relating the anecdote to the here & now by stressing how ‘funny’, with hindsight, the events actually were: *Like looking at it now, it's so funny, you know...* Both Coda and Final Event are very clearly interactionally motivated, i.e. they both address themselves to the interlocutor as someone with whom the text is being built up, although the Final Event is probably less strongly interactional than the Coda.

I would contend that it is in this interactionality that the explanation for those self-corrections must be sought which lead to some degree of displacement of stages or elements of generic structure, i.e. to a kind of ‘generic perturbation’. It surely is no accident that self-corrections typically either lead to the extensive elaboration of some generic stage, for example of Orientations whose elaborations are often so extensive that they turn into a new generic stage subsequent to the initial, self-corrected Orientation, similar to the elaboration of the Synopsis in 4-32 above, or to the addition of a generic stage altogether which, though not criterial to the genre in question, adds significantly to the text's success as an interactionally produced text, however monologically told.

One further example of such interactionally motivated elaboration of a particular generic structure must suffice, especially as such examples are of necessity rather lengthy if they are to make their point. In an account of a surprising success at a dog show, the narrator takes us through the various stages of the competition, each one of which his dog rather surprisingly wins, surprisingly because as the narrator says *My first showing with Khan, the first time he'd been in the ring, that was the first time I'd ever showed a dog, too, so it was new for him and it was new for me, and I didn't know what to do and he didn't either*. Picking up the account with the third Incident in this text, an exemplum (see Section 6.2.2 for discussion), we find two successive instances of self-correction:

Example 4-34 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 45)

EXEMPLUM

...

Incident (3 – abandoned)

And then I had to go into the best minor puppy in-show which is out of three hundred dogs and I was down to the last six. And he went in and-

Interpretation (abandoned)

I didn't win that but I'd come so close to winning it that ...

Incident (3 – resumed):

NARRATIVE

Orientation

Khan was very tired at this stage. He'd been prancing about all day in the heat and everything was new to him and he was getting tired and, you know, he was getting a bit sick of the whole thing by now. And we'd gone in the ring and he was standing there and he was looking really good, and the judge has looked at him and looked at all the other dogs.

And I'd been watching the judge judge the other dogs, and he usually looked at all the dogs and then he picked the person he was going to give it to and he'd walk over to them and have a talk to them and get them to run around the ring and when they came back he'd give them their prize.

Complication

And so he's looked at all the dogs and he's gone up to this pekinese, which is right at the front of the line and I was right at the end of the line, and he's got this lady to run around the ring and she's run around.

Evaluation

And Elaine was just behind me outside the ring and I turned around and I said, "oh well, the pekinese's won it," you know. I said, "well, we did pretty good."

Resolution

So I just turned around and when I looked back, Khan's lying down on the ground. And the judge had walked back down to me because he wasn't pleased with the pekinese and he was going to give it to me. But Khan was lying down and I couldn't get him to stand up.

And then I got very nervous and I freaked out a bit, and trying to get Khan set up and that, I was generating my feelings into the dog and he's getting scared and didn't know what was going on and on.

You know, I was getting a bit rough with him and so naturally he wouldn't stand properly, and the judge couldn't give it to me because, you know, there was a lot of people looking and it was a very big thing to win that particular group.

Interpretation

Anyway, so I didn't win it but still I come so close to taking out the whole show on my first show, you know. ((laughs))

Coda

That's the way it goes. But you know, that was a very great experience for me. That's probably the one I'll never forget, you know. Because some people go for ten shows before they even win a class.

At first it seems as if the narrator were simply going to continue relating the next incident in this series of incidents which add up to an exemplification of a (single) surprising success, and in much the same way as he had related the previous incidents. Instead, he abandons Incident (3) and proceeds to close the exemplum with an Interpretation, possibly because it is in danger of grinding on interminably – as noted in the discussion of jointly produced texts in Section 5.4.2.2.1, giving an account of a series of events presents the teller with the problem of how to end the account 'pointfully', something more important to successful telling than giving a full account of events.

But having told considerably more in the first two Incident stages than simply saying that his dog had won, he may well feel now that he is letting his interlocutor down by *not* telling in some detail how he failed to win the last event in the competition and so he now also abandons the Interpretation and returns to elaborate Incident (3) – yet in a narrative form which is remarkably different from the simple accounts in Incidents (1-2). Despite this departure from the form of Incidents (1-2), however, the narrative told at this point is considered to function as the realisation of Incident (3) in the overall generic structure of an exemplum. In other words, it is

considered to constitute an instance of a text type, a type of generic structure, being embedded to realise an element or stage in the structure of another genre, indicated by the indentation of the stages in question.

One type of evidence for this interpretation of Incident (3) comes from the way in which the second of the self-corrections changes in status as the resumed text progresses. Whereas *I didn't win that but I'd come so close to winning it that ...* could not have been developed into much more than a Final Event when it faded out and was effectively abandoned, following the elaboration of Incident (3) the wording *Anyway, so I didn't win it but still I come so close to taking out the whole show on my first show, you know* becomes a perfect Interpretation of Incident (3). While it is true to say that a succession of Incidents may well succeed in cumulatively making the point of an exemplum, and thus at times functions successfully without an explicit Interpretation following each and every Incident, it is much more usual for a series of Incidents to be followed by an Interpretation rather than a mere provision of information as to the eventual outcome of the series of events recounted. Furthermore, the classic Coda following the last Interpretation is all the stronger for being able to draw – implicitly – on the detailed account of success *and* failure.

Incident (3) is both different from the previous two Incidents and also like them since its function in the overall text is exactly like that of the first two, viz. to contribute to the making of the single point of a 'surprising success'. Its elaboration, i.e. its repairing of the previously begun and abandoned Incident (3), has very little to do with providing information without which the text as a whole could not be understood and everything with elaborating a particular stage in a genre which, once begun, is being successfully maintained. Rather than argue that such self-corrections are motivated by the need to correct a presumed 'error' of being insufficiently informative – perhaps seeking to preclude the possibility of the text not being understood – it would appear that an explanation of more general validity might be to consider most self-corrections instances of interactionally motivated elaborations of a generic structure, such structures not being straitjackets for individual speakers but culturally shared models for making particular kinds of meanings.

While interactionally determined aspects of generic structure thus clearly have the potential to 'disturb' a synoptically conceived of generic structure, interrupting the 'ordered' production of a particular generic structure, they do not call the synoptic

perspective into question and thus call for a complementary dynamic account of text. The reason for this is simply that the generic structure of the total text may still be recognised as the criterial structure of a particular type of text, a particular genre, and not a structure which, from a synoptic point of view, combines the generic structures of different text types and, from a dynamic point of view, changes its structure continuously. It is only the latter kind of phenomenon which does indeed call for a complementary dynamic account and this will be discussed in Section 4.4 below.

4.4 Continuous Change at the Level of Generic Structure

The notion of continuous generic change is only meaningful because a genre is considered a structure, i.e. the actualisation of a choice in some system of more or less agnate genres. The premiss of the argument advanced here is that the actualisation of a single generic choice in structure is potentially at risk of being realised ‘ungrammatically’ – from a synoptic perspective – on account of the process of realisation being linear and proceeding in real-time. Although this obviously applies to all languaging, the risk of such ungrammaticality must be considered greater in the case of a generic structure for the simple reason of its ‘size’ generally being greater than that of any other unit of language – the longer it takes to complete a structure, the greater the risk of its getting changed in the process, or even left unfinished.

The relative likelihood of different structures being affected dynamically by their production in real-time corresponds to their relative size: The larger a structure is, the more likely it is that it will exhibit the type of ungrammaticality discussed in this chapter. Since the lower limit of a generic structure is probably something of the size of a clause complex – although it is typically realised in a structure consisting of more than one clause complex – we would expect to find instances of such ungrammaticality more commonly at the level of generic structure than at the level of lexicogrammar. Similarly, at the level of lexicogrammar we would expect to find such ungrammaticality more commonly affecting the clause complex than the clause.

From a non-synoptic or dynamic perspective, however, the realisation of a generic structure which is somehow affected by its linear production in real-time may not be evidence of any ungrammaticality at all but instead be the realisation of more than one choice in a system of agnate genres. Such an interpretation would rest on the argument that the realisation of a choice in structure is open to the realiser itself at some point,

though clearly not at just any point, becoming the basis of a new choice in a system of agnate genres.

Something of this kind may also well be involved generally in instances of embedding of different elements or stages of generic structure, such as in examples 4-33 and 4-34 above. But whereas in such instances the original generic choice, and the structure realising it, is firmly maintained, generic embedding in fact serving to realise that structure, in the case of generic structural change not involving embedding the change is continuous throughout the production of the text. What at one point in the text, and in time, appears to be the (partial) realisation of a generic choice *a*, at another, subsequent point will appear to be the (partial) realisation of a generic choice *b*, with the movement from *a* to *b* appearing to be perfectly seamless, and the text in toto perfectly natural rather than odd or fragmented. And the question of the text's grammaticality, at least as that is ordinarily understood, does not arise since that question is only meaningful from a synoptic perspective.

Let us consider one text which, from a synoptic perspective, is a narrative-type text, specifically an instance of an exemplum. We first present the text interpreted synoptically, including in the representation some of the markers of its interactional production discussed above in order to demonstrate that it is in fact *not* these which lead to the text's changing continuously:

Example 4-35 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 13)

GP: What about a really funny incident? We talked about some of the disasters before.

I: ((Mentions some dog's cleverness, which leads to talk about matters unrelated to the question, then:))

EXEMPLUM

Abstract/Orientation

Oh, I had a funny little thing. Suppose it wasn't the funniest thing really that's ever happened. It hasn't been connected with our dogs but with our Foxy, that we had at home ~~when we were~~ when I was a kid. {{yes}}

Incident (1)

She knew very well that she wasn't allowed to sleep on the beds inside, and she would – ~~she'd sleep and~~ she'd hop up and she'd have a sleep. And you'd (('she'd')) hear her (('you')) come in and she'd hop down. She (('you')) didn't hear her get down but she'd get up on her tippy-toes {{oh yes}} and you'd hear this click-click-

click of her nails on the lino and you knew very well where she'd been because she'd be sneaking out.

Interpretation

And you could hear this click-click-click, which was ~~worse~~ the worst thing she could do.

Incident (2)

And the other thing she used to do was to get... You know, you'd put- you know, some scones or pancakes or cake out on the table for afternoon tea and, you know, no-one was there for five seconds so she'd hop up on the chair, and she'd only take one piece, she didn't want a lot, {{yeah}} and she'd hear you come and so she'd put it back. ((laughs))

Interpretation

So she wasn't going to get caught with the evidence.

Coda

There was... two funny things she used to do so she was a character in that regards. {{yes, yes}}

The text in 4-35 appears to be highly synoptic: Its context of production, a sociolinguistic interview, is strongly weighted in favour of the production of synoptic texts; it is produced monologically with all that implies about an unmarked association with the realisation of a generic choice synoptically; and the narrativeness itself lends further support to such a synoptic interpretation since narrative-type texts appear to be the most grammaticalised of all text types.

Yet at the same time this text presents some problems for a synoptic analysis, most prominently as a result of its predominant choice of a modalised tense – a ‘generic’ tense, not a historical present tense – in the stages Incident (1) ^ Interpretation ^ Incident (2). However, neither its characterisation as a ‘generic narrative’ (cf. Plum & Cowling 1987) or as a ‘deep structure narrative’ cast in the form of a ‘surface structure procedural discourse’ realised by present rather than past tense (cf. Longacre 1976:208) provides a satisfactory solution since what is most noticeable about the text is that it appears to ‘mix’ aspects which are narrative, expository and even commentary-like. As a consequence, a dynamic perspective on the text complementary to the synoptic one adopted above might throw some light on what this text is generically, and this is done in the re-presentation of the text as example 4-35a below. (To facilitate further discussion the text will be divided into clauses and clause complexes; the numbering system is as outlined in Section 4.2 above.)

Example 4-35a

NARRATIVE-TYPE

Abstract/Orientation

|||(1.1) Oh, I had a funny little thing |||

(2.1) Suppose it wasn't the funniest thing really that's ever happened |||

(3.1) It hasn't been connected with our dogs but with our Foxy || (3.2) that we had at home || (3.3) when I was a kid |||

OBSERVATION

Event Description (1)

(4.1) She knew very well || (4.2) that she wasn't allowed to sleep on the beds inside || (4.3) and she would || (4.4) she'd hop up || (4.5) and she'd have a sleep |||

(5.1) And you'd (('she'd')) hear her (('you')) come in || (5.2) and she'd hop down |||

(6.1) She (('you')) didn't hear her get down || (6.2) but she'd get up on her tippy-toes || (6.3) and you'd hear this click-click-click of her nails on the lino || (6.4) and you knew very well || (6.5) where she'd been || (6.6) because she'd be sneaking out |||

Comment (1)

(7.1) And you could hear this click-click-click || (7.2) which was the worst thing she could do |||

Event Description (2)

(8.1) And the other thing she used to do was to get... |||

(9.1) You know, you'd put- you know, some scones or pancakes or cake out on the table for afternoon tea || (9.2) and, you know, no-one was there for five seconds || (9.3) so she'd hop up on the chair || (9.4)

EXPOSITION

Argument (1)

(4.1) She knew very well || (4.2) that she wasn't allowed to sleep on the beds inside || (4.3) and she would || (4.4) she'd hop up || (4.5) and she'd have a sleep |||

(5.1) And you'd (('she'd')) hear her (('you')) come in || (5.2) and she'd hop down |||

(6.1) She (('you')) didn't hear her get down || (6.2) but she'd get up on her tippy-toes || (6.3) and you'd hear this click-click-click of her nails on the lino || (6.4) and you knew very well || (6.5) where she'd been || (6.6) because she'd be sneaking out |||

(7.1) And you could hear this click-click-click || (7.2) which was the worst thing she could do |||

Argument (2)

(8.1) And the other thing she used to do was to get... |||

(9.1) You know, you'd put- you know, some scones or pancakes or cake out on the table for afternoon tea || (9.2) and, you know, no-one was there for five seconds || (9.3) so she'd hop up on the chair || (9.4)

and she'd only take one piece ||
(9.5) she didn't want a lot || (9.6) and
she'd hear you come || (9.7) and so
she'd put it back ||| ((laughs))

Comment (2)

(10.1) So she wasn't going to get
caught with the evidence |||

and she'd only take one piece ||
(9.5) she didn't want a lot || (9.6) and
she'd hear you come || (9.7) and so
she'd put it back ||| ((laughs))

(10.1) So she wasn't going to get
caught with the evidence |||

Conclusion

(11.1) There was... two funny things
she used to do || (11.2) so she was
a character in that regards |||

The re-presentation of 4-35 in 4-35a above seeks to display graphically how the text moves from being one kind of text, synoptically speaking, to being a quite different kind of text. The point being made is that while *prospectively* the text appears to be of a clearly narrative type, with a more or less fused Abstract/Orientation, *retrospectively* it is an expository type, quite likely a conventional exposition, with a Conclusion preceded by two Arguments. Yet an interpretation of the shifts between generic stages in terms of embedding, as always an all too convenient standby, must be rejected since the narrative opening is an equally unlikely Thesis for an exposition as the expository ending is a Coda to a narrative. If the text does not involve embedding, however, then its truly problematic part in generic terms is found in its entire middle stage, comprising clause complexes 4 – 10, since this is the linchpin for the generic change.

The middle stage has been doubly coded, once as observation and once as exposition, with the two stages Event Description ^ Comment of a text type observation mapped onto the single Argument stage of a text type exposition. *Prospectively*, i.e. seen from the beginning stage of the seemingly narrative-type text, the two instances of observation could have been expected to realise temporally sequenced narrative events functioning as some sort of Complication ^ Resolution. Looked at *retrospectively*, i.e. after the completion of the second instance of observation and before going on to the Conclusion in clause complex 11, the two instances of observation appear to be a second instance of an Orientation, itself realised as two events. It is not until the Conclusion itself is reached that the middle stage is retrospectively reappraised as constituting two Arguments in an exposition, with the narrative-like beginning now completely lost sight of.

The procedural aspects in clause complexes 4 – 6 as well as 8 – 9, i.e. those clauses which chose a generic tense for the realisation of past-time events, are interpreted here to be a case of two successive Event Descriptions simply being realised procedurally rather than themselves constituting a single ranking stage ‘How to ...’ in a text type procedure via embedding of the two observations; for discussion of PROCEDURE see Section 6.2.1. An alternative analysis of the entire text as a procedural-type genre would be faced with a number of difficulties including finding a plausible interpretation of clause complexes 7 and 10 respectively. By interpreting clause complexes 4 – 7 and 8 – 10 as two successive instances of observation it becomes possible to make the link to the unambiguously expository Conclusion in clause complex 11 via a reinterpretation of the two instances of observation as Arguments in such an exposition, i.e. by considering the Arguments as being realised by embedded observations.

The progressive realisation of this particular text’s structure is mapped out in terms of the generic stages or elements of schematic structure contributed by different genres in Figure 4-1:

| Clause complex # | Genre | Generic stage | Clause complex # | Genre | Generic stage |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1–2 | narrative-type | Abstract | | | |
| 3 | narrative-type | Orientation | | | |
| 4–6 | observation | Event Description 1 | 4–7 | exposition | Argument 1 |
| 7 | observation | Comment 1 | | | |
| 8–9 | observation | Event Description 2 | 8–10 | exposition | Argument 2 |
| 10 | observation | Comment 2 | | | |
| | | | 11 | exposition | Conclusion |

Fig. 4-1: Generic structure of textual example 4-35 – 35a

The staging of the text appears to be entirely determined dynamically on the basis of whatever stage the speaker is at: Having reached some point, that point is assessed not in the light of its immediate past history, i.e. of how the speaker got there, but in the light of its immediate future, i.e. of how the speaker might progress from there. No one generic structure can completely account for this text since a number of different structures, constituting the realisations of different choices in a system of genre,

contribute to such a text. For all the analytical problems it presents, the text in 4-35 is a perfectly ‘good’ text; it is neither odd nor beset by ‘performance’ problems in the sense of performance that falls short of idealised competence.

On the contrary, it is suggested that a text such as 4-35 demonstrates the limits of a synoptic analysis, and that ultimately means the limits of a generic analysis as it is generally understood, and that the only way to account for such texts is to search for some kind of ‘enabling system’ to handle the shift from one generic option to the other. Whether such a ‘system’ is to be a dynamic system as Martin suggests or an explicit, operationalisable form of what it means to make successive passes through the system, specifying the conditions on such passes, as Halliday suggests, must be left to future research (see also discussion in Section 2.3). (Cf. also Ventola’s 1987:81ff attempt to account for examples of the ‘switching, mixing, and embedding’ of genres in terms of ‘generic sidesequencing’.) What seems beyond argument, however, is that the notion of continuous change is perfectly in harmony with the notion that contextual meanings are realised in text probabilistically, such realisation being achieved by the continual reweighting of choices in a system. The fact that structures at the levels of both lexicogrammar and genre reflect the influence of the real-time production of text thus lends further weight to arguments in favour of a model of language which can account for both synoptic and dynamic aspects complementarily.

Chapter 5:

Contextual Comparability of Texts

5.1 The Sociolinguistic Interview as Research Tool

If the sociolinguistic interview is to be a useful tool for the study of functional variation at the level of text, then some attention needs to be paid to the research methodology used in the collection of a corpus of comparable data. Since the methodology of the interview is most clearly expressed in the interview schedule itself, which in this study of course also makes certain hypotheses about the nature of text as discussed in Chapter 3, I propose to discuss the interview schedule from the point of view of its success as a tool for the elicitation of texts. In addition, the discussion will be very much concerned with the conduct of the interview with a view to contributing to the development of the sociolinguistic interview as a research tool.

Most generally put, every question in an interview schedule would ideally lead to a response²⁹ in every interview. Moreover, every such response in one interview would be comparable with the corresponding response in every other interview in terms of the conditions of its elicitation. That such a state of affairs is impossible to achieve goes almost without saying and yet there is hardly any mention in any of the empirical text studies in the literature of any problems concerning elicitation as such. But due to the fact that texts, and not syntactic or phonological phenomena, are being compared, some attention to the actual elicitation of texts serving as the data of empirical studies is greatly warranted. While the discussion of the efficacy of the interview could be dismissed as being concerned with just one possible way of gathering data, the much more important theoretical concern with the nature of the data being compared certainly cannot be.

While a sociolinguistic interview conducted for the purpose of gathering data for an empirical study of textual variation is unlike the survey interview used in, say, market research, it shares with it the fact that both are ‘constrained by a particular ideal of information gathering which is measurement’ (Brenner 1981:19; emphasis in orig.).

²⁹The intended meaning of ‘response’ is not unlike Goffman’s (1976/1981: 43) who argues that ‘To say that the subject of response can extend back over something more or less than the prior turn’s talk is another way of saying that although a *reply* is addressed to meaningful elements of whole statements, *responses* can break frame and reflexively address aspects of a statement which would ordinarily be “out of frame,” ordinarily part of transmission, not content – for example, the statement’s duration, tactfulness, style, origin, accent, vocabulary, and so forth.’

Such sociolinguistic research needs to take seriously the question of comparability, i.e. in statistical terms the question of bias. As in the interview used in survey research generally so it is the case in the sociolinguistic interview that ‘All sources of bias are invariably related to the questionnaire, the respondent and the interviewer as well as to the interactions between them.’ (Brenner 1981:20).

There are a number of sources of a lack of comparability, at the level of both interviews and responses, and all in one way or another contribute to the total number of ‘codable’ texts, i.e. texts deemed usable for quantitative analysis, being considerably fewer than the logically possible number. The number of interviews (50) times the number of questions in the schedule (13) equals the total number of possible responses, viz. 650. Instead, the number gained is 420 or 65% of the potential number of texts. (All percentage figures are rounded.) A summary of the success rates of individual questions is presented in Figure 5-1. (See Appendix A for interview schedule.)

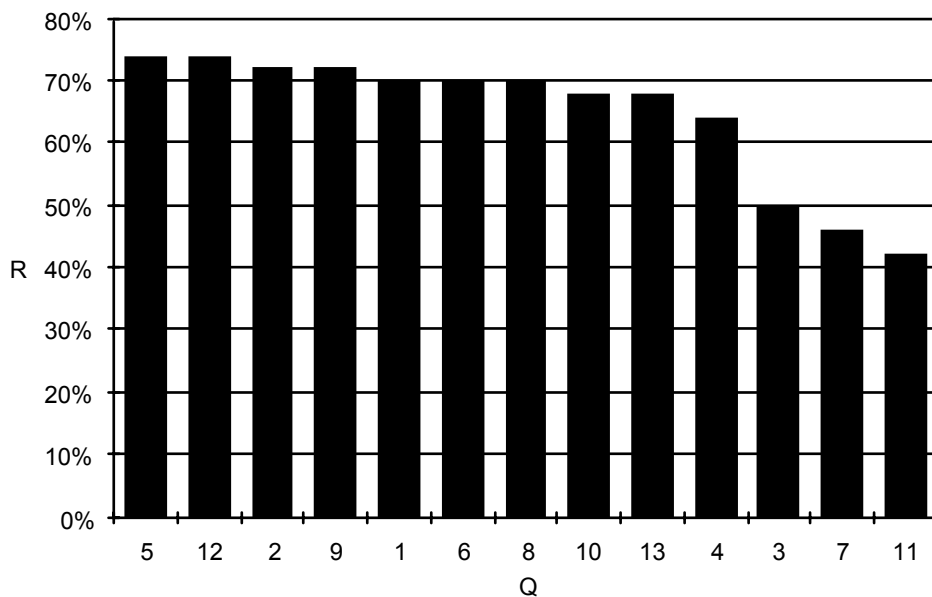


Fig. 5-1: Codable responses given to questions in interview schedule

The success of individual questions ranges from a high 74% for Q 5 (‘describe ideal buyer/ owner’) and Q 12 (‘is dog showing a sport?’) to a low 42% for Q 11 (‘tell favourite story’). One possible explanation for the large difference between the success rates might be that while the relatively more successful questions are quite specific in terms of field, the relatively unsuccessful question is lacking in direction as far as field

is concerned. Generically, on the other hand, Q 11 ('tell favourite story') as a clearly narrative question is to be compared with the much more successful Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?') (70%) and Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') (68%). The reasons for the different success rates for individual questions are quite diverse, and complex, and will be discussed in some detail in the rest of this chapter.

The possible sources of a lack of comparability (SLC), both at the level of the interview as well as at the level of the response, may be briefly summarised by reference to five broad categories:

- (i) interview schedule, i.e. the data design
- (ii) interviewer, i.e. the conduct of the interview
- (iii) interview, i.e. the context of situation
- (iv) interviewee, i.e. his 'cooperativeness' in terms of the data design
- (v) analytical techniques, i.e. ability of theory to account for the data

A summary of the relative importance of these sources of a lack of comparability of interviews and responses is presented in Figure 5-2:

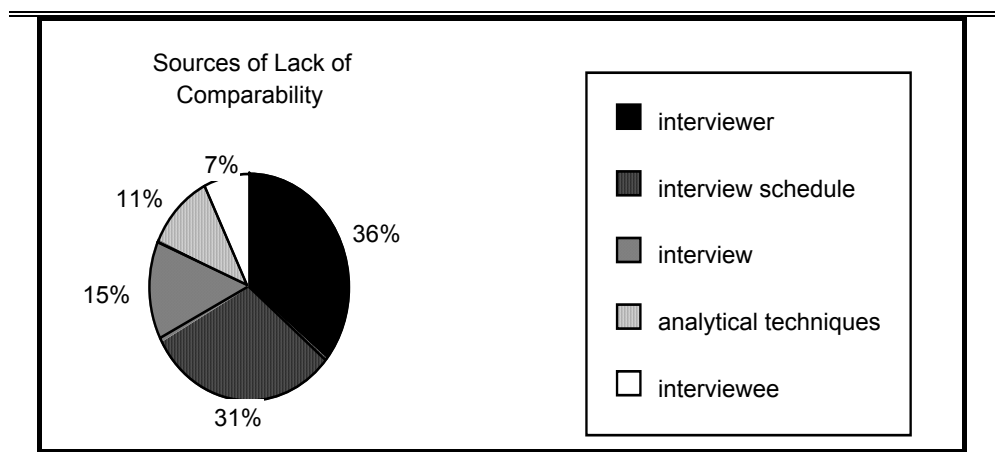


Fig. 5-2: Relative importance of sources of lack of comparability (SLC)

The conduct of the interview is in some sense held responsible for *not* obtaining the largest proportion, viz. some 36%, of the 230 potential texts which could have been obtained but were not, i.e. either because there were no responses to code at all or the responses were lacking in comparability relative to other responses. The least important source of such a lack of comparability on the other hand is the category interviewee with 7%. Even in the absence of a closer examination, these figures would suggest that

while the interviewee is typically a most cooperative subject in our research, it is the research methods themselves which warrant reviewing and this will be part of the following detailed discussion of the interview as used in the data design underlying this study.

5.2 Interview Schedule as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)

The interview schedule is held responsible for two causes of a ‘zero-response’, and thus of course of ‘zero-text’, viz. absence of an elicitation question in the schedule (coded SLC 1) and inapplicability of an elicitation question to the interviewee (coded SLC 2).

| SLC | Code | Focus | Cause |
|--------------------|------|-------|-------------------------------|
| interview schedule | 1 | Q | not yet in schedule |
| interview schedule | 2 | Q | not applicable to interviewee |

The results of coding the interviews for those two sources of a lack of comparability which can be grouped together under the heading of ‘interview schedule’ are presented in Table 5-1:

Table 5-1: Interview schedule as source of lack of comparability

| SLC # | Question # | | | | | | | | | | | | | ‘Zero’ Responses | |
|-------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | no. | % of all zero |
| Rs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 % |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 20 | 0 | 1 | 67 | 29 % |
| | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 20 | 0 | 2 | 71 | 31 % |

A total of only 4 potential responses are coded SLC 1 which, together with the 67 potential responses coded SLC 2, account for 31% of all potential responses which did not result in texts suitable for quantitative analysis. While SLC 1 as a cause of lack of comparability is negligible, SLC 2 is the single most important cause of failing to obtain a ‘codable’ text. The categories focusing on the interview schedule thereby constitute the second-largest source of a lack of comparability in the corpus of texts. They are discussed in the rest of Section 5.2 below.

5.2.1 Question Not in Schedule

The absence of the question in the schedule (code SLC 1) accounts for the fact that the elicitation questions of the final schedule were not worked out completely until the fourth interview. Only four potential responses are affected by SLC 1, three pertaining to Q 8 ('funny incident') and one to Q 13 ('children in showing'). It was the interpretation by the first three informants of Q 11 ('*favourite* story') as a question after a '*funny* story' which led to a separate question being formulated after a 'funny incident'. Once both questions were in the schedule, they needed to be asked in the sequence of 'funny incident' (Q 8) and 'favourite story' (Q 11) in order to signal that 'favourite' did not (necessarily) equal 'funny'.

5.2.2 Question Not Applicable to Interviewee

Inapplicability of the question to the interviewee (code SLC 2) covers two potentially distinct causes of a lack of comparability, specifically of failing to elicit a response, which cannot be distinguished in individual instances. Firstly, the question leading to SLC 2 may be genuinely inapplicable to the interviewee: for example, one interviewee's brood bitch had had only one litter and that was born at a friend's place in the owner's absence, thereby ruling out Q 3 ('whelping alert') and Q 4 ('account of whelping'). If the question is asked in such a situation it will obviously be rejected as inapplicable; conversely, if the absence of the relevant field experience had become known during the course of the interview the question was simply not asked.

Secondly, inapplicability may not be based on fact at all but be related to an interviewee's interpretation of the question as having the potential to cast him or her in a bad light. For example, emergencies or accidents, asked after in Q 6, may be seen as avoidable – I look after them too well – and successes at shows, asked after in Q 10, are sometimes said to be preferably surprising and therefore none is singled out for talking about.

The reason for this attitude is not hard to find: Expecting to win is seen as implying too calculating an attitude to a hobby which is taken very seriously but must not be regarded as a business. The high failure rate of Q 7, which asks after a 'busiest time' on account of keeping dogs, also seems in part due to a rejection of the supposition that keeping dogs might compete with other, more 'legitimate' demands on the interviewee's time.

A more significant cause, however, may be the intrusion of the question into domestic affairs and its supposition of field experience in an area where the interviewer has little knowledge, and where therefore the predictability of field is low. It should be noted that the status of the field experience as routine and thus as potentially ‘not reportable’ (Labov 1972b:370-1) is reflected in the type of response elicited but not in the failure to elicit a response as such (see Chapter 6 for discussion).

Of all elicitation questions, Q 11 (‘favourite story’) scores the highest for inapplicability. (Q 11 also succeeds the least often overall.) Twenty-one interviewees (out of fifty) deny that they might have a favourite story to tell. Two explanations may be advanced for such a high rate of inapplicability: one, Q 11 makes a demand on the interviewee which is unlike that in any other question by focusing explicitly on a genre, viz. a ‘story’; and two, Q 11 offers no field support, i.e. no ‘topic’ in any everyday sense. The question does not so much tax the interviewee’s memory, as for example Q 8 (‘what happened in funny incident?’) does by asking for the recall of an incident, but rather demands the instant creation of a piece of verbal art without offering much help in finding a peg on which to hang it. (Cf. Labov 1972b:354, fn.3.)

Two interviewees stand out with an unusually large number of SLC 2 codings, viz. I 33 and I 21 with seven and five inapplicable questions respectively. They have to be seen as being in some sense not ‘core’ members of that sub-group of the dog fancy for which the interview schedule was designed. I 33 keeps and breeds dogs for hunting but does not engage in the kind of showing in which the typical members of the dog fancy participate. I 21 on the other hand is the kind of down-to-earth breeder (a housewife with five children) who confirms the suspicion that the interview schedule is unconsciously aimed at the stereotypically indulgent and locquacious member of the fancy, in addition to being aimed at a kind of ‘core’ member. For the schedule to work efficiently with a large number of informants, it clearly needs to be designed for the typical member of the target group – the problem being then, of course, to match the schedule with the ideal speaker.

5.3 Interviewer as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)

The interviewer is held responsible for three distinct causes of a lack of comparability, either resulting in a ‘zero-response’ or in a ‘zero-text’, viz. (i) where the question was simply forgotten (coded SLC 3); (ii) where the question was not asked because of lack

of control, lack of time, and various other reasons (coded SLC 4); and (iii) where the elicitation process was in some way ‘interfered’ with in the wider sense of the elicitation question not being asked the way it was designed to be asked (coded SLC 5).

| SLC | Code | Focus | Cause |
|-------------|------|-------|--|
| interviewer | 3 | Q | forgotten to ask |
| interviewer | 4 | Q | not asked due to lack of control, time, etc. |
| interviewer | 5 | Q | interference with elicitation process |

The results of coding the interviews for the three sources of a lack of comparability which can be grouped together under the heading of ‘interviewer’ are presented in Table 5-2:

Table 5-2: Interviewer as source of lack of comparability

| SLC # | Question # | | | | | | | | | | | | | ‘Zero’ Responses | |
|----------|------------|---|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | no. | % of all zero |
| Rs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 26 | 11 % |
| 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 8 % |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 38 | 17 % |
| | 5 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 83 | 36 % |

A total of 83 responses are coded SLC 3 – 5, these accounting for 36% of all potential responses which did not result in texts suitable for quantitative analysis. The categories focusing on the interviewer constitute the largest source of a lack of comparability in the corpus of texts. Of all single categories, SLC 5 (‘interference with elicitation process’) is the second-largest while SLC 2 (‘Q not applicable to interviewee’) with 29% of all codings is by far the largest coding category. The categories SLC 3 – 5 are discussed in the rest of Section 5.3 below.

5.3.1 Forgetting to Ask the Elicitation Question

Forgetting to ask the elicitation question (code SLC 3) is the direct result, i.e. the obvious ‘cost’, of seeking to downplay the interviewer’s power as that interactant who not only asks the questions but also sets the topics (see discussion in Section 3.3.1). The strategy followed here is to *not* rely on a copy of the interview schedule, i.e. to ask the questions from memory. 26 texts, out of a potential 650, were ‘foregone’ in this

way – a small enough price to pay for an attempt at conducting the interview more like a conversation and less obviously like an interview.

5.3.2 Unable to Ask the Elicitation Question

A failure to ask the elicitation question due to a lack of control over the interview, coded SLC 4, is directly related to the choices between interview vs. conversation and explicitly vs. implicitly powerful interviewer. Labov noted the problem of getting interviewees to cooperate in terms of a predetermined interview schedule but saw it essentially as one of

older speakers, in particular, [who] pay little attention to the questions as they are asked. They may have certain favorite points of view which they want to express, and they have a great deal of experience in making a rapid transition from the topic to the subject that is closest to their hearts.

(Labov 1966a:69)

Quite generally, interviewees seemed to fall into one of two groups as far as control over the interview, specifically over the asking of the elicitation questions, is concerned: One kind of speaker would listen to the entire question, although perhaps rejecting or dismissing it any point where this was structurally possible. The other kind of speaker, however, would respond as soon as he or she recognised a possible topic, and would seize the initiative by developing his or her own topics, defeating the intention to constrain genre and field.

The somewhat more talkative speakers were also more likely to follow up on a ‘good’ response to an elicitation question by enlarging on a topic of their own, thereby creating some of the ‘end’ problems found in delimiting a text by reference to a theory of genre (see Section 5.6 for discussion). The other kind of speaker by contrast seemed to have a much stronger awareness of the interaction as interview and consequently of what constituted a response (and therefore presumably also of a question). At times this was made quite clear by marking the end of a response with an explicit return to the context of the elicitation such as a Does this answer your question? or some equivalent expression of Completion of the task in hand.

While the total number of 19 responses not obtained due to a loss of control is not very high, two interviews stand out prominently for the loss of control suffered: I 31 with nine failures coded SLC 4 reflects a loss of control due to a spate of time-consuming interruptions which simply prevented elicitation questions from being

asked. The face-to-face interruptions by two small children, and the several telephone calls, would of course have yielded perfectly usable data for the contrastive analysis of phonological variables in different contexts by reference to tenor, i.e. speaking to outsider (interviewer) vs. familiars (interviewee's children), or to mode, i.e. speaking face-to-face (interviewee's children) vs. on the telephone without any visual feedback (interviewee's friends). I 19 with five failures coded SLC 4 reflects the interviewer's ceding control when dealing with an interviewee and a third party present at the interview, the interviewee's partner in the dog fancy, who insisted on treating the interview as a joint interview. This may be 'inconsiderate' from the interviewer's point of view, who has the objectives of his research in mind, but it is of course hardly aberrant behaviour on the part of the speakers concerned.

5.3.3 Interfering with the Elicitation Process

Two categories of 'interference' with a potential text (code SLC 5) result from poor handling of the elicitation process itself. The first kind of interference is created by asking the elicitation question badly, the second by 'interjections' of various kinds: by persistent questioning jeopardising the monologic production aimed at; by interrupting a response, causing it to be either abandoned or generically changed; and by various other kinds of interference. The coding SLC 5 thus applies to actual responses elicited but rules these out as texts unsuitable for contrastive analysis.

5.3.3.1 Interference by Poor Questioning

It was found that there were two ways in which the question could be asked in order to invite a response which potentially differed significantly from the one aimed at. In the first instance, the canonical structure of the elicitation question could become quite dysfunctional by overemphasising the lead-up to it and thereby failing to 'get to the question' itself. In the second instance, the question form at times differed significantly from that in the schedule. The sources of interference could thus lie in the Supposition or in the Cue.

5.3.3.1.1 Supposition

The Supposition, i.e. the introductory part of the elicitation question, may become dysfunctional when overly elaborated or not quickly followed up when there is some indication of an interviewee's agreement with the Supposition. As already noted, there

is a tendency on the part of some speakers to seize the initiative as soon as some possible topic is recognised, thereby leading to a response which is constrained for field but not for genre. The build-up to Q 7 ('tell about today's chores'), for example, leads to such a response:

Example 5-1

GP: Who looks after the dogs?

I: The kids help a bit.

GP: I suppose mornings are frantic in your household?

I: No more than anyone else's. It's pretty basic with them. ... (text continues with observations on type of dog kept)

... Aw no, early mornings, it's just a matter of me getting out there and checking to see there's water in their dishes ... (text continues)

Having failed to proceed to Commitment in the structure at some point before the interviewee begins the most pertinent part of his response, i.e. *Aw no, early mornings* ..., it is not possible to do so once he has begun. The text, as one constrained for both field and genre, is lost.

5.3.3.1.2 Cue

A second source of interference lies in the element Cue of the interview question when it is given in a form that is likely to constrain the response in a direction other than that intended by the data design. For example, Q 7 ('tell about today's chores') seeks to elicit a recount of what is clearly a routine sequence of events, and the generic constraint in the elicitation question therefore stresses that a recount is aimed at as much as possible (see discussion in Section 3.2). Nevertheless, the routine nature of the field clearly also weighs on the interviewer's mind as one particular Cue shows:

Example 5-2

Cue: Could you give me an idea, let's say, of a routine, by telling me what you did this morning?

The tension between routine events and recounts of these as specific events is paralleled in a number of elicitation questions by the contrast between the 'general' and the 'specific'. For example, Q 2 ('describe ideal dog') and Q 5 ('describe ideal buyer/ owner') at times lead to the interviewee claiming that some particular dog/buyer

represents his or her ideal, which in turn may lead to the interviewer asking for a description of that individual instead.

As already pointed out (see discussion in Section 3.2), no one element of the criterial structure of the elicitation question can be considered obligatory – as long as one element is present a ‘response’ may be obtained even if it is not a response to the elicitation question. The element Cue, in the presence of one or both of the other two elements, is often not realised at all. Whether that in itself amounts to true ‘optionality’ depends entirely on the objectives formulated for the interview. It is most certainly the case that Cue is not a necessary element to achieve ‘talk’ – but at least for two elicitation questions, viz. Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’) and Q 7 (‘tell about today’s chores’) it is necessary in order to achieve a generically constrained response.

In contrast to generically significant changes in the question form, minor changes in field focus are not considered ‘interference’ with a potential text sufficient to exclude it from the corpus. One such shift of field focus occurs commonly in Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/ accident?’) where an ‘accident’ may be asked for instead of an ‘emergency’. Most changes in field focus are in fact suggested by the interviewee, e.g. a ‘fight’ in respect of Q 6 being yet a further variation. Other alternatives which were explicitly offered by the interviewee, and readily accepted, were, respectively, ‘sad’ and ‘moving’ incidents in place of a ‘funny’ one (Q 8); a ‘failure’ at a show in place of a ‘success’ (Q 10); and a ‘heartbreak’ story in place of ‘favourite’ one (Q 11).

Similarly, some interviewees made their intention to make a generic switch explicit; for example, in response to Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’) one interviewee prefaced her response by saying I’ll tell you what normally happens. Some of the changes suggested to both genre and field orientation are instructive as far as the unmarked association of genre and field is concerned, a topic that has already been explored in Chapter 3. For this reason, as well as for the obvious reason of not wanting to jeopardise the interview by insisting on questions being answered ‘as put’, any field and genre changes explicitly made by the interviewee are considered acceptable deviations from the question form.

5.3.3.2 Interference by Interjection

The second kind of interference is created by ‘interjections’ of various kinds: by persistent questioning jeopardising the monologic production aimed at; by interrupting

a response, causing it to be either abandoned or generically changed; and by various other kinds of interference. Any discussion of interference of this kind must in fact be part of the evaluation of all kinds of ‘contributions’ that can be expected to be made in the interview situation, from follow-up questions by an interviewer to a third party’s attempts at helping with a response, from expressions of surprise by a listener (which may lead to changes in direction by the speaker) to simple interruptions (which may lead to some response being abandoned).

The attempt to evaluate the significance of such ‘contributions’, which typically are meant to ‘assist’ the interviewee, has to be based on some notion of genre: either they contribute to the realisation of some genre, i.e. they help to construct (and at times to deconstruct) some generic type being developed conversationally, or generically they make no difference to the text being produced. If they do ‘contribute’, then a decision needs to be made as to whether to include the resultant texts or not. Since it was the objective of this study to limit the interviewer’s contributions in order to obtain independently produced texts, the question of what constitutes ‘interference’ in a generic sense warrants some discussion. In this section I will therefore be concerned to develop some ‘editing rules’ for contributions by the interviewer (i.e. other than the elicitation questions themselves), and these will be extended to encompass the contributions by third parties present at the interview in Section 5.4 below.

5.3.3.2.1 Intervening in the Response

The interviewer’s intervention in the response – seen as part of his conduct of the interview and therefore as part of the asking of elicitation questions – is essentially motivated by having certain generic expectations. This is as true for an interviewer who sets out to elicit texts per se as it is for one like Labov (1966a), who uses the stratagem of obtaining a narrative text³⁰ for its potential to make the interviewee forget the constraints of the interview context in order to obtain casual speech for phonological analysis. Such ‘generically conditioned’ intervention, which is not merely based on a self-conscious and deliberate attempt at eliciting certain responses for the purposes of data collection but quite generally on any speaker’s expectations of what constitutes a response to his question, takes two forms in the interviews in this study.

³⁰While a distinction will need to be made between narrative-type texts and narrative ‘proper’, the former simply describing a range of related text types all of which represent experience ‘narratively’ in some sense while the latter are defined by reference to a particular generic structure, the distinction is only loosely employed in this chapter. (See Chapter 6 for further discussion.)

One form relates to the interviewer's follow-up questions, which may in effect constitute contributions to a text which is produced dependently rather than independently. This phenomenon has already been discussed at length for its significance to the study of textual variation generally and will not be dealt with at this point (see Section 3.1.3 above). At any rate, as I was always conscious of the objective to obtain independently produced texts for the reasons given above, the number of responses affected by follow-up questions is small.

However, this objective was achieved at the cost of not considering the responses to Q 14 for inclusion in the corpus. This elicitation question asked after the interviewee's views on what is often referred to in discussions as the 'dog problem' affecting big cities, i.e. the problem of noise, dirt, attacks, etc., caused by the keeping of a very large number of dogs.³¹ Since this question invariably raises the issue of a dog fancier's share of responsibility for this problem by virtue of being a dog breeder, the question was for many interviewees the signal to express their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting the dog fancy. Furthermore, since it was an emotional and controversial issue, interviewees solicited agreement for their opinions from their interactant, i.e. the interviewer, and the interview quickly turned into a conversation and even discussion at this point.³² Once realised, I decided to treat the question as one ideally suited to 'greasing the wheels of social interaction' which balanced the monologic phases of the interview but to ignore it as one of the elicitation questions proper.

In addition to follow-up questions affecting the interview as an efficient method of data collection, a second kind of intervention also pertains to the interviewer's expectations of obtaining a certain generic response to his question. However, rather than working at obtaining a generically constrained response by fielding follow-up questions, he may in fact bring about the failure of his own attempt at such an elicitation by intervention as in example 5-3:

³¹The total number of dogs and cats kept as pets in Sydney is currently estimated to be in excess of four million, thus certainly equalling if not exceeding its human population (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 11/4/87).

³²It may well be the case that there is a generic distinction to be made between two kinds of expository-type texts, viz. the (oral) 'exposition' aimed at in this study and the (oral) 'opinion' text postulated by Horvath & Eggins (1987), the latter being considered by them an inherently dialogic type of text.

Example 5-3 (Q 2)

GP: How would you describe your ideal beagle, the one you wish to breed?

I: I think I've bred him. ... I think I've bred him. Because everybody was breeding dogs out here, and using the same dogs. Therefore we were getting similar dogs going into the ring all the time: Tri-coloured, black saddle, white little blaze down the forehead, brown face, tail up in the air with a white end on it – they were all very similar. But I noticed that English beagles looked differently. They had a little more white scattered about, maybe across the stifle or across the shoulders – they looked a little different. So I made up my mind that until I could find a suitable dog I would not breed another litter. Well then Rachel M. had a dog out of an English bitch, an Imperial Champion. And at the last beagle show I saw two beagles that were alike, that stood out differently to the rest. And the one I've got, this little daughter of Satin, this Coffee & Cream, she's won about eighty percent of the shows that she's ever gone in. And of course, she's a surprise package and she just knows, as soon as she goes in the show ring she knows she's on show and she puts her best foot forward all the way round. And I've never trained them very much. I've sort of depended on shows-

GP: Yeah, can you tell me- I've been to a show only once and it is pretty confusing for a total outsider. You watch people taking their dogs around and see them judged. Could you explain what you have to do with your dogs when you're showing them?

I: Sure, well I start from scratch. One reason why I picked beagles is that they are easy to look after. ... (text continues)

A failure to recognise that a response 'in progress' does in fact constitute an 'answer to the question' is likely to tempt the interviewer to abandon his role as observer (of text production in progress) and to take up an active role as participant. And whereas in the case of follow-up questions this would have been intended to keep the interviewee 'on track' generically, just as in the 'danger-of-death' narrative cited by Labov (1966a) (see example 3-1 in Chapter 3), we may equally find that such intervention occurs in the interest of getting through the interview (schedule) and result in the termination of a seemingly unproductive response, as in 5-3, by using a cue provided by the interviewee to ask another elicitation question. There is no knowing whether the interviewee's reference to the *show* was in fact the beginning of the response DRIFTING irrevocably (see Section 5.6.3.2), which was clearly the interviewer's interpretation, or whether the interviewee might not have come back to answering the question in a narrower sense than, for example, a 'response' in Goffman's sense would constitute (see fn.1 this

chapter). However, up until the point of intervention, the response could not be said to have done so.

Such an intervention may of course be quite unjustified on the grounds of not answering the question since a seemingly irrelevant response as in example 5-4 may merely be a lengthy lead-up to an entirely relevant response to Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?'):

Example 5-4 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 37)

GP: Can you remember an incident that you're particularly fond of as being something very funny?

I: What ... revolving around the dogs?

GP: Yes.

I: Funny?

GP: Or involving your interest in dogs, I mean even at a show if you like, not necessarily even your own.

I: I can't bring any particular incidents to mind, not really, no. There are lots of funny little incidents that occur. I mean when you've got puppies around, they're always into mischief and devilment, there's always something funny where you'll find them, you know, sitting inside a Wellington boot looking cute or something, you know. We have these Wellingtons we wear when we go on hunts and things. Or in rainy weather.

No, I can't think of an incident, nothing comes to mind just at the moment because there are so many little things. I mean, beagles are so endearing that, you know, there'll often be times where you'll be standing and going "uuh" and "aah" and aren't they cute, or aren't they amusing. They'll-

Well ... oh well, often what happens around here-

We have a pool, as I suggested, with a pool fence around it, and my bitch here is very clever. She is the smartest of the lot ... (text continues)

By the time the interviewee repeats that she *can't think of an incident* it seems obvious that no response recounting any particular incident, which is what is asked for in the elicitation question, is forthcoming. Yet, the interviewer not having intervened, the interviewee's own talk about general patterns of behaviour leads her to think of tellable incidents after all, and to giving an account of them. Within the context of a sociolinguistic interview conducted for the purpose of collecting instances of comparable texts, however, interventions of the kind illustrated in 5-3 must be expected and the potential loss of a comparable text accepted.

However, the perfectly normal tendency for an interactant to play an active role as participant is one best exercised with discretion by an interviewer. By abandoning the role of observer and assuming that of participant, the interviewer may end up ruining what was going to be a generically well-formed response. Unwarranted interventions may interrupt the interviewee's response and thereby lead to incomplete texts. In a study of textual variation which seeks to explore what speakers actually do when producing text under comparable conditions, responses which are incomplete due to the interviewer's intervention cannot be compared with those that were 'allowed' to be completed. The analyst can neither make up the end of the text, inventing its linguistic realisations, nor can he pretend that certain (types of) speakers typically realise certain types of text in ways which we know to be incomplete by reference to similar texts. (See also example 5-12 in Section 5.4.2.)

5.3.3.2.2 Interpolations

Some interventions in the response can be abstracted from the text without doing violence to it in terms of its generic realisation. Interpolations often come about as the result of the interviewer's desire for more information at some point in the response. It seems to be the case that such requests are dealt with purely locally, i.e. they have no function at all in the global structure of the text. For example, such an interpolation in the narrative by Labov, reproduced as example 3-1 in Chapter 3, does not realise a functional element in that text's generic structure, no matter how the narrative is analysed:

Example 5-5

WL: How long were you up there?

I: About ten minutes.

Such interpolations may be seen to belong to the context of the interview, the context of narrating, describing, etc., rather than the narrative, the description, etc., itself.

One feature of the purely local role of such requests for added information is that both the interviewer's intervention and the interviewee's response to it may be clearly delimited³³, as example 5-6 shows:

³³Interpolations and local responses are shown inside double curly brackets if delimitable, a practice that will be followed throughout to indicate wordings which are capable of being 'abstracted' by reference to generic structure.

Example 5-6

- I: ... and we wandered over to the local P and A show one weekend-
- GP: {{P and A – what does it stand-
- I: Pastoral and Agricultural, you know, the usual country shows}}
and we saw the dogs being judged ... (text continues)

It is quite common for brief interpolations not to interfere with the continuity of the text at all, even to the point where the structure of a clause begun before the interruption, and completed after it has been dealt with, is maintained perfectly.

On the other hand, the interviewer's request for further information may lead to a local response which cannot be clearly abstracted from the response as a whole:

Example 5-7

- GP: Do you remember how you first got into breeding borzois?
- I: Well, yes. I've been in dogs virtually all my life. Prior to that I'd had other breeds – I've had quite a few breeds, to be honest with you.
- GP: {{Which one did you start off with?
- I: Well, kelpies of course, following on from my dad.}}¹
And we had kelpies after we were married, around on a five-acre property that I owned at the time. And then-}}²
I'm a sort of diversified chap and we went into-}}³
We had bulldogs and basenjis, a basset, and we'd always loved borzois. I saw my first borzoi in about 1954 at the royal and both my wife and I fell in love with it. ... (text continues)

There are at least three possible endings for the 'local' response to the interpolation, indicated by sequentially numbered double curly closing brackets, but none could be argued for with more conviction than any other. Texts with interpolations which lead to responses that cannot be delimited are considered to be dependently produced texts and are excluded from the corpus.

5.3.3.2.3 Reactions

An overt REACTION by the interviewer at some point in the production of the text may also lead to a local response. Reactions need of course not be verbal, for example surprise, disgust, delight, etc., may be expressed paralinguistically or kinesically. And unlike a request for further information, which may potentially lead to a dependently

produced text, reactions are simply expressions of the interviewer's simultaneous role as co-conversationalist, specifically as hearer.

However, there is little doubt that overt reactions, verbal or non-verbal, do lead to local responses, typically to elaborations of some point made, as in a response given to Q 12 ('is dog showing a sport?'):

Example 5-8

I: ... even if they give you a trophy, they're really for the person and not the dog.

GP: {{Oh really.

I: Mm, nine out of ten they are.}}¹

I personally object to that, you know. I'd prefer them to give me a dog brush or a year's supply of food or some such thing or a nice winter coat for the dog or something like this.}}²

But I could never refer to it as a sport myself. ... (text continues)

There is no way of knowing whether the local response to the reaction of surprise extends only to the clause immediately following the reaction, i.e. is constituted by reaction¹, or up to but not including the boundary marker *but* at which point the speaker explicitly returns to the elicitation question, i.e. is constituted by reaction².

Although the extent of a local response to a reaction may be just as difficult to determine as that to an interpolation, the fact of the interviewer's 'interference' via a reaction will be ignored here since it is neither a contribution to a dependently nor a jointly produced text (see also Section 5.4.2.2.1 for discussion of joint text). In other words, local responses to a reaction will simply be abstracted from the text and ignored.

5.3.3.3 Summary of coding SLC 5

(Interference with Elicitation Process)

Interference with the elicitation process by the interviewer resulted in a total number of 38 responses *not* obtained, i.e. not found comparable as texts. This category of potential sources of a lack of comparability is thus the largest among the three subcategories which focus on the interviewer, accounting for 46% of the total number of responses

coded SLC 3 – 5.³⁴ Of the 38 responses affected by interference, Q 4 ('tell about whelping') accounts for eight and I 6 for four responses.

In a sense the explanation for the disproportionately large number of SLC 5 codings for the elicitation question and the interviewee is probably the same, viz. an unusually high degree of negotiation between interviewer and interviewee. But while a propensity to negotiate the interaction must probably be explained in terms of individual personality in the case of the interviewee, in the case of the elicitation question such a propensity reflects back on the question itself. A question which is in some sense awkward, is based on false assumptions, betrays a lack of genuine knowledge of field and thus of its predictability, etc., is likely to result in a great degree of negotiation, something which conflicts with the objectives of the data design.

Q 4 ('tell about whelping') is such a question: In almost every whelping complications are encountered yet it asks after the routine whelping. Paradoxically, whelpings are also seen as routine on simply biological grounds yet the question asks after an account 'from beginning to end'. Furthermore, by asking after the last instance of a 'problem-free' whelping, the question creates a problem of memory since for some interviewees such a whelping is a long time off. But to reiterate a point that has been made repeatedly: Not being able to obtain a comparable text is not in the least synonymous with not obtaining talk – Q 4 is only once found inapplicable to the interviewee.

5.4 Interview as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)

The interview, i.e. the context of situation within which it takes place, is held responsible for two distinct causes of a lack of comparability which both result in a 'zero-text', viz. (i) where the response is given by a partner who happens to be present at the interview (coded SLC 6); and (ii) where a response is interrupted in various

³⁴Although the interviews forming the basis of Brenner's (1981) study are survey interviews rather than sociolinguistic ones, and are thus clearly not directly comparable, the total proportion of questions whose wording was 'significantly' or 'completely' altered by the six interviewers studied was about 14% out of an actual 1784 Q-A sequences (Brenner 1981: 28ff). This result compares with 5.8% of questions altered in this study on the basis of 38 texts not having been obtained out of a possible total of 650. Once again, the comparability of these results is at best approximate. Nevertheless, results such as these, coming as they do from interviews where interviewers are trained to ask questions invariantly, i.e. in survey interviews, or alert to the dangers of questioning variation, i.e. in the interviews in this study, should make us suspicious of unsupported claims that a given interviewer's behaviour was 'essentially' invariant, i.e. that any variation in questioning was without effect on the texts elicited and thus did not contribute to any statistical bias affecting the sampling. (Cf. Horvath's 1985: 135 criticism of Linde 1974: 62 for making just such a claim.) Whereas the biasing effects may have been minimal in the traditional dialect survey (cf. Kurath's 1939: 148 claim that there had been 'relatively few instances where field workers differ[ed] from each other in some important respect in their manner of putting the question'), these are likely to be far from insignificant in studies focusing on text.

ways, either by a partner or by some other third party, some event, some mechanical cause, etc., (coded SLC 7).

| SLC | Code | Focus | Cause |
|-----------|------|-------|--|
| interview | 6 | R | given by partner |
| interview | 7 | R | interrupted by third party or some event |

The results of coding the interviews for the two sources of a lack of comparability which can be grouped together under the heading of ‘interview’ are presented in Table 5-3:

Table 5-3: Interview as source of lack of comparability

| SLC # | Question # | | | | | | | | | | | | | ‘Zero’ Responses | |
|-------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|---------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | no. | % of all zero Rs |
| 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 6 % |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 20 | 9 % |
| | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 34 | 15 % |

A total of 34 responses are coded SLC 6–7, which together account for 15% of all potential responses which did not result in texts suitable for quantitative analysis. The categories focusing on the interview constitute the third-largest source of a lack of comparability in the corpus of texts. The categories SLC 6 and SLC 7 themselves rank seventh and fourth respectively among the coding categories overall. They are discussed in the remainder of Section 5.4 below.

5.4.1 Response Given By Partner

Responses which are given by a partner, whether that partner is also an interviewee, as in the cases of interviewees 6–7 and 34–35, or whether merely present at the interview, are coded SLC 6. If the partner is one of those two who themselves acted as interviewees in a subsequent interview, then their responses are coded as given by the second interviewee.

The presence of partners, and their contributions, interruptions, promptings, etc., are unavoidable just as interruptions due to the domestic setting of the interview are. Most contributions by partners and other third parties are coded as interference of one

kind or another, i.e. coded SLC 7. The two pairs of interviewees mentioned above show the largest number of elicitation questions answered by a partner, thereby reducing the efficiency of the interview as a method of collecting texts.

An additional problem with interviewing partners is that if both are present at any time of one or the other's interview, a number of questions in the schedule simply become impossible of being asked 'a second time'. For example, asking a question a second time which ostensibly seeks to elicit information to increase the interviewer's knowledge of the dog fancy, such as Q 9 ('explain dog showing'), would either be seen as a peculiar lapse of memory on the interviewer's part or alert the interviewees to the existence of a hidden agenda of elicitation questions. However, it is again a reflection of the tacit rules of the interaction as interview, and of their acceptance by interviewees, that not one of the partners in the two pairs of interviewees affected a response by interrupting.

5.4.2 Interruption by a Third Party or Some Event

Interruptions of a response being given by the interviewee, whether they are deliberate ones made by the interviewee's partner or some other third party present, or whether they are more or less accidental interruptions due to a whole range of causes, are coded SLC 7. But not all interruptions which cause the interviewee to suspend a response are necessarily coded SLC 7, leading to the exclusion of the elicited response as a 'codable' text. Many interruptions due to the domestic setting of the interview, e.g. interruptions by a child, a phone call, etc., which are not intended to contribute to the response, do not affect the response as a potentially codable text at all.

5.4.2.1 Inconsequential Interruptions

The interviewee often succeeds in resuming the response at the exact point where it had been interrupted, especially when the interruption is brief. This is often signalled by making a link with the interrupted text via a repetition of the last word uttered before being interrupted:

Example 5-9

I: ... well, then they don't get one. And also-
Help: {{Excuse me, did you want the spare room done today?
I: No, you can leave that till next week.}}
Also, when people come ... (text continues)

Such interruptions are like the local responses to a reaction discussed in 5.3.3.2 above in that they can be abstracted from the text and ignored as a source of a lack of comparability.

They differ from reactions in that they are not only outside the text but also outside the text's context in any theoretically interesting way. They belong not to the 'context of situation' in the sense of that being a theoretical construct but are instead part of the physical setting of the situation in the same way as is someone speaking in the next room, i.e. someone who can be overheard but is not part of the context relevant to the construction of the text in an interaction between interviewer and interviewee (cf. Halliday & Hasan 1976:21; Hasan 1980).

5.4.2.1.1 Asides

Interviewees are not only interrupted, however, in some sense they also interrupt themselves by making ASIDES which generically lie outside the text but are part of the text's context of situation. For example, as part of the response to Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?'), one speaker steps right out of the description being produced and addresses herself to the interviewer:

Example 5-10

... But then, my dogs are outside. She does sleep in occasionally. ... But the puppies are outside.
{{I will let you see them.}}
I normally let her whelp in the garage. ... (text continues)

Such an aside relates directly to the elicitation context, acknowledging the interviewer not so much as hearer but as a visitor unfamiliar with, but presumably interested in, the physical properties of the context of situation. Like reactions and local responses, prompts, interpolations and other 'interruptions' which can generally be abstracted from the text, asides can usually be ignored as a source of a lack of comparability. Asides *to* the interviewer contrast with acknowledgments *of* the interviewer, especially

via the elicitation question to which a text is a response, since these are best considered part of a text's Beginning ^ Middle ^ End structure (see Section 5.6.2 for discussion). (Cf. Sinclair & Coulthard 1975:38ff for their discussion of asides by the teacher in the classroom as 'commentary on the discourse'.)

5.4.2.1.2 Prompts

Yet another type of interruption are PROMPTS, which are more like interpolations rather than reactions in that they are concerned with information. This is either being demanded of a partner by the interviewee or offered by the partner to the interviewee. Not only do partners prompt in the conventional sense, i.e. 'help' the speaker complete what he is saying as conversationalists generally do, they may also provide information deemed relevant by the partner at some point during the interviewee's response, whether the information is needed, or indeed wanted, by the interviewee or not. Such prompts are typically accepted by interviewees, the prompt in the conventional sense often being repeated word-perfectly as in example 5-11:

Example 5-11 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 29)

- I: ... And we then made, through a series of meetings, made arrangements to meet a breeder who would supply us with one and we obtained our first dog ...
- Partner: {{Eight years ago last Christmas.}}
- I: ... eight years ago last Christmas.

On the other hand, interviewees often solicit information from their partners as in example 5-12:

Example 5-12 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 10)

- I: Now this dog, he was only a young dog.
((Addressed to partner:))
{{He'd be about six months old? When he done it? Six, seven months old?
- Partner: Six to eight months old.}}
- I: Yeah, I think about six or seven months he was when he done it. Now, he couldn't reach up ... (text continues)

Prompts of this kind can generally be abstracted from the elicited response and treated as interpolations. As such, they are not deemed sources of a lack of comparability of the corpus texts.

5.4.2.2 Destructive Interruptions

Other interruptions, especially those requiring the speaker's full attention, clearly interrupt the response as a text realising an instance of some generic type as in example 5-13. (The 'codable' part of the response to Q 13 was elicited by a further question by the interviewer and is therefore included in the corpus.)

Example 5-13 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 11)

- GP: Commitment¹
Have you as an exhibitor ever had a big exciting success which came as a total surprise?
- I: R¹
Oh yes, I've had best exhibit in-show.
- GP: Commitment²
And you wouldn't 've expected it at the time?
- I: R²
Oh no, I wasn't expecting it at all.
- GP: Cue
What happened?
- I: R^{3a}
Well, I'd gone to a country show- ((1st interruption by child))
- R^{3b}
That's what I said afterwards, "If you only knew that you were going to win these sort of things, you could enjoy it all day." ((2nd interruption by child))
- R^{3c}
But

The interviewee's responses R¹ to R³ could not be said to constitute a response to Q 10 as attempted to be elicited by the interviewer's Cue since the account *introduced* with R^{3a} *Well, I'd gone to a country show* and *concluded* with R^{3b} *That's what I said afterwards* ... is never told. While R^{3a} has all the hallmarks of the Orientation to a narrative-type text, and R^{3b} those of an Abstract, the narrative-type text itself must be considered interrupted. This interpretation is supported by the resumption after the child's second interruption R^{3c} with the typical boundary marker *but*, with which the entire response to Q 10 fades out.

Similarly, interruptions of the recording process itself always lead to the response being coded SLC 7 since the basic requirement of a quantitative analysis must be to compare like with like and not fragments of texts with complete texts. It is somewhat

paradoxical that tape recordings for the purpose of studying grammatical and semantic variation need in certain respects to be of a better quality than those made for the study of phonological variation. Not only do phonological units occur far more frequently than grammatical and semantic units, the latter are also of a larger size than the former and any loss of intelligibility of the part of a unit must lead to the loss of the whole unit for the purpose of analysis. The fact that the frequency of a unit's occurrence stands in inverse relation to its size, i.e. that there are fewer texts than clauses, and fewer clauses than groups, etc., only compounds the problem of comparability.

5.4.2.2.1 Jointly Produced Texts

Far less clear as far as the implications for comparability are concerned, and thus for inclusion in a corpus of texts, are those interruptions which, arguably, prevent the response from being completed by the interviewee. For example, if the response being given appears to be of a narrative type generically, then, following the model of narrative structure suggested by Labov & Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972b), an interruption which, say, has the consequence of the text ending with a Complication, may be deemed to be incomplete since a Coda could have been expected to be produced, however optional an element that might be considered to be. The text reproduced as example 5-14 offers clear evidence that an interruption may lead to an incomplete text on those grounds:

Example 5-14

GP: What's your favourite story about your dogs?

I: Abstract
Probably the fact that my mother-in-law was terrified of them, although she'd had a cattle dog.

Orientation
And my husband's sister said, "Look, don't go near those dogs when you go down there!"

Complication
And we had to go to a funeral. And the dog came in and stood quite near to my mother-in-law.

Resolution
And then it wasn't very long afterwards, my mother-in-law was sitting here and the dog came in and sat on her knee.

Coda

Now, this is this vicious cattle dog. She came-

Partner: I took a photo of her and the wife – she was sitting on her knee, too.³⁵

I: Yeah, you know, there's just a few. I don't know about favourite ones. But that one was good.

Rather than resume the Coda, the interviewee continues with a Completion, which is characterised by a return to the context of the narrating, i.e. the context of the elicitation itself, and realised by an explicit reference to the elicitation question. It is of course not being argued here that every narrative-type text would in fact end with a Coda if given the opportunity but merely that where there is evidence that a Coda was about to be produced, as in 5-14 above, the cutting-off of that Coda leads to an incomplete text. The same argument applies to the interruption of any other element typically ending a text, such as a Resolution, Conclusion, Completion, Reorientation, etc.

The text reproduced as 5-14 could of course be considered a jointly produced text, albeit one which suffers from an interruption which will not easily be accounted for in terms of a generic structure. In this study, however, the whole text is deemed incomplete due to the incomplete realisation of the Coda and it will therefore not be included in the corpus.

A jointly produced text which is complete by reference to its generic structure, a response to Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'), is given in example 5-15. Like the majority of the responses to Q 1, this text also recounts the gradual process of getting involved in dogs as one that begins with the acquisition of a pet and ends with considering it a show specimen with which to breed. Every such recount, in the sense of Martin & Rothery (1981), faces the problem of 'getting off' the seemingly endless train of events leading to the present time by finding an end which doubly signals that the question has been answered, i.e. which signals both that the point of the telling has been made and that the response has ended. This could be a generic problem since the field events would appear to allow the speaker to grind on endlessly and without making the point necessary to turn a potentially boring account of getting from A to B into one that is both informative *and* entertaining. (In fact, recounts are almost never the simple-minded accounts one might expect them to be – the closest speakers ever

seem to get to a boring list of temporally sequenced events is in the so-called PROCEDURE; see Section 6.2.1.)

Example 5-15

- I: Orientation
We went in with the intention of buying a pet. Well, originally
...
((some 50 clauses later))
Record
... but in the meantime we had two other. We picked up a
line because for his services we charged a puppy of the
litter.
- Partner: In the meantime we were showing him. When he was three
months old, the breeder asked us if we'd show him. So we
said, yes, well, if he was worth it. You know, I thought, well,
if he was good enough, he deserves a chance.
- Reorientation
So we went and *HE* liked it and *I* liked it, so we just sort of
stuck. He loves it.

The partner nimbly picks up the textual connective *in the meantime* and redirects the response away from the succession of events which undoubtedly would lead the story to the present time eventually and instead picks out what was crucial to 'getting involved' – showing dogs, and loving it.

The generic unity of the perfectly seamless text in 5-15 is achieved by the Reorientation which the interviewee's partner produces as the most appropriate ending to a text developed as a recount. It is made possible by the fact that the co-narrators share both the field events which are being related as well as the cultural meanings which allow them to combine forces in a single representation of their experiences. That such sharing need not result in the felicitous completion of a text of course is demonstrated by 5-14. And in respect of the felicitously completed 5-15, it is worth noting that while the main character in this recount, viz. the *we* pertaining to the partners, is maintained by the new speaker in the first few clauses of the Reorientation – the currently speaking partner's *I* is as heavily stressed as the reference *HE* to the previously speaking one – the fact that the text is concluded by a switch of characters to the silenced partner, stating his current attitude to the involvement in dogs in what almost amounts to a Coda, may well imply an acknowledgment that it is *his* text after

³⁵The hilarious ambiguity of *she was sitting on her knee, too* is of course not noticed during the interaction at all – yet another example of the 'alienation' from speech suffered by an analyst when working with transcribed data.

all. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency for interactants, just as for the interviewer in this study, to join in the production of a text at a late stage, completing it just as interactants complete grammatical units whether or not there is any indication that such intervention is desired or warranted.

5.4.2.3 Summary of coding SLC 7

(Interruption by Third Party or Some Event)

Interruption by a third party or some event resulted in a total of 20 responses *not* obtained, i.e. not found comparable as texts. This category of potential sources of a lack of comparability is thus the larger of the two subcategories which focus on the interview situation, accounting for 59% of the total number of responses coded SLC 6–7. Most of the interruptions are in fact caused by a third party, typically by the partner, and not by external events. Of the 20 responses affected by interruption, Q 13 (‘what do you think of children in showing?’) accounts for six and I 19 for five responses.

The ostensible cause of the disproportionately large number of SLC 7 codings for this particular elicitation question and interviewee is an unusually high degree of cooperation between interviewee and partner. I 19 and his partner in the dog fancy, i.e. his wife in this particular case, simply treated the interview as a joint undertaking despite the fact that it was in every respect set up to be with one person only, e.g. by the organisation of the recording itself. There is obviously little that can be done to change such an orientation. For these speakers, a question such as Q 13 (‘what do you think of children in showing?’) merely reinforced the appropriateness of behaving in this way: Since they had children who could be involved in dog showing if they so chose, they quite naturally did have strong opinions on this matter.

If Q 13 had the effect of drawing (typically married) partners into the interview quite generally, it was not only for the obvious reason that such an issue might be of concern for people with children of their own but also because of what might be called an ideology underlying people’s involvement in the dog fancy itself. Time and again dog fanciers asserted that the main value of an involvement in dog breeding & showing was that ‘it kept the family together’, i.e. that it was an interest which adults and children could pursue together. Quite tellingly, this opinion was just as often voiced by people with children, whether still at home or not, as by single people. As far as the objectives of the interview are concerned, Q 13 is not an ideal question since it tends to

bring about the very interference by a partner the data design aims to exclude. This elicitation question is thus similarly dysfunctional as Q 14 ('your views on big city dog problem'): Whereas Q 14 was found inevitably to lead to talk by both interviewee and interviewer, i.e. to a genuine conversation if not discussion, Q 13 was found to tend to lead to a joint response by interviewee and partner.

5.5 Interviewee as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)

The interviewee is held responsible for a lack of comparability (coded SLC 8) either on the grounds of dismissing the question as trivial, resulting in a 'zero-response', or on the grounds of having misunderstood the question and thus appearing to be 'not answering the question', resulting in a 'zero-text'.

| SLC | Code | Focus | Cause |
|-------------|------|-------|---|
| interviewee | 8 | R | Q dismissed as trivial or Q misunderstood |

The results of coding the interviews for the 'interviewee' as the source of a lack of comparability are presented in Table 5-4:

Table 5-4: Interviewee as source of lack of comparability

| SLC # | Question # | | | | | | | | | | | | | 'Zero' Responses | |
|-------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | no. | % of all zero |
| Rs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 7 % |

A total of 16 responses are coded SLC 8, which account for 7% of all potential responses which did not result in texts suitable for quantitative analysis. As a major category, 'interviewee' constitutes the smallest source of a lack of comparability in the corpus of texts. As a single category, it ranks sixth among a total of nine categories, i.e. it is not an important source of a lack of comparability of potential texts.

5.5.1 Dismissing the Elicitation Question as Trivial

The classic dismissal of an elicitation question as too trivial to warrant a response is illustrated in examples 5-16 – 17:

Example 5-16 (Q 10)

- GP: Commitment
Have you ever gained a really surprising success in a show? One that you never expected, that came out of the blue?
- I: R¹
I had a reserve challenge in the Sydney Royal. That was- I suppose, that was unexpected.
- GP: Cue
What happened?
- I: R²
Oh we- I was, you know, I got- My dog was reserve challenge, that was all. ((laughs))

Example 5-17 (Q 9)

- GP: Would you explain to me what you have to do when you show a dog? When you go in the showing area?
- I: Oh, all you got to do is stand them up and run around in triangle. That's all there is to it.

The finality of *that's all* concludes a type of response which it is hard to accept as comparable to those responses which elaborate beyond a mere confirmation that some experience does indeed apply, i.e. in 5-16, but that it is not worth elaborating on, i.e. in 5-17.

Two slightly elaborated responses illustrate the difficulty of distinguishing between a dismissal of the elicitation question and a minimal response which nevertheless answers the question.

Example 5-18 (Q 4)

- GP: Could you tell me what took place during that delivery, sort of from when she started till she was finished?
- I: Well, she just had a normal pregnancy and she had the puppies herself ... and we raised them. We didn't keep any ourselves, we raised them all.

Example 5-19 (Q 3)

- GP: Could you tell me what it is that alerts you in your dogs? What your dogs do?
- I: They just get very agitated and restless. They can't find where they want to sit, and they're very upset and just generally agitated really.

While both responses perhaps imply by their use of the adjunct *just* that the events related are insignificant, the response in 5-18 never answers the question at all and is

similar to 5-16 and 5-17 in that it dismisses the question in the single clause *she had the puppies herself* and then goes on to recount events that lie outside those addressed by the question. The response in 5-19, on the other hand, does answer the question, albeit also in the single clause *They just get very agitated and restless*, and then elaborates this description in a single clause complex consisting of two clauses. What 5-19 does not do is give any real indication of dismissing the question.

For the purposes of this study, a more important consideration in deciding whether or not a question has been dismissed is whether the response is amenable to a description in terms of a generic structure. The point here is *not* whether the response meets our expectations on the basis of the question asked but whether a generic description is possible at all, something that may be doubted in the case of 5-19 but not in the case of example 5-20:

Example 5-20 (Q 2)

GP: Commitment

You must be breeding with some ideal in mind?

I: R¹

Yeah, well, we're trying to get another little boy or little girl like our big boy. Because he's the tops.

GP: Cue

How would you describe him?

I: R²

Observation

He's the king.

Comment

To my appearances, he's the king. We call him the king. There's not been any staffords around that can knock him off his pedestal.

While 5-20 is even more minimal than 5-16 – 19, it is clearly a generically perfectly good response: It would appear that while the more conventional description is experientially focused, a description such as 5-20 is essentially interpersonally focused and is thus more closely related to the observation/comment genre described by Martin & Rothery (1981). (This genre has been renamed observation in this study, and to be consistent the generic stage Observation in 5-20 should also be renamed Event Description; see fn. 2 in Section 4.1, as well as Section 6.2.2 for discussion of this genre.)

At a level of ‘information-giving’, for example, it may be said that the difference between descriptions is one of degree, not of kind, and that this applies both in respect of focus (experiential vs. interpersonal) and length (minimal vs. elaborated). The fact that the cue ‘describe’ may lead to types of responses that lie along continua of both kinds is evidence for this. The problem clearly is deciding when a generic account ceases to be fruitful. For example, while calling one’s favourite dog *king*, one’s primary school *awful*, or one’s apartment *terrific* may count as perfectly proper replies to the question *How would you describe ...?*, there is little doubt that such responses are not descriptions in the same sense as responses which provide some experiential information about the physical, psychological or even philosophical ‘make-up’ of some object. ‘Descriptions’ even more minimal than 5-19 or 5-20, such as simply responding with an *awful* or *terrific*, are really not capable of being accounted for in terms of a generic structure and should be excluded as codable texts, their obvious validity as responses to a question notwithstanding.³⁶

Evidence of three kinds permits us to argue that some of the minimal responses may at times be interpreted as being dismissive of the elicitation question: (i) a comparison with other responses to the same elicitation question shows them to be *not informative* (cf. Grice 1975); (ii) in terms of their generic structure they appear to be *fragments* at best; and (iii) evidence at the lexicogrammatical level, e.g. the dismissive *that’s all* and the restrictive *just*, shows them to consider the field events explored in the question as being *not reportable*.

5.5.2 Misunderstanding the Elicitation Question

The problem of an elicitation question being misunderstood has already been touched on in Section 5.3.3.2.2 in the context of the interviewer’s intervening in a response which did not seem to be answering the question. Such intervention, coded SLC 5, was clearly due to the interviewer’s acting as participant in the interview situation. In this section an attempt is made to consider the *relevance* of a response to a question from the point of view of the analyst approaching the recording of the interview.

If a ‘maxim of relevance’ (Grice 1975) does indeed govern the response to a question, how is irrelevance, i.e. the maxim’s being ‘flouted’ in Grice’s terms, to be

³⁶Such laconic responses to a question are adequately described in terms of adjacency pairing or some similar structural unit at a level of conversational structure, i.e. while they clearly enter into a structure with the question which gave rise to them, the application of the concept of generic structure both to an analysis of the adjacency pair in toto as well as to the second-pair part would appear to be a case of overkill.

demonstrated? It would appear that the non-application of such a maxim is as difficult to demonstrate with real data as it is with constructed examples since the problem lies in finding responses ‘that must be interpreted as irrelevant’ (Levinson 1983:111; emphasis in orig.). Such irrelevance may also be related to a dismissal of the question, as discussed above, or even to the rapid transition between topics noted by Labov. Consider the response in example 5-21:

Example 5-21 (Q 9)

- GP: Showing dogs is such a bewildering activity for outsiders. Could you explain to me what you do when you get to the show?
- I: Usually wander around and see people I haven’t seen for years. Wait for the breed to go in. I don’t really get too nervous, I don’t think. I don’t really know why I even go. I guess just to see if the judge feels the dog’s good or not. I often wonder why I do it. At the moment, with our trip to America coming up ... (text continues)

The response continues for a very long time without ever returning to the topic ‘dog show’. The response clearly drifts but the issue here is not the delimitation of the text but its determination as a relevant response. The first few clauses could conceivably qualify as the introductory part of a conventional explanation of showing yet at the same time the ‘off-handedness’ of the exophoric ellipsis in the opening clause *Usually wander around and ...* suggests that the speaker is really dismissive of the question as a serious request for an explanation of the rules of showing.

A second example points to the need to search for the causes of a presumed lack of relevance in the question itself: In example 5-22, the interviewer’s failure to adequately resolve an ambiguity seen by the interviewee but not foreseen by the interviewer leads to a seemingly irrelevant response.

Example 5-22 (Q 10)

- GP: Commitment
Have you ever had a really exciting win in a show that came totally out of the blue, totally as a surprise?
- I: R¹
Yeah.
- GP: Cue¹
What happened?
- I: R²
In respect of what did we win or ... the excitement?

GP: Cue²
Well, yeah ...

I: R³
Generally, we've got to the stage now where – or not just now, we've had it for a while – we realise that winners get trodden on. So we don't like to sort of- if we win something big, we try and keep it down a bit. But we've had a couple of really top wins and, you know, you don't know what to do. I'm running around on the spot because I'm nervous as anything, anyway. And I just go mad, you know. I sort of walk the wrong way, thank the wrong people. Everything around me is complete oblivion, you know. There's people can come up and sort of congratulate me and I haven't got the faintest who the hell they were, you know. And they have a shot at me later on and I got to apologise to a lot of people. But it's just a good, really good feeling. When you win something really big, and as long as you don't do it a real lot, you know, it can be enjoyable.

The response is clearly not an account of what happened when the interviewee had a big success, i.e. it is neither a narrative-type account of a particular happening nor an expository-type account of the emotional impact a particular win had on him. The response deals with winning, and the disorienting excitement of winning, as a generic event and as such it is clearly relevant to the question as reinterpreted by the speaker in the inconclusive negotiation of the elicitation question, i.e. in the exchange $\underline{R}^2 \wedge \underline{Cue}^2$. Although the response thereby defeats the expectations embodied in the data design, it cannot be deemed an irrelevant response to the question as interpreted.

A seeming lack of relevance may also be caused by a long lead-up to the field events explored by the question. By the time the speaker comes to the point, however, the actual elicitation question is forgotten. This is of course not an uncommon occurrence in daily conversation where a perhaps somewhat verbose respondent may make amends for a response felt not to have answered a co-conversationalist's question by saying *I'm sorry, I've forgotten what your question was*.

In response to Q 4 ('tell about whelping'), for example, one interviewee, after ascertaining that the actual whelping is addressed in the elicitation question, nevertheless starts the response with matters pertaining to mating, pregnancy, etc., and slowly progresses up to the point at which you know that she's due. The whelping itself is forgotten and Q 4 not repeated by the interviewer. The response is thus indeed technically irrelevant in terms of the data design although hardly illuminating of the flouting of a maxim to be relevant.

Examples of irrelevant responses which could not be explained as the result of a question being dismissed, misunderstood or forgotten by the interviewee, or as a rapid switch to another topic, are almost impossible to find. Speech act theorists enjoy ‘proving’ that with enough ingenuity in building up context or co-text, any sequence of clauses can be shown to be a possible, i.e. a coherent discourse (cf. Levinson 1983:111ff; 292; Edmondson 1981:12ff). No such contextualising is needed when the data is not only not invented but is also richly contextualised to begin with.

The problem of finding an irrelevant response is here seen as one for the analyst since the interviewer as participant in the interview at times does make the decision that a response is indeed irrelevant and intervenes (see Section 5.3.3.2.2). While the analyst brings his expectations of normal interactive behaviour to bear on the interaction after the fact, and makes judgments as to its success, it is next to impossible for him to *prove* irrelevancy. While the analyst may succeed in demonstrating what may have caused a participant in a conversation to decide that his co-participant was being irrelevant, this is not at all the same as proving that the response to a question actually was irrelevant.

To the extent that the concept of relevance as applied to a response can be said to be synonymous with the coherence of ‘a text’ constituted by a question and the response to it (see also Section 5.6.2), it is probably true that ‘both language users and language analysts use essentially the same procedures in its construction’ [i.e. the construction of a textual ‘unit’ in conversation – G.P.] (Schiffrin 1987:23-4). However, it is probably also true to say that due to the analyst being required to provide explicit grounds on which to decide the relevance of a response – or the lack thereof – criteria for doing so replicably are unlikely to be forthcoming.

5.5.3 Summary of coding SLC 8

(Q dismissed as trivial or Q misunderstood)

The total number of instances of the elicitation question being dismissed or misunderstood is only 16, the coding undoubtedly reflecting a desire to err on the side of caution. While Q 9 (‘explain dog showing’) attracted a relatively high rate of SLC 8 codings, no single interviewee scored higher than two. It is of some interest to speculate on the reasons for the relatively high rate for Q 9. At first sight this is puzzling since the dog show is without doubt the focal point of the dog fancy. The

contrast with the low rate for Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?'), however, brings out the generic focus of the elicitation question as a significant variable in the 'reportability' of field, a point already noted in connection with the routine events of Q 4 ('tell about whelping') and Q 7 ('tell about today's chores') (see Section 3.2.2). The field events aimed at in Q 9 ('explain dog showing') are not considered reportable by some interviewees in the form of an explanation or description, but demonstrably so in the form of a narrative-type text in response to Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?').

5.6 Analytical Techniques as Source of Lack of Comparability (SLC)

The analytical techniques available are held responsible for a lack of comparability (coded SLC 9) on the grounds of being unable to satisfactorily delimit a text as that part of an elicited response which answers the question. Most of the problems encountered are 'end' problems, typifying the 'drift' Horvath (1985) noted and happily glossed here by two interviewees as their inclination to *diversify*.

| SLC | Code | Focus | Cause |
|-----------------------|------|-------|------------------------|
| analytical techniques | 9 | R | beginning/end problems |

Such 'getting off the track' may occur at any point in a response, including the beginning, but as the discussions of the interviewer's intervention (Section 5.3.3.2.1) and of the difficulty of judging a response relevant (Section 5.5.2) showed, responses affected by drift are typically dealt with in the interview situation itself.

The issue discussed in this section is how to delimit a response after the event of its production, approaching the record of a response as analyst. For example, if a response does answer the question at some point but obviously no longer when it is ended, either by the interviewee or by the interviewer's intervention, on what grounds can some part of the response be delimited as constituting a text comparable to those in the corpus not beset by such an 'end' problem, and the 'remaining' parts of the same response be considered co-text? By contrast, the 'beginning' problem is mainly one of deciding what part of the response is to be considered part of the interview context and what part the (beginning of the) text.

The results of coding the interviews for problems of delimitation as the source of a lack of comparability are presented in Table 5-5. A total of 26 responses are coded

SLC 9, accounting for 11% of all potential responses which did not result in texts suitable for quantitative analysis. As a major category, ‘analytical techniques’ constitutes the second smallest source of a lack of comparability in the corpus of texts.

Table 5-5: Analytical techniques as source of lack of comparability

| SLC # | Question # | | | | | | | | | | | | | ‘Zero’ Responses | |
|-------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | no. | % of all zero |
| Rs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 26 | 11 % |

As a single category it ranks third, equal with ‘elicitation question forgotten’, among a total of nine categories, i.e. it is quite an important source of a lack of comparability of potential texts.

5.6.1 Delimitation of Text

The concept of ‘text’ as a semantic unit relies essentially on the notion of COHERENCE, i.e. on the view that a stretch of language which is coherent therefore displays a semantic unity:

A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive.

(Halliday & Hasan 1976:23)

Part of that coherence is the creation of patterns of generic structure which are produced by speakers and recognised by hearers, that is ‘language as the projection of a higher-level semiotic structure’ (Halliday 1977:193), which is an important part of this study.

The problem posed for this study at the point of gathering a corpus of comparable texts lies in how to proceed from the concept of text to identifying ‘a text’:

Meanwhile we should stress the essential indeterminacy of the concept of “a text”. ... A text, in the normal course of events, is not something that has a beginning and an ending. The exchange of meanings is a continuous process that is involved in all human interaction; it is not unstructured, but it is seamless, and all that one can observe is a kind of periodicity in which peaks of texture alternate with troughs – highly cohesive moments with³⁷ relatively little continuity. The discreteness of a literary text is untypical of texts as a whole.

(Halliday 1977:195)

Depending on the perspective on text taken by any given model, the delimitation of text matters to a greater or lesser extent, but a delimitation of some sort is always at least implicit, e.g. by reference to notions such as ‘completeness’ in Labov & Waletzky (1967) and Hasan (1979). The concept of a delimitable text is not confined to those approaches to text studies which operate with a concept of genre or text type; it is also found in the quite different approach of ethnomethodologists to ‘conversational analysis’ (cf. for example Schegloff & Sacks 1973 on the unit ‘single conversation’).

In the following discussion of beginning and end problems, the concept of genre will largely be relied on to demonstrate the problems and the solutions, if available, to them. It will not be possible to go into very detailed argument concerning all types of text which are beset by such problems since this would necessitate an analysis of all the genres represented in the corpus. The analysis of genre underlying the discussion in the rest of Section 5.6 is that presented in Chapter 3 as part of the basis of the data design. A more detailed discussion of the genres elicited in the interviews is presented in Chapter 6, such discussion focusing in particular on the genres elicited in response to the narrative-type questions in the interview schedule.

5.6.2 Identification of the Beginning of a Text

It has been an unstated assumption in the data design of this study that the beginning of the elicited response, and therefore in the unmarked case the beginning of the text, coincides with the interviewee’s first utterance after the last element of the elicitation question actually asked by the interviewer. This formulation of the assumption seeks to account for the difference between responses where the Cue is realised and those where it is not, as in examples 5-23 and 5-24:

³⁷The original has ‘of’ rather than ‘with’, a misprint which is corrected in Halliday 1978a: 137.

Example 5-23 (Q 6)

GP: Commitment

Have they ever been involved in an accident?

I: R¹

Well, no, she hasn't, but the little one was – she was hit with a car, the Foxy.

GP: Cue

What happened?

I: R²

Well, I was out watering ... (text continues)

Example 5-24 (Q 6)

GP: Commitment

Have any of yours ever been in an accident, let's say?

I: R

Yes, she got run over by- Tammy got run over by a car. One of those silly things, a door got left open ... (text continues)

Instead of confirming the assumption of a text's beginning as uncontroversial, 5-23 and 5-24 demonstrate that such an automatic identification of the interviewee's beginning of an extended, uninterrupted response with the beginning of the text, i.e. a text that can be said to be comparable with all other texts in the corpus, is misleading. While 5-23 has an Abstract in R¹, which would lie outside the text's boundaries on the basis of the unstated assumption concerning beginnings, 5-24 has an equivalent Abstract as part of the text to be included in the corpus.

Elicitation questions of the danger-of-death type, which come with a ready-made Abstract so to speak, may lead to an affirmative response to the Commitment, which in itself may then be seen to function as the Abstract of the subsequent text, i.e. typically of a narrative-type text:

Example 5-25 (Q 10)

- GP: Commitment
Have you ever had a surprising success at a show ... (continues)?
- I: R¹
Yes.
- GP: Cue
What happened?
- I: R²
Oh, we went down to- it was twelve months ago ... (text continues)

Almost invariably, however, when the element Commitment of the interview question leads directly to the giving of an extended response, an Abstract is produced which in some way incorporates the experience aimed at in Commitment:

Example 5-26 (Q 10)

- GP: Commitment
Have you ever had a surprising success at a show ... (continues)?
- I: R
As an absolute total surprise, I can tell you. It happened to me last Easter and up to this day I still not have got over it. It was with my ... (text continues)

Most generally put, beginning problems are due to the negotiation of the question and the response to it. The examples used to demonstrate such negotiation have been drawn from elicitation questions which aimed to elicit narrative-type texts. This is no accident since such negotiation is typically found in the context of narrative questions while questions aiming to elicit expository-type texts are typically responded to without further ado, provided they are responded to at all, of course. It appears to be the case that narrative-type texts have a status which sets them clearly, even self-consciously, apart from the ongoing discourse in some way so that a response to a narrative question needs to be marked as such.

Expository-type texts, on the other hand, are seemingly far more part of the ongoing discourse itself and as a result are less consciously marked out as a semiotic artefact realised in language. However, this does not in the least imply that expository-type texts are less well-structured generically than narrative-type texts as may be seen from example 5-27:

Example 5-27 (Q 12)

GP: Commitment

It's been suggested to me by other breeders that they consider dog showing a sport.

Cue

I wonder what your view of that is?

I: EXPOSITION

Thesis

Well, I think it's a sport.

Argument (1)³⁸

It's a sport because you're competing. You're competing against ... one dog against another. You're bringing out under the judge what you consider to be the best of what you've bred – this is in theory anyway – and you're competing with that animal against dogs that other people have bred.

Conclusion (1)

And in that respect I think it's very much a sport.

Argument (2)

There are prizes, such as in other sports are offered. It's an international thing – you can get judges from overseas, you get dogs imported from overseas.

Conclusion (2)

So, I think it's very much a sport.

There is obviously no difficulty here in identifying the beginning of a stretch of discourse as the response-to-the-question with the speaker's first utterance in a sequence of uninterrupted utterances. The implicit assumption concerning the beginnings of texts stated above is generally justified in responses to expository questions, certainly as far as the negotiation of elicitation questions is concerned. The absence of a beginning problem caused by negotiation of the question in the case of expository-type texts is paradoxical: It is the relative lack of generic status such texts have as texts apart from the ongoing discourse which leads to their production as 'simply' the response to the question. Expository-type texts, however structured they may be generically, are not recognised by speakers as semiotic artefacts in the same way narrative-type texts are.

Before pursuing the specific beginning problems encountered in the context of expository questions, which are problems of *continuity* (see below), beginning problems caused by the negotiation of the elicitation question, which are problems of

³⁸The same generic stage will be numbered sequentially if realised recursively, and may be otherwise glossed as to its status if abandoned, continued, resumed, preliminary, final, etc.

discontinuity, deserve to be explored in some more detail. The negotiation is largely responsible for an often observed discontinuous realisation of a text in terms of its generic structure, as in example 5-28:

Example 5-28 (Q 10)

- GP: Commitment
Can you think of a surprising success at a show ... (continues)?
- I: R¹
I can tell you about a failure.
- GP: 'Cue'
Yes, that [would-
- I: R²
That would]³⁹ be even better.
- R³
Well, we had ... (text continues)

The interviewee offers a change in experiential focus, awaits the interviewer's response and rapidly completes his assent with a prompt in terms of the discussion in Section 5.4.2.1.2 above. It is the interviewee's choice of making his response R¹ to the element Commitment, i.e. *I can tell you about a failure*, part of the negotiation which assigns it the status of lying outside the text as it will be defined here for the purpose of achieving textual comparability. However, not all instances of discontinuity constitute a problem in terms of achieving textual comparability since some instances of discontinuity are simply due to some of the types of interruption, including self-interruption, discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.4. In 5-28, for example, the prompt R² *That would be even better* could simply be disregarded as was argued in Section 5.4.2.1.2 above.

Discontinuity nevertheless at times leads to problems of textual interpretation since it provides the 'opportunity' for a seemingly new start as in example 5-29:

Example 5-29 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 09)

- GP: What about the very opposite of the disasters? I mean, the funny incident – everyone seems to have-
- I: R¹
Noo, I haven't got much to ... You know, I could probably put me mind to think about it but ...

³⁹Overlapping speech is indicated by being enclosed in square brackets, opening and closing brackets being placed on their respective lines rather than extending vertically across two or more lines.

R²

Narrative-type text

Well, we've had funny incidents with the dogs, you know. That particular one the pound picked up, she was the character, she was the one that had the brains. You could read her mind, she was really a character. She used to try you to the limit. If she could get out that front door, she'd go, you know. The rotten thing got out one day not long after we'd- ((laughs))

R³

Aside

Yeah, it's funny, it can get people going, can't it, when you start to think about it.

R⁴

'Background'

This particular dog, she was the second one. When the first one got killed, my wife was carrying the second baby. We said, "What do we do? Do we get out of it or do we get another one?" So we said, "Oh well ...". So we popped in the car, rang Melbourne and drove to Melbourne and got another dog. So ... mad really, but that's what we did.

R⁵

Narrative-type text

But I used to take this thing up the- Old Tammy, I used to take her up the hill, up behind where we lived in Canberra. And take her for a walk and I tried to get her to run ... (text continues)

The narrative-type text in response to the elicitation question is clearly begun in R² but interrupted with the aside in R³. The problem is whether R⁴ constitutes a return to the text or a further, yet different, interpolation which can be ignored and abstracted. Such an interpretation would not be unreasonable since the 'background' material offered in R⁴, the circumstances of the acquisition of the canine heroine of the text in question, is hardly necessary to the comprehension of the text. But not only does the speaker offer this information, constituting an Orientation of a more general kind than the Orientation given at the beginning of R⁵ with *I used to take her up the hill* etc., a decision to ignore R⁴ would once again pose the same problems pertaining to the inclusion or otherwise of the Abstract in R² as discussed above.

A re-representation of 5-29 as example 5-29a, with the aside in R³ and the abandoned clauses at the end of R² and the beginning of R⁵ edited out, shows the overall well-formedness of the narrative response:

Example 5-29a

NARRATIVE

Abstract

Well, we've had funny incidents with the dogs, you know. That particular one the pound picked up, she was the character, she was the one that had the brains. You could read her mind, she was really a character. She used to try you to the limit. If she could get out that front door, she'd go, you know.

Orientation (1)

This particular dog, she was the second one. When the first one got killed, my wife was carrying the second baby. We said, "What do we do? Do we get out of it or do we get another one?" So we said, "Oh well ...". So we popped in the car, rang Melbourne and drove to Melbourne and got another dog. So ... mad really, but that's what we did.

Orientation (2)

Old Tammy, I used to take her up the hill, up behind where we lived in Canberra. And take her for a walk and I tried to get her to run ... (text continues)

In this case, the decision to include R² follows from the decision to recognise R⁴ as part of the narrative-type text, the discontinuous realisation of R² on account of a simple aside notwithstanding.

The importance of including, whenever possible, as part of the text to be coded a beginning which constitutes an Abstract may be illustrated with example 5-30 where such an Abstract is also offered as a changed focus on field, as in 5-28, yet without it being offered to be negotiated, thus *not* posing any problems of discontinuity.

Example 5-30 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 11/I 35)

GP: Commitment

Have you got a favourite story about your dogs ... (continues)?

I: R

Abstract

I have a heartbreak story.

This young dog here ... (text continues)

...

And that broke our hearts because ... (text continues)

Although not every text picks up the wording of its Abstract in its ending as explicitly as 5-30, the actual wordings being shown with dotted underline, the remarkably common occurrence of that phenomenon provides a further argument for including the Abstract as part of the text irrespective of its location.

The determination of a text's beginning, and especially of a narrative-type text's beginning likely to be affected by negotiation, needs to be sensitive to the elicitation question on generic grounds – undoubtedly the 'text' pertaining to any given question would be much more reliably defined as comprising both question and response. Unfortunately, this is not a feasible strategy in light of the variation found in the negotiation of the question. The strategy adopted in this study therefore was (i) to exclude the negotiation of question & response (cf. also Horvath 1985) and thus to identify as the beginning of the text the interviewee's continuous and uninterrupted response; (ii) include discontinuously realised stretches of the interviewee's response only where the fact of an interruption of the text can be established on generic grounds.

5.6.2.1 The Text as 'Intertext' with Reference to its Beginning

A separate category of beginning problems is constituted by two types of responses, viz. (i) those which seem at first not to be answering the question at all but which suddenly address themselves to the question specifically and explicitly; and (ii) those which appear to be answering the question from the first utterance in response to it but take an inordinantly long route to what was considered the 'point' of the elicitation question in the data design. If in the case of all previously discussed instances of beginning problems the crux was one of distinguishing between the text and the (elicitation) context within which it was embedded, in the case of what may be called 'delayed' responses to the elicitation question the crux is essentially one of distinguishing between the text as the response-to-the-question and some other text which is sequenced relative to it. Both these problems or cruxes of course pertain to the relationship between text and CO-TEXT.

Some of the difficulties posed by long lead-ups to the response-to-the-question have already been discussed above in the context of the interviewer's intervention in the response (Section 5.3.3.2.1) and also of the interviewee's dismissing or misunderstanding of the elicitation question (Sections 5.5.1-2). Below we will briefly illustrate some of the problems faced in abstracting text from an ongoing monologic stretch of discourse given in response to the elicitation question as that part which may be said to constitute the response-to-the-question.

In the case of responses which 'diverge' in some sense, interviewees often explicitly return to the elicitation question after some lengthy 'diversion'. Such a

diversion must itself be seen as a text standing in some relation to the one then about to be produced, but its relationship to the text is different from the text's relationship to the negotiation of the question, as in example 5-31:

Example 5-31 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 13)

GP: Commitment
What about a really funny incident? We talked about some of the disasters before.

I: R¹
Oh, it's funny to me with Betsy. We used to take her out on the race days and race her. She was funny in the way that she'd be so eager to get out and chase that fox lure. You know, they reckon they can't work out why they are at places but as soon as she realised why she was out there, I suppose she saw the fox skin, but she was so eager to get started.

GP: Are they normally raced?

I: No, we don't have that many races, really. The way we race them ... (text continues)

R²
... Oh, I had a funny little thing. Suppose it wasn't the funniest thing really that's ever happened. It hasn't been connected with our Foxy ... (text continues)

The speaker's *Oh, I had a funny little thing* makes a direct connection to the *funny incident* in the elicitation question and thereby announces the start of the response-to-the-question. Such overt lexicogrammatical marking thus allows for an unproblematic identification of the beginning of the text to be coded as the response. Consequently, the text produced as R¹ can be seen to constitute a different text from that produced as R². And while both texts are of course produced in response to the elicitation question, R¹ is not seen by the speaker as *the* response.

A variant of such explicit signalling of the beginning of the text intended as the response-to-the-question along the lines of the only thing was ... is often produced following a first denial of the Commitment. Such references to the question simply serve to announce the relevant part of the response, demarkating it from that which went before. What went before is either another, related, text as in 5-31 or text that is part of the elicitation context itself.

The 'intertextual' relationship between two such texts (Lemke 1985), in 5-31 between R1 and R2, is typically one of field, whereas that between the text functioning as the response-to-the-question and the elicitation context, via the (negotiation) of the

elicitation question, is additionally one of genre. Due to a narrative text's focus on 'text as semiotic artefact', narrative-type texts produced as response-to-the-question are not only *multiply* coded (cf. again Lemke 1985) but are so coded *explicitly*. As a result of this explicitness, their beginning after a delayed start, i.e. after text which does not constitute the response proper, is rarely in doubt.

On the other hand, expository-type texts, due to their lack of focus on 'text as semiotic artefact', tend not to highlight any part of the text given in response to the question as the 'response proper', as illustrated in example 5-32:

Example 5-32 (Q 9)

GP: Cue

Could you explain to me what it is that you actually have to do when you show a dog?

I: Organisation of the dog fancy with reference to judging

Yes, when a judge judges a dog he judges it- It's in his mind but to become a judge he's had to learn the standards of each breed that he's qualified to judge. And the dog show's broken up into six groups of dogs. And they're referred to as ... (text continues)

... So, if that judge only wants to specialise in hounds, he can qualify by learning the standards of every breed in the hound group. And he goes to classes and so on and he has to do some trial judging ... the same as any examination system really.

Preparation of the dog

So when- – they judge alphabetically – so when your breed is about to be judged, you get your dog ready. You know, you bathed him the day before or the morning of the show if you don't live far away ... (text continues)

... Because a dog show is really much the same as a beauty contest, really.

Show procedure

They then start calling the dogs in. And they'll start off from baby puppy class, which is from three to six months old, minor puppy class which is ... (text continues)

... And then he'll assess the six against each other in his mind and he'll place them accordingly. And that's how it's judged.

The response (partially) presented as 5-32 certainly constitutes some sort of explanation, perhaps more conventionally a description of virtually every aspect of dog showing. (The complete text, including the 'middle' of each of the three sections delimitable on field grounds not shown here, is very much longer.)

The issue here is, however, whether that description answers the question *What it is that you actually have to do when you show a dog?* as part of a more comprehensive description, or whether it is indeed the description aimed at in the elicitation question. It was commonly found that interviewees produced a procedural text explaining the routine of dog showing which was embedded in some much larger text, as in 5-32, without in any way highlighting or delimiting that part of the total response as the response-to-the-question. Even the two most ubiquitous markers of the beginning of a text functioning as the response-to-the-question, viz. the grammatical item *well*, typically functioning as boundary marker both at the level of conversational units and of units of generic structure, and much discussed in the literature (cf. R. Lakoff 1973; Halliday & Hasan 1976:269; Owen 1981; Levinson 1983 passim; Schiffrin 1987), and the prosodic feature of relative pitch height, which often delimits a text by a marked variation of pitch at the beginning and end (see Dressler 1972; Coulthard 1981; Gosling 1981), are rarely found in this situation. (Cf. also Halliday 1985c:229 (fn.) on the similar phenomenon of a speaker marking quoted speech prosodically by ‘a special voice quality’.)

As a result of the absence of any explicit marking of a ‘text within a text’, the longwinded, and at times perhaps even seemingly ‘pointless’ response, may have to be accepted as the response-to-the-question in its entirety on generic grounds with the ‘pointful’ part of the text only being able to be identified on the grounds of field.

5.6.3 Identification of the End of a Text

The unstated assumption of the data design concerning the beginning of a text to be coded as the response-to-the-question has no meaningful equivalent as far as the end of such a text is concerned. A possible ‘mechanical’, rather than functional, equivalent might be the beginning of the next question in a sociolinguistic interview based on an interview schedule. However, not only could such a principle of delimitation not do justice to the concept of text as a semantic unit, it would also not be applicable to an interview conducted in the style of an alternately monologic and dialogic interaction.

Identifying the end of a text presents us with a problem that is in many ways the reverse of that pertaining to beginnings: The interviewee is almost solely responsible for ending a text while the interviewer has considerable responsibility for a beginning via the elicitation question; there are many more end markers available than markers of

beginnings; and while narrative-type texts are seemingly marked more clearly for endings than expository-type texts, i.e. being exactly like beginnings in this respect, narrative-type texts are in fact more likely to continue beyond what appeared to be their end than expository-type texts do – without this, however, necessarily creating end problems; see Section 5.6.3.1 below.

Many responses are quite unambiguously ended by the interviewee, a number of common ‘end markers’ helping to identify the end of the text as response-to-the-question. The most unambiguous of these are formulaic endings, whose meanings typically are indexical of the meaning of the text as a whole. For example, in the traditional fairy tale the end marker together with a complementary beginning marker frame the narrative text:

Example 5-33

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Beginning</u> | Once upon a time ... |
| <u>Middle</u> | |
| <u>End</u> | And they lived happily ever after. |

The boundary markers in the fairy tale are exclusively associated with the fairy tale and thus index the enclosed text generically, both prospectively and retrospectively.

Although in spontaneously produced oral texts of all types identifiable endings are optional (cf. Dressler 1972), and thus are unlikely to achieve indexical strength, they are probably most common, and also most reliably functioning as endings, in narrative-type texts:

Example 5-34

- (a) And this was it.
- (b) It was just one of those things.
- (c) That’s how it started.
- (d) That was probably the funniest incident / the best success / the greatest surprise.

All four examples share in common a feature of ‘extended reference’, i.e. reference that ranges over a process or sequence of processes (Halliday & Hasan 1976:52); see also discussion in Chapter 8. Furthermore, it is specifically anaphoric reference rather than mere absence of cataphoric reference which so marks the end of a text (cf. Dressler 1972:62). As well, examples 5-34c and 5-34d pick up some lexical element in the elicitation question, 5-34c clearly Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’) and 5-34d Q 8

(‘what happened in funny incident?’) and Q 10 (‘what happened in surprising success?’) respectively. Expository-type texts are equally ended with formulations which share some of the features common to endings of narrative-type texts, such as those in example 5-35:

Example 5-35

- (a) It’s an ideal. I have yet to see one. (Q 2: ‘describe ideal dog’)
- (b) I think it’s a sport. It’s a sport to me. (Q 12: ‘is dog showing a sport?’)

However, none of the examples in 5-34 – 35 necessarily functions as the end in some particular text – it is in the nature of non-indexical endings (and non-indexical wordings generally) that they can only be interpreted by recourse to all the evidence contained in the particular text of which they are a part.

The ‘potential point of completion’ (Gosling 1981) of a text is said to be marked by relatively low pitch complementary to the relatively high pitch marking the beginning of a text. In addition, silence following such a noticeable drop in pitch may also be an indication that the text is now considered completed by the speaker. For example, the ending cited as 5-35a does in fact *not* function as the end of that particular text despite the strongly implied finality of the wording. Instead, by way of repair, the speaker hastily proceeds with what can only be described as an afterthought:

Example 5-36

- Ending (1) It’s an ideal. I have yet to see one.↓
- Ending (2) They also got to hold their tail up. I strongly dislike tails that go right over the back. “Teapot curl.”↓... ..
((followed by 2 seconds’ silence))

There is a very marked drop in pitch on both *one* at the end of the first ending as well as on *teapot curl* at the end of the second and final ending. It is the additional long silence after the second ending which signals unambiguously that the text is now finally completed.

A further end marker, comparable to the prosodic ones of relative pitch and silence, is a lexicogrammatically realised self-confirmatory assertion of the validity of what has just been said (shown with dotted underline):

Example 5-37

- (a) And that's exactly what it is: sport and hobby combined. Yeah.
- (b) That is the most exciting thing. Mm. for sure.

Such assertions of validity are similar to a tag question which may end a text produced in the presence of a partner, except that tags solicit a confirmation of validity by the partner (shown with dotted underline):

Example 5-38

- (a) And then it went from there, didn't it?
- (b) That's how it got started, wasn't it?

Partners typically do not consider these tag questions an invitation to participate in the interview; commonly they merely nod their assent.

The function of such end markers is typically, and perhaps minimally, to signal that the text as response-to-the-question has been completed. But the end of a text may also be signalled by a return to the elicitation context, via an explicit (example 5-39a) or implicit (example 5-39b) reference to the elicitation question:

Example 5-39

- (a) I hope that answers your question.
- (b) So that was when she was a puppy but I was going to tell you something that happened to us not so long ago. ... (text continues)

And when linguistic and paralinguistic clues combine redundantly, i.e. when the ending of a response is coded multiply, the end of the text cannot be in doubt:

Example 5-40

End of text

... that to me is incredible↓

Return to elicitation context

But ... you caught me on the hop because there may be other things I just can't ...

The ending in 5-40 has a drop in pitch on *incredible*; this is followed by the boundary marker *but*; the boundary marker is reinforced by a following pause; and a change in voice quality from the rapid and excited delivery of the preceding text to the earnest, reflecting one of the elicitation context all combine to support the interpretation of *that to me is incredible* as the end of the text.

In summary, it may be said that a number of end markers typically combine to indicate the end of the text as the response-to-the-question: generically interpreted markers such as explicit completions of various kinds, ranging from formulaic and thus potentially indexical ones to those which can only be recognised as completions in context; implicit completions such as beginnings of co-text, i.e. either of elicitation context or a subsequent text; and textual markers such as falling pitch, ensuing silence, and assertions of ‘having answered the question’. However, neither the linguistic nor the paralinguistic markers discussed above are always reliable indicators of the end of a text, especially when only one or two such markers are realised.

5.6.3.1 The Text as ‘Intertext’ with Reference to its End

The major problem in identifying the end of a text concerns the need to distinguish between a text given as the response-to-the-question and some other text. In contrast to the usually clearly marked return to the elicitation context, the recognition of some stretch of text as constituting a text distinct from some other text, both being given in response to the elicitation question and therefore in some sense part of the response to the question, is highly problematic. Yet some recognition of ‘intertextuality’ is needed in an empirical, and quantitative, study such as this in order not to be forced to adopt the position that since all text can probably ultimately be shown to be related, discreteness cannot be recognised by the analyst – it most certainly is recognised by speakers and hearers (cf. Hasan 1979). Although all work on genre implies the delimitability of text, few attempts have been made to confront the problem of delimitability in the case of continuous text such as that found in conversation. In this study, it has been attempted to resolve the problem of intertextual discreteness via the concepts of genre and register, i.e. specifically field. (See also Ventola 1979; Burton 1980, 1981; Gregory & Malcolm 1981 for approaches to delimiting a text by reference to the concept of register in particular.)

One source of difficulty in identifying the end of a text derives from the organisation of the field events which are represented in text. This problem has already been discussed with reference to beginning problems, exemplified above in 5-32. The difficulty of marking, and consequently of recognising, the end of a text is particularly acute in the case of texts, such as a procedural text produced in response to Q 9 (‘explain dog showing’), which have a number of potential endings. A comparison of

several endings shows varying degrees of marking the end of the text, from essentially field-determined to essentially genre-determined:

Example 5-41

- (a) ... and then chooses which she prefers: first, second, third or whatever.
- (b) ... and then they just place you. But ... and that's about it.
- (c) ... and he'll place them accordingly. And that's how it's judged.

Whereas a text that closes with 5-41a could continue to relevantly answer the question by outlining the further stages of the knock-out competition the dog show is, a text that closes with 5-41b is unlikely to do so, and a text that closes with 5-41c has all but forestalled the possibility of doing so altogether. It is in texts with presumed endings such as 5-41a, which lack a strongly generic marker of a text's end, that the identification of the end of a text is most problematical while the end of a text is most reliably identified by an ending which may be so determined by reference to the text's generic structure independently of a sequence of events in terms of field.

The limiting case of text which closely mirrors the sequence of field events is constituted by the text which exhaustively recounts all field events and whose generically determined end coincides with the last event. While the delimitation of such texts may well present a practical problem for a contrastive analysis in terms of both their actual elicitation and their usefulness as corpus texts – partly because such 'exhaustive' accounts tend to get interfered with by the interviewer in the interests of getting through the interview (see Section 5.3.3.2.1) and partly because very long texts simply increase the researcher's workload without necessarily providing any compensatory gain in understanding in a study focusing on many text – they do not present a theoretical problem of defining 'a text' in contradistinction to 'text'.

Theoretical problems of determining the end of a text arise in those instances where a text demonstrably has some kind of ending yet also continues what is seemingly the same text. The continuing text in such cases can usually be ruled out as constituting a return to the elicitation context or a beginning of a distinctly new text, i.e. there are generally no explicit markers of the beginning of either one. Instead, such continuation usually involves either an increase in generality of T2 relative to T1, and of T3 relative to T2, and so on; or simply a further exemplification of some point already made in T1 in a T2, a T3, and so on, at the same level of generality. Partly for reasons of space we

will limit ourselves here to exemplifying the two types of continuation with narrative-type texts.

The ending to the narrative reproduced as example 5-42 below demonstrates the type of continuation which involves an increase in generality:

Example 5-42 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 09)

NARRATIVE

...

Resolution

... And this damn dog's running around and around and around and there's me on my hands and knees trying to catch her. I ended up catching her, belted the tripe out of her, you know.

Coda (1)

But, oh God, I tell you what! It would've been lovely to see a movie film to see this – her chasing round and round and me on my hands and knees trying to catch her, you know. ((laughs))

Coda (2)

But she was the real character dog, you know – we've never had a character dog like her since. We've had a lot of dogs – lost count of the number – but you know, they're the ones you remember, you know.

Far more than your royal champions that go and win this and win that and (what) else, you know.

Where Coda (1) relates the narrative to the here & now in terms of the particular events told in it, commenting on the antics of dog and owner, Coda (2) in some sense recasts the entire preceding text by virtue of its commenting on the much more general implications of a dog's character for the pleasures to be derived from keeping dogs in the first instance. Since Codas are interpretative of the whole text by definition, there is clearly no reason why a narrator should not offer several, and successive, interpretations although, unlike in some forms of recent fiction, they are unlikely to be alternative ones.

While Codas are undoubtedly optional (cf. Labov & Waletzky 1967:39; Labov 1972b:370), it seems that the pressure to interpret a just-told narrative is so great that not only the hearer of a narrative at times provides a Coda-like interpretation – embarrassingly so in the context of a sociolinguistic interview since the interviewer's intervention potentially precludes the interviewee from completing his narrative – but that the narrator is likely to continue interpreting his or her narrative if any ensuing silence is found intolerable, as in example 5-43:

Example 5-43 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 11/I 11)

NARRATIVE

...

Coda

Our bitch wasn't even in season so they obviously didn't take her for gain. They didn't know enough ... ((laughs))

###⁴⁰

But that's just how naive a lot of people are. Even when we've had people bringing bitches here for mating ... you know, some of their comments. You wonder how they ever got there themselves, you know. But ...

It is only on the basis of the prolonged silence following the Coda that the reinterpretation of the entire text – relating the events of the narrative to the wider issue of human sexuality and community attitudes towards it – can be excluded from the text itself, at least for the research purpose of quantifying the corpus data. Similarly, Coda-like interpretations such as that in example 5-44 below, which are offered in some sense in response to a third party's contribution, i.e. which are a 'reaction' as that was defined in Section 5.3.3.2.3 above, may also be excluded in the interests of limiting texts to what can be unambiguously attributed to the interviewee:

Example 5-44 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 11/I 01)

NARRATIVE

...

Resolution

And he kept belting the dog with the hat, putting it back on his head. The dog jumped up, grabbed the hat, and took the top of his ear off. ((GP: gasps))

###

Well, it's his own fault! ((laughs)) I mean, how stupid can you get? Putting a fur hat back on your head after you've been belting the dog with it and he's trying to get it. ((laughs))

The phenomenon of a 'multiple' or recursed Coda needs to be distinguished from that of a 'multiple' exemplification. Most times this is not too difficult because of the presence of explicit markers of the beginning of a new text, including the unambiguous announcement of *another example / time / occasion / dog / show*, etc. There are numerous texts to be found in Volume 2 where the speaker continues with a further exemplification of the point made in the text included in the corpus. However, although such continuations are recognisable as instances of multiple exemplification, they may

still have to be considered part of the text to which they function as a continuation, i.e. to T¹, rather than to constitute a second text T², if they are explicitly integrated into T¹ via a Coda. So-called EXEMPLUMS (see Section 6.2.2 for discussion) are particularly likely to make use of such multiple exemplification by relying on the cumulative force of similar examples given in succession to drive home the point of the text, as in example 5-45 below:

Example 5-45 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 11/I 49)

EXEMPLUM

Abstract

Well, like I said, Ronnie used to love coming in the house. And Paul used to get him in here – he used to play with him. He was really Paul's dog, you know.

Incident (1)

...

Incident (2)

...

Coda

But ... you know, he was just a dog that just loved us, you know.

Conversely, when a second exemplification is clearly commented on in a Coda-like fashion separately from the events in T¹ we have reasonable grounds for considering that second exemplification a T², as in example 5-46 below:

Example 5-46 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 01)

T¹

EXEMPLUM

...

Interpretation

Well I nearly fainted. Because I thought, 'My God!' He said to me, he said, "you've had this one from a pup." Because she's white and there's not many whites around, he'd seen her as a pup. She was a lovely puppy but she stopped growing. And ... I only took her to get points for my OTHER bitch. ((laughs))

And she turned around and ended up getting best of-breed. Well, I nearly passed out.

Coda

But he only did that, I think, because he thought, 'oh well, she's still got this dog – it must be alright.'

⁴⁰The outer boundaries of a text are indicated by three bold cross-hatches ###.

I don't think he knew what he was doing. ((laughs))

###

T²

And then another bitch, I took her to a show and it was her first show. Because I said, "Aw," you know, "she's taking a long time to come on." And all of a sudden she started looking alright and I thought, 'right'. And I'm very critical of my own dogs as far as showing goes. And I took her along and anyhow she ended up taking out best minor puppy in-show that day and I nearly fainted. I just didn't expect that at all. So that was very, very unexpected and very exciting because I was very critical of her at the time.

The final Coda-like comment in the second exemplification of a surprising success at a dog show, shown with dotted underline, refers exclusively to the *bitch* introduced in this exemplification and neither to the one in the first exemplification nor to both. This continuation is therefore clearly delimitable and considered a T² on the basis of having both a beginning and an end marker of its own.

Much less clear is the status of the type of continuation which is simply a development of the topic of an otherwise completed text, as in example 5-47 below:

Example 5-47 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 47)

T¹

OBSERVATION

...

Event Description/Comment

And on the Sunday she won – beat the dog for opposite and managed to take out the group, the whole of the working group, which I thought was a pretty good achievement for a pup that was three months and one week old sort of thing.

###

T²

That would probably be the biggest ... kick, you know, I've had sort of thing. I wasn't handling the dog that particular- when it actually took the group – a friend was handling it because we had handling problems with it. You know, you always got handling problems with a young pup, they'll never behave. And we'd been experimenting over the two days ... (continues)

As in the case of 5-43 above, it is only the end markers present in T¹ – the Comment shown with dotted underline as well as the very lengthy silence indicated by triple ... – which indicate the end of T¹ and thus the beginning of a T² after the silence.

While continuations of both the multiple Coda and the multiple exemplification type are found in both narrative and expository-type texts, they appear to be much more

common in the context of narrative-type texts. This is likely to be for precisely the same reason as that advanced in Section 5.6.2 above in explanation of the fact that we found the negotiation of beginnings to be more common in the context of narrative questions than of expository questions, viz. the relatively self-conscious status of narrative-type texts as semiotic artefacts. Narrative-type texts tend to be almost reflected on by the narrator – they are certainly ‘fashioned’ as texts to an extent unequalled by expository-type texts.

5.6.3.2 Continuous Text

If some texts pose problems of analysis on account of their continuing beyond some seeming end, others must at this stage of genre theory be considered continuous texts which simply cannot be delimited at all. In other words, some responses can neither be considered to constitute the response-to-the-question in toto nor can a text be delimited, i.e. abstracted from the whole of the response, which could be said to constitute the response-to-the-question.

Such continuous texts are constituted by those responses which ‘drift’, i.e. where the interviewee ‘diversifies’ or diverges in some sense, often rapidly and yet also imperceptibly. They are intuitively felt to be both relevant and irrelevant on the grounds of topic or subject matter. Furthermore, they are clearly perceived to be ‘endless’ in at least two senses: One, no one topic is clearly delimited, unlike additional exemplifications, for example; and two, the whole of the response is only delimitable by reference to physical aspects of speaking, viz. by virtue of being co-extensive with the interviewee’s turn.

The rapid and effortless shift from one topic to another, creating the impression of a ‘seamless’ stretch of discourse without much else helping to create generic structure, is at times considered to be one of the distinguishing features of a genre of casual conversation (cf. Gregory & Malcolm 1981; Halliday et al. 1985; Plum 1986). In contrast to such a definition of genre, by implication amounting to a positive evaluation of the type of discourse in question, the occurrence of the same phenomenon in monologue, whether by a conversationalist or, say, a lecturer or public speaker, is entirely negatively evaluated as ‘rambling’, i.e. as being deviant in that particular context, and noted as the absence of any particular generic structure – as being *not* a response-to-the-question, *not* a lecture, or *not* a speech. Where one topic triggers talk

about another topic, perhaps better seen as one lexical item triggering talk on another topic, the coherence of the speaker's text with an elicitation question, or the theme or topic of a lecture or speech, is jeopardised.

In terms of the two kinds of coherence said by Halliday & Hasan (1976:23) to characterise a text, a response which drifts is certainly 'coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive'. For example, in response to Q 5 ('describe ideal buyer/owner') one interviewee produced a very long text whose topical development may be summarised as in example 5-48:

Example 5-48

- (1a) Interviewee describes how he vets potential buyers ...
- (1b) Gives example of one unsuitable buyer who did not care about the safety of the pup despite its cost ...
- (2) Discusses cost of producing a litter, seeking to answer a common accusation that some fanciers make a lot of money out of breeding ...
- (3) Explains how breeding often involves arranging matings in distant towns, which is costly since one cannot simply put a dog on a train ...
- (4) Condemns uncaring breeders who may send a bitch by train, which may lead to a loss of the bitch ...

((GP asks follow-up question))

The text represented in the form of a topical 'plot' in 5-48 is certainly cohesive at any one point – the continuity of its plot is maintained via lexical cohesion and also, although perhaps less so, via reference (see Halliday & Hasan 1976; Martin 1983a, 1984b); the key topics in the development of the text are shown with dotted underline.

In some sense, 5-48 is 'also coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register' (Halliday & Hasan 1976:23), viz. by the speaker's talking about matters of breeding and keeping dogs. In this way the speaker maintains a very obvious consistency in respect of the register variable of field, yet this consistency is only evident at a less delicate level of field than that aimed at in the question. Furthermore, his choices of tenor and mode also appear to be maintained throughout his response since neither his relationship with his hearer, i.e. the interviewer, nor his relationship to his language, i.e. his text, in terms of both a time and a space dimension, undergo any perceptible change. However, since by the time the speaker reaches 'stage' 4 in 5-48 he clearly is no longer providing a response to the question after the

ideal buyer, he is failing to maintain consistency in respect of that part of the context of situation which accounts for the interviewer's role in it as questioner. The problem for a single-stratum model of context, such as the Halliday/Hasan model, is how to account for the obvious lack of coherence obtaining between the elicitation question and the response (at a certain point).

A two-stratum model of context as adopted in this study, on the other hand, would not seek to account for the lack of coherence at the level of register but of genre. It is only by recognising the role of generic structure, the role of 'language as the projection of a higher-level semiotic structure' (Halliday 1977:193), that we are in fact able to distinguish between one text and another. In the case of texts such as 5-48, this means that it is only by reference to a concept of generic structure that we are able to say that the response 'drifts', i.e. that it is likely to be incomplete since there is no sense in which some part of the response is actually a completed response-to-the-question, and that it is unlikely ever to be completed since each of the field choices made as the text progresses is more remote from the previous one, thereby losing any possibility of completing a response-to-the-question both in terms of genre and of field.

There is no doubt that questions, and in some sense questioners, do get ignored in all sorts of interactions, but such failure to answer a question in an interview is clearly a departure from a sociolinguistic norm. The lack of coherence with the elicitation question found in the examples of drift in the interviews in this study does not only relate to the 'topic' of the question but even more importantly to the fact that there was a question asked at all. The text produced by the interviewee in these cases ought to, but does not, acknowledge the interviewer as an active interactant, i.e. as questioner. Instead, such texts only consider him a passive interactant, i.e. a hearer. The resultant breakdown of a synoptic perspective on text is thus paradoxically due to the speaker taking a dynamic approach monologically. The text unfolds linearly, one step at a time, without displaying the goal-orientedness characteristic of text that is amenable to a description in terms of a generic structure.

5.6.4 Summary of Coding SLC 9 (Beginning/End Problems)

The total number of instances in which a response cannot be delimited satisfactorily in order to include some stretch of discourse as the response-to-the-question is 26, perhaps not a very large number in the light of the 420 codable texts obtained in the

interviews. No one elicitation question stands out with a particularly high rate of SLC 9 codings, the largest number being four. Similarly, no one interviewee attracts more than two SLC 9 codings.

In the light of earlier remarks concerning some differences between narrative and expository texts as far as their marking and recognition of endings are concerned, it is perhaps worth noting that the three elicitation questions which each score four SLC 9 codings are in fact expository questions, viz. Q 2 ('describe ideal dog'), Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?'), and Q 12 ('is dog showing a sport?'). What they have in common over and above their expository focus, of course, is an obvious potential for a great deal of talk from speakers whose lives often revolve around precisely the three activities explored in these questions: what you seek to breed, how you breed it, and how you demonstrate that you have bred it successfully. Beyond this, not much can be said about the distribution of beginning/end problems in the responses obtained in the interviews.

Chapter 6:

Generic Differentiability of Texts

6.1 The Corpus as Tool for Researching Generic Hypotheses

In this chapter we will be concerned with the generic variation found in the texts actually elicited in the sociolinguistic interviews. Just as the discussion in Chapter 5 served not only as a critique of the sociolinguistic interview but also as a guide to the analysis of the data gathered in these interviews with the aim of achieving an optimum degree of contextual comparability of the texts to be considered ‘codable’ corpus texts, the discussion in this chapter must serve a dual purpose. In the first instance, we will be concerned to re-examine the hypotheses underlying, implicitly or explicitly, the formulation of the interview questions with regard to the interaction of genre, field, and question form in the light of the texts actually elicited, and this aspect of the discussion is thus comparable to the critique of the interview in the previous chapter. In the second instance, we will seek to sufficiently motivate the generic categories put forward in this chapter in order to support the generic coding of corpus texts by reference to the realisations of genre at the levels or ‘planes’ of register and language. Such generic categories are obviously not put forward for their own sake, i.e. simply for the sake of categorising the corpus data, but rather in order to achieve a degree of generic differentiability of corpus texts which is not only sufficient to permit the drawing of general conclusions regarding generic variation but also to serve the further aim of testing the generic hypotheses embodied in the coded corpus via the quantification of linguistic variables. This aspect of the discussion is thus comparable to the formulation of guidelines to achieving contextual comparability in Chapter 5.

The general objective pursued in this chapter is to account for the variation between responses at a primary level of genre and field delicacy, variation which is to be expected across a large number of interviews and a wide range of interviewees. In line with the ultimate goal of contributing towards a probabilistic model of text via an empirical study, we are concerned to quantify the relationship between elicitation question and response in generic terms by establishing what genres were produced in response to a particular elicitation question. In other words, we seek to discover whether a question formulated as, say, a ‘narrative’ question, specifically one to elicit,

say, recounts, in fact does lead to the production of narrative-type texts generally and to the production of recounts specifically – and if not, why not. In practice, we will seek to arrive at a generic analysis of the texts actually produced in response to the elicitation questions used in the sociolinguistic interviews, i.e. questions which were formulated to elicit particular genres, and we will do this by focusing on the elicitation question itself.

The relationship between elicitation question and response in generic terms is of interest for two distinct though related reasons: Firstly, in order to assess the usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview we need to know whether the interview questions as formulated do in fact constitute ‘natural’ questions generically, i.e. questions which are likely to result in responses whose generic status is not the product of having been given to please the interviewer or to comply with the implicit rules of an interview. Secondly, the interaction of genre, field, and elicitation question which we hope to explore by focusing on the generic variation found in the responses provides one way – in fact the only way in a study such as this – of beginning to answer the question as to whether a given choice at the level of genre may be constraining choices at the level of register since these are hypothesised, according to the genre model adopted in this study, to realise the generic choice itself. In other words, if we find that a certain aspect of field informally describable as a particular choice of field in contradistinction to other, related choices, is typically associated with one particular generic choice but hardly ever with some other choice, then we may conclude on the basis of such indirect evidence that the former choice of genre ‘favours’ its own realisation in certain choices at the register plane, i.e. in systems of field, tenor, and mode, but disfavors realisation in other choices.

We will seek to demonstrate the variation found by an essentially illustrative approach, presenting sharply contrasting texts, be it in terms of genre, field, or both, in order to bring out the possible sources of the variation among texts given in response to the same elicitation question. At the same time, such a general focus on the least agnate texts elicited in the context of the same question will be balanced by an attempt at accounting for the strong agnation obtaining between those corpus texts which were given in response to a set of specifically narrative questions. Similarly, the simultaneous description of generic categories in terms of their realisations will pay closer attention to the genres represented among the texts produced in response to narrative questions, and specifically to those genres which feature prominently among

those responses, than to those given in response to the other questions. This ‘favoured’ treatment given to texts produced in response to narrative questions is simply a practical response to the daunting size of the analytical task faced in a study which aims to be quantitative as far as this is possible within the constraints discussed in Chapter 1 yet obviously cannot avoid the prior qualitative description of genre essential for any quantitative investigation of actual text.

Since it is the fundamental hypothesis of the genre model of text adopted in this study that genres are to be defined in terms of their generic structure – structure rather than system since the systemic choice underlying such a structure is only accessible via the structure realising it – and that generic structures in turn are realised probabilistically by different patterns of co-selections of choices at the different levels of register and language, what is needed for a study such as the current one to be theoretically of interest is in the first instance a motivation of generic structure at the levels of genre itself (in functional terms), of register (in contextual semantic terms), and of language (in terms of systems of discourse semantics and lexicogrammar); and in the second instance a testing of the generic structures hypothesised to characterise the texts in a given corpus via a quantitative investigation of the linguistic realisations of those same texts in order to provide the only kind of validation of generic categories possible in a probabilistic model.

However, the obvious magnitude of the work involved in providing a qualitative account of the generic structures of a range of genres – for example, the detailed discussion by Hasan (1984b) of just one generic stage, viz. Placement in the quasi-literary, largely written-to-be-spoken, and thus relatively fixed genre of the nursery tale, comparable in its functional role to Orientation in the ‘narrative of personal experience’ discussed by Labov & Waletzky (1967), takes up fourteen pages – is not the only serious impediment to any real progress towards the validation of a probabilistic model of text: the much needed qualitative account of genre also presents us with a strictly theoretical problem. Since all realisational relationships between the categories at different levels of the model are held to be probabilistic – including in fact the co-occurrence of the functionally related generic stages that enter into the multivariate structure which realises some one choice of genre in a system of agnate genres although the generic stages are generally stated in terms of obligatoriness and optionality of occurrence – there cannot be a small set of well-defined realisations by

which we can with certainty recognise a stage with a given functional role, or even the boundaries of a stage whatever its functional role.

It is easy enough to demonstrate that even the seemingly most transparent indicators of generic structure, viz. the so-called discourse or boundary markers such as *well*, *now*, *so*, etc., which may be said to realise generic structure ‘discretely’ since a single linguistic item largely drawn from a closed set appears to mark the beginning or end of a generic stage, are neither sufficient nor necessary to the identification of some generic stage. For example, while some given discourse marker, say *well*, may be found frequently initially in texts given in response to an elicitation question in this study, it could certainly not be claimed that *well* always marks a new generic stage, let alone a text-initial stage such as Abstract or Orientation, since its general function of ‘marking a response’ in the sense of Schifffrin (1987), both in recreated dialogue in a monologic text as well as in a kind of internal argumentation by a narrator, means that it often functions locally rather than globally in a text. And it almost goes without saying that an initial occurrence of *well* is not a necessary marker of a generic stage, whether that stage itself is initial in the text or not.

In the case of the non-discrete or ‘dispersed’ realisations of generic structure, the indeterminacy of realises has led writers on genre to appeal to ‘semantic properties/attributes/features’, for example Labov & Waletzky (1967); Labov (1972b); Longacre (1983). Similarly, Hasan (1984b:84) suggests that the crucial aspects of the structural units or generic stages of a text type may be stated by appealing to semantic properties but points out that unless such appeals are backed up by ‘non-ambiguous statements about the realization of the semantic attributes by reference to which the structurally important units of text types can be identified’, the analysis of actual texts is likely to result in disagreement as to the generic structure of particular texts.

However, the observation that discrete realisations of generic structure via discourse or boundary markers can only be stated in terms of tendencies of occurrence is equally valid, if not more so, for its non-discrete or dispersed realisations – it can only be claimed that, for example, narratives tend to begin with an Orientation; which tends to introduce the principal cast of characters, the state of ‘things’ or rather the ‘state’ of actions, and the important times and locations, i.e. all the general business important to ‘setting the scene’; and which tend to be realised linguistically by certain choices in systems at the levels of discourse semantics and lexicogrammar, for example

superordinate lexical categories, presenting reference, elaborating clause complex-type relations, existential *there* themes, relational clauses, and so on. And while the presence or absence of some generic stage may have a strong bearing on whether a text is considered to be a member of a certain generic category, the presence or absence of some register choice typically associated with or realising a given generic stage, or a linguistic pattern typically associated with or realising a given register choice, can rarely be said to be criterial of some given generic stage. It is in the nature of discourse that there cannot be a convenient ‘checklist’ for the coding of text.

Although an illustrative approach is integral to the discussion in this chapter, for reasons of space only the most commonly occurring genres or text types in response to a specific elicitation question will be able to be exemplified. Similarly, the extent to which generic structures, and particularly generic stages, can be explicitly, unambiguously and exhaustively motivated so as to serve the practical analysis of a large corpus is extremely limited. In fact, due to the probabilistic nature of realisation at the level of discourse generally, I would contend that it is in practice not possible to arrive at the kind of ‘coding guidelines’ for texts often produced in similar work in order to ensure the degree of analytical replicability generally aimed at in linguistics. The methodological problem faced in a study focusing on text *per se*, i.e. on its generic structure, is in fact positively intractable compared with that faced in a study focusing on the lexicogrammatical or phonological features by which it may be realised.

In a discussion of methodological issues as part of her study of discourse markers, for example, Schiffrin (1987:66–71) argues for the complementarity of ‘sequential’ and ‘distributional’ accountability to a data base, i.e. for an analysis which is qualitative by accounting for a given (type of) discourse in respect of selected discourse phenomena and their conditioning environments and an analysis which is quantitative by accounting for the same discourse phenomena in whatever (types of) discourse they may occur. By following such a procedure of complementary accountability, the analyst is able to explore a limited number of linguistic features for their relevance to discourse, mutually enriching the insights gained from the study of one discourse and the study of many. On the other hand, a study attempting to ‘identify’ the ‘types of discourse’ a large number of texts might constitute, i.e. via identifying their generic structure, must in some sense rely on the mutually informed insights gained by complementary qualitative and quantitative analyses which are, strictly speaking, neither available nor would be capable of being applied if they were. It would appear

that ultimately the only ‘correct’ set of coding guidelines, the only checklist, must be some kind of algorithm that incorporates comprehensive information on the probabilities of occurrences and co-occurrences, both simultaneous and successive, of all the systemic features relevant to the production of text, and at all levels of description – something which no human being could possibly memorise and consciously apply in an analysis of texts although speakers obviously do so totally unconsciously in both their production and comprehension of text.

Short of the necessary information – and the computer-installed parser needed to apply it – we are left with doing what linguists always do, and that is making judgments both as speakers of the language of their data and as linguists applying a theoretical model to that data. And while the linguist’s judgments could in principle be tested other than by a quantitative analysis, for example by having native speakers judge the data, i.e. in this case have them make judgments as to their generic structures, in practice such an exercise would be both next to impossible and futile. Some of the reasons which would rule a judging exercise out relate to the sheer volume of data; the need to control some of the conditioning factors, for example the elicitation question, and the interviewee’s sex and social group membership, which, although it would result in smaller sets of contextually comparable data and thus be more manageable for individual judges, would at the same time decrease our ability to relate the judgments of different judges; the need to ‘neutralise’ some of the phonological social markers evident in speech yet to retain the orality of the texts; and others more. But even if all of these obstacles could be overcome and a group of judges found to undertake such a demanding task, what could possibly be gained other than at best a consensus view of generic structure which would still be in need of testing by investigating its correlation with the distribution of linguistic variables? In the absence of any external judging of the corpus texts, the presentation of a large subset of texts in Volume 2, comprising all codable texts produced in response to four of the narrative questions in the interview schedule, should at least provide readers of this study with the opportunity to judge their generic coding for themselves.

The organisation of the chapter is as follows: We will first discuss the types of responses gained to each type of elicitation question – in other words, although the focus of this chapter is on the generic coding of the texts given in response to specific elicitation questions, the chapter itself will be structured around the generic headings used in Section 3.2.2, i.e. recount, narrative, etc., rather than the elicitation questions

themselves or indeed the generic categories actually needed to account for the corpus texts. In order to move towards maximum accountability, we will limit ourselves to providing a generic account of those texts which were found to be ‘codable’ and which therefore form part of the corpus of quantifiable texts, i.e. to those texts which are contextually comparable in accordance with the discussion in Chapter 5. Furthermore, quantitative information on the incidence of generic stages in particular genres will be drawn exclusively from a subset of 125 corpus texts produced in response to four narrative questions since it is those texts which constitute Volume 2, the data volume forming part of this thesis, and which are not only analysed in terms of generic structure but whose generic structure is clearly indicated in their presentation.

The discussion will proceed in an illustrative fashion, primarily focusing not only on those text types found to predominate among the responses but also on those aspects of such types which appear to ‘make the difference’ between them. Since we consider the middle stages to be criterial of a given generic type, we will focus on those stages which in some sense constitute a text’s middle and, while not exactly neglecting beginning and end stages, rely to some extent on the discussion of those in Chapter 5. Our main concern in this chapter is to motivate the generic structures postulated to account for the text types predominantly produced in response to some given elicitation question(s), thereby cumulatively accounting for the text types represented in the corpus. The goal is to account for the generic variation found in the corpus texts via (i) the postulation of generic hypotheses and discussion of the realisational motivation of the generic stages said to be criterial of generic structures; and (ii) the tabulation and interpretation of the actual incidence of different text types found to have been produced in response to the elicitation question(s) under discussion.

The decision to concentrate on the middles of texts in order to arrive at their generic classification is partly motivated by the view that beginnings and endings of text may be considered ‘frames’ which are to some extent independent of the genres with which they are commonly associated. For example, while terminologically Thesis implies an exposition and Abstract a narrative, there is in fact a very strong correspondence between them which makes one suspect that Thesis and Abstract are simply minor variations on the same beginning theme which tend to be distinctly named in any given text on the basis of the whole text rather than any features that would uniquely identify a beginning stage in isolation from the rest of its text. (The *once upon a time* beginning indexical of a fairy tale is the exception rather than the rule

here.) Essentially the issue is one of delicacy. While for example Orientation is commonly found in all manner of ‘narrative’, the work by Hasan (1984b) on Placement in the nursery tale mentioned above demonstrates that even a stage such as the scene-setting stage so commonly found in narrative-type genres may have its own unique semantic attributes in a given sub-category of narrative, realised in linguistically quite specific ways, which distinguishes it from a scene-setting stage in other (sub-categories of) narrative genres.

A generic structure appears to have something akin to the logical structure of the nominal group with its pre- and postmodification of a Head which constitutes its key function, in fact its only obligatory function (see Halliday 1985c). It seems that viewed as a logical structure, i.e. a univariate structure rather than the multivariate one of functional elements whose relationships to one another vary, a generic structure is also *not* built up from a beginning to an end in successive modification of either the beginning or the end stage, i.e. either prospectively in the manner of the experiential structure of the nominal group, as in *miniature longhair bitch puppy*, or retrospectively in the manner of Chinese boxes, as in ‘the house that Jack built’, but in a sense from a ‘centre’.

But unlike the Pre- and Postmodifiers in a nominal group structure, the stages clustering about a central stage appear to exhibit a strong mutual predictability such that a beginning stage like Abstract is often mirrored in an end stage like Coda. Such mirroring is also implicit in the classic Labovian definitions of both since the Abstract is said to answer – retrospectively – the question as to why the story was told in the first place (Labov 1972b:370) and the Coda’s function is said to be to return the text/listener to the present time (Labov & Waletzky 1967:39; Labov 1972b:365–6, 369). Both stages thus address themselves to the listener by making the text’s relevance to the hearer explicit, and to the context in which the narrating is taking place. Both typically make ‘meta-statements’ about the text, an Abstract making such a statement cataphorically about a text yet to be produced and a Coda anaphorically about a text already completed.

Not too much is to be made of speaking of a text’s beginning, middle, or end. In contrast to the Aristotelian identification of such very general stages on the basis of the highly developed dramatic form of tragedy – for which the properties of such stages could in fact be specified on the assumption that they were obligatory ones – we can

really claim no more than that the ‘meaty’ part of a genre lies in its middle and that therefore closely related genres in particular may be compared in terms of how they differ in their middle stages. (Cf. also the view put by Labov 1972b:370 that ‘Only ..., the complicating action, is necessary if we are to recognize a narrative ...’, such complicating action also being referred to as the ‘main body of narrative clauses’ by Labov & Waletzky 1967:32.) It would obviously be illogical to claim that a text which comprised only a complicating action therefore had no beginning or end.

Lastly, by inverting the perspective followed throughout this chapter we will show in what contexts, i.e. in the context of which type of elicitation question, the generic types found in the corpus as a whole are in fact produced. The final step in the ‘argument’ implicitly underlying a genre-based approach in a probabilistic model of language in context would then be to attempt to model the generic stages which define a given generic structure in terms of the notion of agnation, i.e. to model the relatedness of the generic choices available at some level of culture by inferring the significant distinctions made at that level or ‘plane’ on the basis of the observed realisations of generic stages at the level of discourse and lexicogrammar. However, since such realisations are hypothesised to be achieved by the continuous reweighting of the probability of occurrence of linguistic choices, a great deal more work is needed before such modelling can be much more than a restatement of what has been discovered so far on the basis of approaching the issue of generic agnation in terms of a ‘range’ or ‘continuum’ of generically differentiated responses. While the notion of generic agnation wants to be recast in probabilistic terms, this must be left for future research.

6.2 Narrative-type Texts

The genres to be discussed in this section relative to the elicitation questions which were to elicit them include recount, narrative, and thematic narrative (see Chapter 3). However, it very soon became clear that a single category ‘narrative’ mistakenly assumed a greater generic homogeneity than the facts warranted. For this reason the practice adopted in this study generally will be to speak of ‘narrative-type’ texts to subsume the above three generic categories (and others besides; see below) while the term ‘narrative’ will be restricted to a text type defined by a particular generic structure, viz. essentially a narrative with the canonical structure of (Abstract) ^ Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ (Coda), postulated by Labov &

Waletzky (1967:40–1) as the prototype of the ‘fully-formed, complex normal narrative’.

6.2.1 Recount

Two questions in the interview schedule were intended to elicit recounts, Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’) and Q 7 (‘tell about today’s chores’). Although their field foci clearly differ, they have in common a focus on temporal sequence which was stressed in the question cue *Can you tell me what you did/what happened – from beginning to end (of work done, of delivery of litter)?* However, rather than resulting in simple recounts of the events focused on, both questions typically yielded narrative-like responses which demanded further subcategorisation into at least two types, viz. RECOUNT and PROCEDURE respectively. These two types of text are exemplified with responses given to Q 4 in examples 6-1a and 6-1b:

Example 6-1a (Q 4)

RECOUNT

Orientation

We had a litter of kelpie pups ... oh, many years ago now, I can’t actually quote the year but it was something like twenty odd years ago. When we had our last kelpie litter. And we knew the time was due, principally because we knew when they were mated. So we counted the time and we knew to within a day or two of when it was due.

Record/Reorientation (1)⁴²

And when it was due, the bitch just

Example 6-1b (Q 4)

PROCEDURE

Synopsis⁴¹

Well, I’ll just give you a normal procedure of whelping.

Orientation

I’ve got several whelping boxes, you’ve got to have a special whelping box ... (text continues)

... I usually have a whelping box set up in the corner over there, especially in the winter time because puppies are very susceptible to cold, new-born puppies.

The bitch, I also have her up the back in another whelping box so that she knows she’s safe. She’s got a whelping box up there but only when she starts whelping do I bring her in here.

How To (1)

She sits in here, I’ll see that she’s

⁴¹ABSTRACT may be usefully contrasted with – at a greater level of delicacy – SYNOPSIS, the former making a ‘meta-statement’, the latter a ‘macro-statement’. While the Abstract, explicitly or implicitly, incorporates the ‘point’ of the text to be given which is, as Labov (1972b: 363–4) points out, *not* synonymous with a summary of the text, the Synopsis does do just that. While one may wish to see Abstract and Synopsis as *alternative* choices, introductory stages in fact often incorporate both types of meanings; see Volume 2 for examples.

went and had the pups as though it was a matter of course. There was nothing traumatic about it all and nothing out of the ordinary.

been panting, she's a little bit agitated, and then the first signs of the puppies' birth is imminent is that she starts straining. And that's when you keep an eye on her. Within half an hour of the straining, she'll probably produce a puppy. It's normally fully encased in the placenta which looks like a plastic bag. She licks the puppy out of the placenta, she chews the cord – this is normal procedure, some bitches don't always do this but most of the labs do it all the time – chews the cord, licks the puppies dry and then settles down again and waits for the next one.

Record/Reorientation (2)

Had the pups, finished whelping, got up and was as strong as a Malley bull and that was that. No trouble whatsoever.

How To (2)

What can go wrong? They don't get them out of the placenta quick enough and the puppy sometimes doesn't breathe ... Because once they're out, once they're born, they want to start breathing and if they don't get them out of their plastic bag good and lively, well, you can lose a puppy that way. So that's one of the main reasons that you like to sit with bitches, making sure that they get them out of that placenta and lick them and get

⁴²The 'conflation' or 'fusion' of two (or more) generic stages is indicated by an oblique slash between the relevant category names, illustrated in 6-1a above as Record/Reorientation (1) and (2).

In this study the phenomena of fusion and embedding will be treated as conceptually distinct, and the terms will be used as technical terms for different phenomena. In brief, while FUSION is considered to be the non-discrete realisation of some generic stage, EMBEDDING is considered the realisation of a generic stage by a generic structure, i.e. by a text type or genre, for example an Orientation in a narrative-type text may be realised by another narrative-type text (cf. example 4-33 in Section 4.3) or even an exposition (cf. example 8-3 in Section 8.2.3.2).

The fusion of two generic stages or elements of generic structure is postulated by analogy with the use of the term in SFG. Fusion is a type of CONFLATION, which applied to text means that functional stages do not have their own distinct realisations *in a given text*, either because they cannot be distinguished at the level of lexicogrammatical description in a very small text, for example at clause level, or because their realisations are 'intermingled' to such an extent that the positing of distinct realisations of generic stages would result in an endless succession of alternating stages without there being any genuine iteration at all. The use of the term fusion thus differs substantially from its use in grammar in two ways: (i) in grammar, fusion refers to the conflation of grammatical functions which do not have their own distinct (morphological) realisations, such as Modal and Finite in *he might come*; and (ii) it contrasts with the notion of MAPPING of grammatical functions on to one another which could just as well be realised differently, such as Subject and Theme in *the boy played with the cat* vs. *the cat the boy played with* (rather than *the dog, that is*) where Complement and Theme are mapped on to one another.

Fusion occurs especially in small texts where the phenomenon is simply the product of a minimally developed representation of experience in text. Apart from this, however, the fusion of generic stages appears to be most common in two distinctly different environments, one concerning those functional elements that constitute the beginning of a generic structure, for example Abstract (Synopsis) ^ Orientation, and the other concerning those elements which are 'interpretative' in some sense, for example in Evaluation ^ Resolution. Obviously, fusion is most likely to occur between successive or 'adjacent' stages but we also find that it rarely encompasses more than two such stages.

The 'intermingling' of an Evaluation stage with not only adjacent stages, i.e. with both a preceding Complication and a following Resolution, has been the subject of a substantial revision of the notion of generic structure as put forward in Labov & Waletzky (1967) by Labov (1972b: 366–370). The issue is an important one in the recognition of different narrative genres where the – in some sense – simultaneous realisation of experiential and interpersonal meanings at the level of generic structure results in the creation of different types of narrative text; see also fn.8 this chapter.

them breathing and chew the cord off properly. But if they don't-

There's been times when the bitch-I've been sitting right here and she's had a pup and I've had to answer the phone or something and she's had a big litter and the pup's virtually slipped out and she hasn't even realised she's had it and there it is, all still wrapped in its little plastic bag and ... is dead.

Coda

And most kelpies, most working dogs, I think, are much the same. They're a very robust type of dog.

Coda

So if you've got a bitch who's not very sensible at times, this is where you've got to watch them. You've got some whelpers who are excellent whelpers, who know what to do right along the line, and others who get a bit tired or a bit lazy or don't think straight.

The analysis of these genres borrows from Longacre (1974, 1976, 1983), who develops the concept of two types of 'procedural discourse', respectively named 'How-to-do-it' and 'How-it-was-done'. The distinguishing semantic feature of these subtypes of procedural discourse is said to be \pm Projection, having 'to do with a situation or action which is contemplated, enjoined, or anticipated but not realized' (Longacre 1983:4). Procedural discourse as such is contrasted with narrative discourse, and their distinguishing semantic feature is said to be \pm Agent-Orientedness, a parameter which 'refers to orientation towards agents ... with at least a partial identity of agent reference running through the discourse' (Longacre 1983:3). A diagrammatic representation of these cross-cutting distinctions, yielding what Longacre calls 'notional types', is repeated as Figure 6-1 below.

| | +Ag-Orientation | -Ag-Orientation | |
|--|-----------------|------------------|--------|
| C S + O U N C T C I E N S G S E I N O T N | NARRATIVE | PROCEDURAL | |
| | Prophecy | How-to-do-it | +Proj. |
| | ----- | ----- | |
| | Story | How-it-was-done | -Proj. |
| C S - O U N C T C I E N S G S E I N O T N | BEHAVIOURAL | EXPOSITORY | |
| | Hortatory | Budget Proposal | +Proj. |
| | Promissory | Futuristic Essay | |
| | ----- | ----- | |
| | Eulogy | Scientific Paper | -Proj. |

Fig. 6-1: Notional types of discourse according to two parameters
(after Longacre 1983:5)

Applying Longacre's categorisations to the texts typically produced in response to Qs 4 and 7, the procedural type of response would probably correspond more closely to a 'How-to-do-it' type than to a 'How-it-was-done' type. (See Plum & Cowling (1987) for a contrastive, and quantitative, analysis of a type corresponding more closely to a 'How-it-was-done' procedural discourse, which they called *GENERIC NARRATIVE*, with a narrative discourse in Longacre's sense, both types involving reminiscences of games played in primary school days.)

The two texts in 6-1a – b adduced to illustrate two different yet closely related genres clearly have different goals: While the recount is concerned with a series of events, typically considered a single incident such as the single whelping in 6-1a, *with the goal of relating how & that event a led to event b, i.e. effectively with **relating** events to one another*, the procedure is concerned with a 'normal' if not normative activity sequence *with the goal of exhaustively stating, and thereby implicitly*

explaining, the activity structure of some event with a recognised institutional focus, such as whelping in 6-1b. These different goals are reflected in the generic structures of recount and procedure, which – at a certain level of delicacy – are hypothesised to be:

| | <u>Beginning</u> | <u>Middle</u> | <u>End</u> |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| RECOUNT: | Abstract ^ Orientation ^ | Record ^ Reorientation ^ | Coda |
| PROCEDURE: | Abstract ^ Orientation ^ | How To ^ | Coda |

Except for their middle stages, the generic structures of recount and procedure are largely alike. The fact that recount and procedure – two types of narrative text – may be said to differ just in their middle stages at a certain level of delicacy is intended to reflect an hypothesis about agnation between genres, viz. that the degree of agnation is at least partly reflected in the number of structural differences and partly in the locus of difference and similarity of generic structures. This view is underlined by employing different labels for the two genres in respect of their middle stages but identical labels for their beginning and end stages. To state this from the vantage point of the generic structure of which they are hypothesised to be a constitutive part, we are arguing that the middle stages in both genres each stand in a similar functional relationship to the other stages in their respective generic structures, notwithstanding the fact that the middle of recount is said to be more structured by having two rather than just one generic stage.

The crucially different middle stages are named RECORD ^ REORIENTATION (recount) and HOW TO (procedure) in an attempt at highlighting the different goals of these genres with category labels which are self-explanatory when considered in conjunction with the labelling of the generic stages of agnate genres, especially other narrative-type genres. The category name Record is preferred to Martin & Rothery's (1981) Eventⁿ, indicating an account of an Event with the choice of Event being available recursively, for two reasons: One, it is in the nature of events generally that they have an experiential structure and that therefore the experiences represented in narrative-type text in a temporally sequenced fashion may always be represented as more than one (micro) event; and two, the Record of events characteristic of this stage does not merely comprise a series of events, but it rather functions as a single stage vis-à-vis other stages in the same structure by stressing the fact of its being constituted of a sequence of events which form a unit in some sense, i.e. which are an activity sequence in the sense of field in register theory (see discussion in Section 2.2).

In other words, while the ‘listing’ of events is to some extent the basic stuff of every narrative-type genre, it is the function to which the listing itself is put in the structure as a whole which we seek to capture. And just as the naming of a stage is always intended to capture something of what its function is in relative isolation from other stages, so something of the different functional relationships between the stages in a multivariate generic structure is intended to be captured by the names of the different stages in a given structure in toto.

In the following discussion we will first seek to motivate the setting up of two different genres to account for the differences in texts such as 6-1a – b by demonstrating how the two generic stages constituting the ‘middle’ stage of recount differ, collectively, from the one generic stage constituting the ‘middle’ stage of procedure, claiming in fact that their patterns of realisations, and therefore their semantic attributes, vary significantly and systematically. Secondly, we will attempt to motivate the setting up of the two stages Record and Reorientation as constituting the middle stage of recount, showing that a Reorientation is a crucial stage in a recount but an unlikely, and certainly not crucial, one in a procedure. (For a discussion of the agnation of recount with other narrative-type genres, see Section 6.2.2 below.)

It would appear that any attempt at stating the semantic attributes criterial of some generic stage must be on the basis of the functional role identified for a given stage in a given generic structure or genre, i.e. on the basis of the goals identified for a given ‘staged, goal oriented social process’ (Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987a). If our characterisation of goals for recount and procedure is correct, then it follows that some of the most prominent differences between their respective goals may be captured by reference to semantic attributes such as ‘individuation’ of character, action, and setting, roughly corresponding to Hasan’s ‘(person) particularisation’, in the most crucial stage(s) of recount vs. ‘universalisation’ of character, action, and setting in those of procedure. These differences between semantic attributes are most clearly realised at the level of lexicogrammar in the grammaticalised Participants, Processes, and Circumstances that make up the multivariate transitivity structures at clause rank since it is here that individuation and universalisation respectively are realised predominantly in different patterns of reference and tense.

Such semantic differences, and their lexicogrammatical realisations, are not to be mistaken for the making of different choices in field, and their respective realisations.

For example, while the two texts 6-1a – b clearly provide information about the structure of the field of dog breeding at greatly different levels of detail, at a least delicate level of analysis the field of the two middle stages is the same and what difference there is in the choice of field at a more delicate level is reflected in the degree to which the lexis realising the characters, actions, and settings characteristic of a particular choice of field is *developed*, especially via hyponymy and meronymy, in a system of lexical relations at the level of discourse semantics (Martin 1984b). Such development of field-realising lexis is always an indication of greater delicacy, and greater delicacy is usually an indication of an increase in TECHNICALITY in the sense of Eggins (1986); Eggins, Wignell & Martin (1987); Martin, Wignell, Eggins & Rothery (1988), and Wignell, Martin & Eggins (1987), implying an ‘expert’ speaker.

It should also be noted that the ‘person particularisation’ specified by Hasan (1984b) as crucial to the stage Placement and, by implication, to the stage Orientation in narrative-type texts generally – a particularisation which is not limited to persons and in fact may extend to actions and settings, i.e. places and times – is not ‘overridden’ by the universalisation typical of procedure. In many non-procedural narrative-type texts in this corpus, for example, the narrator of a text in which either he/she or his/her partner is a main character will set the scene in an Orientation via a first person plural referent which is either never returned to in the main body of the text or at least not until a Coda to the text. Similarly, in 6-1a above we find an absolute switch from Orientation to Record in this respect, viz. from the partners who owned and bred the bitch in question – which of course is the main character in the text – to the bitch itself, i.e. from particular characters providing the background to just one character, often one of the scene-setting ones, playing the main part.

The postulation of two generic stages for the middle stage or main body of recount vs. only one for procedure is also a direct consequence of the stated goals of these genres. Since the goal of a procedure of the ‘How-to-do-it’ kind lies essentially in explaining the activity structure of some event, and thus usually of the series of events constituting the ‘name’ event, such as ‘whelping’ in the text presented as example 6-1b, it is important that this be done exhaustively in the sense of ‘from first to final event’. (Notions such as ‘exhaustively’, ‘comprehensively’, etc., of course unavoidably bring into play the notion of delicacy.) In this respect a procedure of the kind dealt with here is like any set of instruction, any manual – including the archetypal procedural text, the common cooking instruction or recipe.

(Unique patterns of lexicogrammatical realisations may provide conclusive evidence that the procedural text does indeed constitute a distinct genre. For example, in German the recipe is realised in the totally archaic impersonal subjunctive construction *man nehme*, which is not only no longer productive but also now exclusively associated with the recipe and thus genuinely indexical. In English this is only hinted at by the imperative form of *to take* which, although pre-selected by the genre recipe, is certainly not indexical of it.)

But what procedures do not have to do is ‘make a point’ in the special sense of Labov (1972b), i.e. be interesting, entertaining, etc., in line with the demands made of the telling of a ‘narrative of personal experience’. Instead, their particular point – or rather their goal to stay with the definition of genre as a ‘staged, goal oriented social process’ – simply lies in allowing a hearer or reader to ‘follow’ the activity structure, if necessary literally. For this reason the procedural text is accomplished when the final step in how to do things, the final event of the activity structure, has been made explicit. To employ some observations made by Hasan (1984b:81) in the context of quite different genres, Procedures ‘logically culminate’ in a ‘Final Event’ without there being any need for any ‘Finale’, any ‘return to altered rest’.

By contrast, the goal of a recount is to give an account of how one event led to another, typically of course involving a series of events yet really only concerned with showing how an event *a* had a certain outcome realised by an event *b*. While one might predict that such a text would be as exhaustive as a procedure this is not at all the case since the goal of recount is *not* to represent a sequence of events in such a way as to permit it to be repeated, be it verbally or in actions. What is much more important is that a goal in an everyday sense is made explicit textually, such a goal being quite distinct from the goal of the social process to be accomplished. While the former goal is essentially concerned with making explicit where the text is going to go in terms of the events to be textually represented, the latter goal is more or less equivalent to the point of a text.

For example, the texts given in response to Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’) often have the acquisition of a pup as a first event and the first – and fortuitously and unexpectedly successful – showing of that dog as a final event. ‘Reaching’ the event goal textually does not at all depend on spelling out every single event that lies between the first-mentioned event and that goal, i.e. the final event by virtue of the

speaker's say-so, nor could it be said that in any real-world sense that final event equates with the speaker having become part of the strongly institutionalised dog fancy.

On the other hand, accomplishing what we might call its generic goal depends very much on making explicit that it has been reached, i.e. that the point of the recount has been made. And making it clear that the goal has been reached – not, we should emphasise, what the goal itself actually is – is the function of a Reorientation, as illustrated in example 6-2 below:

Example 6-2 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 13)

RECOUNT

... So we got him.

And he was quite a good dog so we thought, you know, 'why,' sort of, 'just have him sit in the backyard?' Plus a little bit of encouragement off the breeder – you know, "it's a good dog, why don't you show it?"

Reorientation

So we started showing him when he was three months old and sort of ever since ((laughs)) it just sort of gathered momentum.

Responses to Q 1 typically accomplish their Reorientation by such formulations as *So we sort of got hooked after that / And we just went from there ... / ... and that's when we started*, etc. To build on Hasan's formulation, rather than merely recording a final event, the Reorientation *stages* a culmination of events, something attempted to be captured by the term Reorientation itself, and in this respect it is clearly distinguished from the final event found in procedure. The really interesting question of course pertains to the nature of that 'staged culmination'.

In one sense a Reorientation is the equivalent of a narrative Resolution as the concept is employed by Labov & Waletzky (1967) since the Record (of events), a series of quite ordinary events in a potentially exhaustive and thus likely to be tedious account, is retroactively given the force of the cause in a cause ^ effect relationship by the consequences of the initiating events being stated in a Reorientation. This interpretation would accord with Hasan's (1984b:81) equation of Final Event (in her analysis of the nursery tale) with Resolution (in the Labov & Waletzky type narrative).

In another sense, a Reorientation appears to be the equivalent of a Coda – called Finale in Hasan (1984b) – since it does indeed function as a 'device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment' (Labov & Waletzky 1967:39), i.e. it does

make the “return to altered rest” statement about the main protagonists’ Hasan (1984b) speaks of, an impression undoubtedly supported by the highly conventionalised, at times almost ritualistic, form of many of the Reorientations in the corpus. Since it seems to be generally agreed that Codas (or Finales) are optional in narrative-type texts (see for example Hasan 1984b; Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972b; Martin & Rothery 1981), we could expect recounts to reflect that optionality in the incidence of Reorientation and we turn to our corpus for some evidence in support of one or the other interpretation of the nature of the stage referred to as Reorientation.

On the basis of the recounts in the subset of 125 texts presented in Volume 2, which will be used throughout this chapter as the basis for any quantification of generic stages simply because that account is fully explicit and available for scrutiny, the incidence of Reorientation in recounts is so high as to suggest its being criterial or categorial⁴³: 30 out of 34 recounts, i.e. 88%, follow a Record with a Reorientation. Furthermore, 10 recounts follow their Reorientation with a Coda – one recount even with two – thereby lending further support to the analysis of recounts proposed here, viz. that the stages Record ^ Reorientation are not only categorial of a text type recount but, given all the above-mentioned qualifications regarding the meaning of beginning, middle, and end stages, in some sense also constitute its distinguishing middle stage. Additionally, finding that a significant number of recounts have both a Reorientation and a Coda, viz. 10 out of 30, strengthens our interpretation of Reorientations being distinct from Codas despite the conventionalised form of many of the Reorientations.

Further evidence in support of the contention that a Reorientation is more than a Final Event – and yet not a Coda – comes from those recounts where a Record is *not* followed by a Reorientation. In those instances we find that there is a distinct sense of the recount being incomplete, something nicely demonstrated in example 6-3 below:

Example 6-3 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 01/I 47)

I: RECOUNT

... and as soon as I came out here ... “I’ll get a cattle dog and have it for a pet and maybe we’ll start to show it.”

⁴³In a study set in a probabilistic model of text – and which seeks to contribute to the replacement of a concept of categoricity with that of variability – it makes good sense to speak of a given generic stage as being criterial (or categorial) to the definition of a genre rather than to claim that its realisation in any given text is either obligatory (or categorial) or optional. While this may appear to be yet another case of hedging, the facts of realisation of text structure clearly warrant it that statements about realisation be couched in terms of (statistical) tendencies.

We started to show it. It's that particular dog still in the yard – it's a shocking specimen. ((laughs)) It's the family pet. ...

###

GP: But this is how it started.

I: Yeah, this is how it started.

Although the pause following *It's the family pet* clearly indicates that the interviewee considers the text completed, the interviewer does not as his request for confirmation that the goal of the recount has actually been accomplished shows.⁴⁴ While it could be argued that the fact of the goal's accomplishment is implicit in *We started to show it*, this degree of implicitness – if that is indeed what it is – is highly unusual among the recounts produced in response to Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'). On the other hand, the fact that the interviewee happily accepts the proffered *But this is how it started* as a Reorientation to the preceding text by repeating it verbatim says something about its function in recount, such function *not* being realised adequately by a final event such as *We started to show it* in 6-3.

The discussion of the functional role of Reorientation in the 'staged, goal oriented social process' called recount leads us to summarise the semantic attributes of Reorientation as follows: At least one but possibly several events, which themselves are temporally sequenced vis-à-vis one another in the Reorientation and/or the previously named events in the Record, are simply *listed* without any of the elaboration of the actions, characters and settings constituting them that is typical of the Record stage. The difference between Record and Reorientation as far as events are concerned is thus a semantic attribute of \pm elaboration (of detail), giving the impression of the text being 'rounded up', being hastily brought to an end. This impression is strengthened by the last-named event in Record being made the starting point for the events named in the Reorientation, often realised in a Circumstance of Time, literal or metaphorical. In fact, although the events in Record are rarely explicitly presented as the cause of subsequent events, it is certainly the case that the events in Reorientation are typically presented as the consequence of what went before, sometimes explicitly via consequential conjunctions functioning either cohesively or structurally. And lastly, there will be some statement of a final event which is synonymous with a return to the

⁴⁴The similarity of the interviewer's behaviour with that shown by Labov – see discussion of example 3-1 in Section 3.1.3 – is unmistakable. Although I had learned by this time to refrain from completing an interviewee's turn, one's ability as an interactant to desist is obviously related to one's ability to tolerate silence.

here & now, thereby not only bringing the recount of events to an end but also simultaneously strongly implying the point of the text.

While in the discussion above we have been concerned primarily to motivate the setting up of a generic stage Reorientation in order to demonstrate the need for a two-part structure of the middle stage of recount in contradistinction to the single, unitary middle stage of procedure, we have somewhat neglected to develop grounds on which we may distinguish between Reorientation and Resolution on the one hand, and Reorientation and Coda on the other. It is suggested that the differences between Reorientation and Resolution are largely consonant with the differences between recount and narrative, such differences having little to do with a narrative-type text being \pm exciting but everything with the goals of these text types being different ones. Additionally, quantitative evidence from an analysis of Theme will be presented in Chapter 8 which shows that Reorientations resemble Resolutions even less than they do Codas, notwithstanding the fact that they typically incorporate final events. As far as Codas are concerned, it would appear that the analysis of narrative-type texts could benefit from a definition of Coda which limits its functional role to the recontextualising of a prior text within ongoing discourse – thereby linking the text to what follows textually – via the making of a metastatement about the narrative, the procedure, etc. This would certainly appear to be the function of the Codas in both recount and procedure in 6-1a – b above.

Although recount and procedure could be expected to be the two prototypical response types, in fact only two texts out of the total of 32 given in response to Q 4 are procedures as exemplified in 6-1b while 19 texts are recounts. However, another 7 texts displaying a strong procedural orientation in fact constitute an uneasy mixture of recount and procedure as in example 6-4 below:

Example 6-4 (Q 4)

GP: Can you tell me how that whelping of Lady went, from beginning to end?

I: 'recount'

She just- When she came into labour, she's-

'procedure'

She'll let you know, she'll come and get you and she'll whinge until you come back to the box with her. And you'll sit there and she'll do all the work herself. And once she has the first pup ... You know, she's absolutely fantastic, you know, she gets that bag

off them so quick and she gets them going really quick. And she takes so much care in them.

'recount'

And she had that pup and then she had – how many did she have the last time? – she had five, I think. All of them were whelped perfectly normally. The last one she was really exhausted. A very, very big pup. And I had to literally pull that one out of her. But once I got it out, back to normal again. She was cleaning them up, feeding them, bringing them around – she's a marvellous mother, a terrific mother.

recount OR procedure:

Coda

And that's just a normal whelping. No problems. And then you get all the ones with problems. ((laughs))

The switch from simple past to simple present tense, or vice versa, occurs quite commonly not simply from one clause to the next – whether the clauses are part of the same clause complex or not – but even when the clauses involved are 'bound' or hypotactic clauses, the two instances of such switches in example 6-4 being shown with dotted underline. The switch constituted by she's *a marvellous mother, a terrific mother* in fact provides a bridge to the following Coda-like summing-up, thereby concluding the text without continuing to make any distinctions between 'recount' or 'procedure' *And that's just a normal whelping. No problems.*

A generic analysis might seek to account for this movement back and forth in terms of some kind of 'genre mixing' (see Ventola 1987), or attempt to take a 'dynamic' approach to the modelling of text (see Section 4.4 for an exemplification of the latter). However, since these recount-cum-procedures texts are produced in response to a question which is generically far from felicitous – conflicting generic cues being given by mixing a universally unvarying sequence of events in terms of field (whelping) with a focus on a specific and potentially unique sequence of events (dog *x*'s whelping) – an attempt to account for the generic instability of these seven texts in terms of either genre mixing or genre dynamics would be misplaced.

Of the remaining five texts, three fall into the generic category of observation, i.e. those named observation/comment by Martin & Rothery (1981), and two into report. Observations take neither a strongly narrative nor a strongly expository approach; instead, such texts are highly interpersonally motivated in that they tend to *state* a 'fact', which may even be minimally realised as a sequence of events, and then proceed to express the speaker's personal *reaction* to that stated fact. Reports are best seen as a

category of ‘description’ at a very general level, the distinction between REPORT and DESCRIPTION relating to the level of generality at which the text is cast such that a report may be considered to describe some state of affairs ‘generically’, i.e. as belonging to a class of states obtaining always, while a description may be considered to describe a specific state of affairs.

The distinction between report and description is thus clearly related to the distinction between procedure and recount, bringing into play cross-cutting vectors pertaining to levels of generality and different foci on the world of experience which we may represent diagrammatically as in Figure 6-2 below:

| | event focus | thing focus |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| specific | recount | description |
| general | procedure | report |

Fig. 6-2: Notional text types of telling and describing

The basic foci on either events or things – on activities or objects as we expressed it in the attempt at a systemic representation of field in Section 3.3.1 – recurs again and again in human behaviour, and thus not surprisingly finds its expression in language behaviour at the level of grammar as well, for example in the tendency to turn events into things in writing (via nominalisation) but to represent them more congruently as processes in speech (via the intricacy of the clause complex); see discussion in Section 4.2. But this basic distinction cuts across an interpretative one of the specific vs. the general, thus creating a fundamental proportionality of recount relating to procedure as description does to report, and of recount relating to description as procedure does to report. This proportionality in turn yields the basic text types of telling and describing, of – at one level – narrating and expounding or ‘expositing’.

The generic categories observation and report/description will be discussed below in some detail in the context of the intended elicitation of narratives and descriptions/ explanations respectively. While the observations given in response to Q 4 fit the above gloss, the reports of the breeder’s (!) typical behaviour are once again noticeably

affected by a tendency to mix such a description with aspects of recounting some last occurrence of whelping.

On the whole, the hypothesis underlying Q 4 ('tell about whelping') need not be rejected on the basis of the texts elicited, i.e. it was indeed found to be the case that recount was largely the favoured generic type. On the other hand, the influence of the fact that whelping is after all a biologically determined activity which does not vary in its essential features from one such event to another leads to the production of what are essentially procedures, however strongly influenced by recounting. For this reason it must be concluded that Q 4 is not what might be called a 'natural' question, conducive to eliciting a naturally recount-type response.

Turning to the second of the elicitation questions aimed at eliciting recounts, viz. Q 7 ('tell about today's chores'), the results are superficially similar. For reasons quite similar to those advanced above in respect of Q 4, we would also expect the textual responses to belong to essentially two narrative types, viz. recount and procedure, similar to those illustrated in 6-1a and 6-1b above. Instead, every single interviewee ignores all attempts at eliciting a recount of the morning's events and without any further ado produces a procedural account as in example 6-5:

Example 6-5 (Q 7)

GP: ... could you tell me how, let's say, this morning went – what you did? From when you first got under way?

I: Well, at six o'clock, when we first get up, I go down and let the first lot out to have a run. Generally it's the baby puppies and while they're out, I clean up ... (text continues)

... and school days I got to tear out and have a shower and be gone by eight o'clock. It's a bit of a rush when school's on. It's alright in the summer months – it's the winter months that's the killer because the days are so short.

While several responses show some trace of the generic cue in the elicitation question, usually by a specific temporal reference which is immediately 'corrected' to a timeless one, most texts make no reference to the temporal specificity of a particular series of events at all. Only one response is not strictly a procedure but rather a more generalised description of the day's work without reference to any sequence of events and is therefore coded a report. As already remarked in respect of Q 4 ('tell about whelping'), the routine nature of the field events explored in the elicitation question leads to a

generalised procedural account of the activities involved and rules out any recounting of specific events.

The generic distribution of the texts elicited in response to the two narrative questions aiming at a recount is shown in Table 6-1:

Table 6-1: Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at recount

| Q | Genre | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|---|---------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-------------|----|--------|----|-------|
| | recount | | procedure | | recount \approx procedure | | observation | | report | | |
| 4 | 19 | 59% | 2 | 6% | 7 | 22% | 2 | 6% | 2 | 6% | 32 |
| 7 | 0 | 0% | 22 | 96% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 4% | 23 |

Q 4 ('tell about whelping')

Q 7 ('tell about today's chores')

On the basis of the distribution of recounts vs. procedures for both elicitation questions, it is concluded that a question which *emphasises* sequence to varying degrees is likely to result in responses which favour the universalising of such sequence, i.e. their representation in text as 'generic' of a class of events, and thus disfavour narrative recounting. The recount questions in the interview schedule must be considered largely unsuccessful, certainly so in the interests of obtaining a large number of texts which are generically differentiated in a reliable, i.e. predictable, manner.

The implications of these findings go further than the design of the interview schedule, however, since what is ultimately at issue here is the realisational relationship between genre and field, in other words, between genre and register. It will be remembered that in the model of genre adopted for this study, the system of genre postulated to be underlying the generic structures accessible to investigation is considered to constrain the register choices available for the realisation of particular genres. ('Constrain' has to be understood here as determining the likelihood of (the combinations of) different choices in field, tenor, and mode which realise the different stages of a generic structure at the connotative semiotic plane of register, in turn realised by choices in language.) Therefore, viewed from a complementary perspective, the finding that recounts are relatively disfavoured in the context of questions which emphasise the temporal sequence inherent in recurrent events, whether they be mundane (household chores) or potentially exciting (whelping), may be considered evidence that a certain kind of narrative-type text, viz. the recount, favours choices in field which are either unique or at least of unique significance to the narrator.

Furthermore, it is also highly plausible that the already disfavoured combination of a genre recount with a field that focuses on recurrent events is additionally militated against by both the choice of tenor typical of the sociolinguistic interviews (see Section 3.3.2, especially Figure 3-4) and the choice of mode typical of the interview questions (see Section 3.3.3, especially Figure 3-5).

On the other hand, it is certainly the case that even recurrent events belonging to a mundane field, such as the weekly shopping for groceries, is perfectly ‘recountable’ provided such a field choice combines with tenor and mode choices deemed more ‘appropriate’ to the field in question, for example when the recount is given to intimates to whom the speaker is linked by positive affect and repeated contact (tenor), such as members of the same household, and in genuine, though not necessarily face-to-face, conversation (mode); see discussions of register in Section 2.2, especially Figure 2-6, and Section 3.3, especially Figures 3-5 – 6.

There is little doubt that such recounts are as ‘pointful’ as the composite narrative of the kind modelled prototypically by Labov & Waletzky (1967), such pointfulness not being preemptively – and negatively – decided by their preference for the label ‘narrative of personal experience’ as Hasan (1984b:71) seems to suggest. The ‘narrative of personal experience’ which ‘recounts’ a morning’s shopping expedition may be lacking in the kind of crisis that is considered the hallmark of a narrative (cf. Sacks 1972b) – which of course is precisely what has motivated the setting up of a genre recount – but it is unlikely to be a tedious recitation of all the events that constituted that shopping expedition and instead made ‘tellable’ in the terms of Labov (1972b) by inventing its own point, such as ‘getting caught up in some hobby against one’s better judgment or one’s original intentions’ in the recounts given in response to Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’). The respective points of different genres are different ones, such points being at least partially synonymous with the goals of different genres.

6.2.2 Narrative

Four questions in the interview schedule were intended to elicit narratives, viz. Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’), Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/accident?’), Q 8 (‘what happened in funny incident?’), and Q 10 (‘what happened in surprising success?’). Unlike the recount questions, these narrative questions do not stress

temporal sequence but rather imply it by naming a ‘macro-event’ which can be more or less strongly assumed to be constituted of a series of temporally sequenced events. The four questions resulted in a large number of narrative-type responses, viz. recounts as defined and exemplified in Section 6.2.1 above as well as narrative-type texts which at a primary level of delicacy will be referred to as *narrative⁴⁵; and also in a substantial number of texts which do not appear to be narrative-like at all, viz. observations. The results are presented in Table 6-2 below:

Table 6-2: Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative

| Q | Genre | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----|---------|-----|------------|-----|-------------|-----|--------|----|-------------|----|------------|----|-------|
| | recount | | *narrative | | observation | | report | | description | | exposition | | |
| 1 | 32 | 91% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 9% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 35 |
| 6 | 7 | 20% | 23 | 66% | 1 | 3% | 2 | 6% | 2 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 35 |
| 8 | 0 | 0% | 27 | 77% | 8 | 23% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 35 |
| 10 | 2 | 6% | 19 | 56% | 12 | 35% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 34 |

Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')

Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?')

Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')

Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')

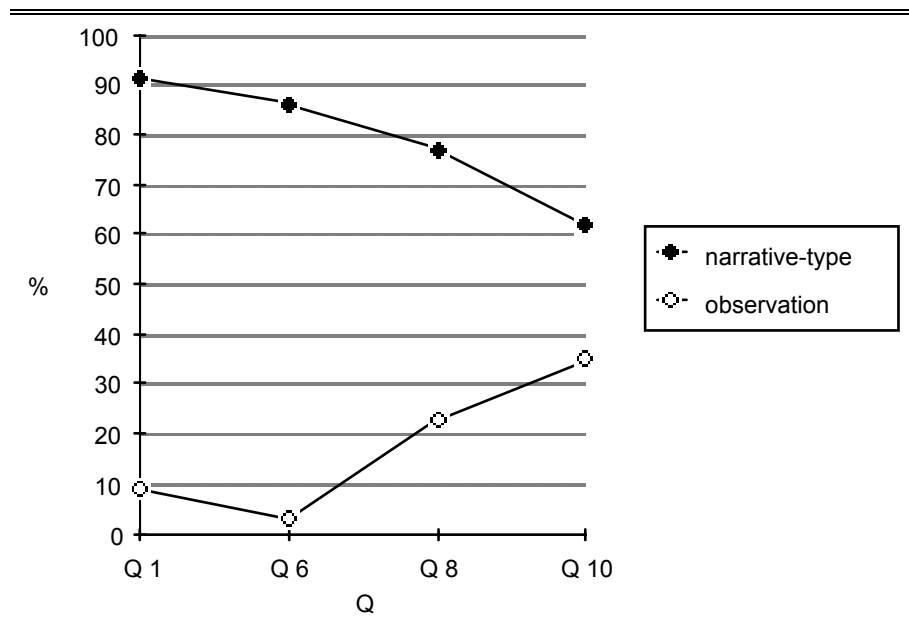
As already implied in the discussion of recount above, we find that one elicitation question in particular, viz. Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'), yielded the prototypical recounts intended to be elicited by Q 4 ('tell about whelping') and Q 7 ('tell about today's chores') and not narratives as hypothesised in Chapter 3. In fact, Q 1 resulted almost exclusively in recounts and as a result came to account for 78% of all the recounts produced in response to the four narrative questions under discussion.

Turning to the category of *narratives, i.e. to narrative-type texts excluding recounts, we find that while the other three narrative questions did result largely in *narratives, the incidence of such texts ranged from a relatively low 56% of all responses to Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') to an intermediate 66% in response to Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?') to a high 77% in response to Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?'). This somewhat surprising result is accounted for by the only category of non-narrative texts found in any substantial number, viz. observation, whose incidence jumps quite dramatically from a low 3%

⁴⁵The asterisk is to indicate that the coding is preliminary, and thus in a sense incorrect, since *narrative comprises several subcategories at the same level of delicacy as recount; see below this section for discussion.

and 9% for Qs 6 and 1 respectively to a very substantial 23% and 35% for Qs 8 and 10 respectively.

A clearer picture of the likely ‘narrativeness’ of each of these four questions may be obtained by aggregating the generic categories recount and *narrative while, conversely, the lack of narrativeness may be inferable from the incidence of observations. By bringing both types of information together we may thus gain a first indication of their narrativeness; see Figure 6-3 below:



- Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')
Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?')
Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')
Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')

Fig. 6-3: Narrative-type genres vs. observations elicited in response to questions intended to elicit narrative

On the basis of the two sets of results graphed in Figure 6-3 it would appear that the narrativeness of a question needs to be represented on a cline – Q 1 clearly being the most narrative and Q 10 the least.

The question posed by these results is whether the elicitation questions set up a kind of generic ‘tension’ similar to that identified in respect of Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’) or whether the range of responses is an entirely ‘natural’ and predictable one. In particular we need to understand the significance of obtaining observations, i.e. non-narrative texts, in the context of narrative questions. And in order to assess the significance of the distribution of recounts vs. *narratives a more explicit motivation of these generic categories is needed similar to that provided for recount vs. procedure in

the previous section. In other words, having argued for a category of recount relative to a category procedure, we still need to demonstrate the desirability of an analysis of non-procedural narrative-type texts as different yet closely agnate genres at a greater level of delicacy. We will address both these questions in turn, first seeking to establish exactly what is the meaning of a choice of observation in the context of a narrative question and then seeking to relate that choice to the other demonstrably different choices being made in the same context.

In order to understand what it is that leads to the very significant incidence of observations in the context of what appear to be narrative questions, however differing in some measure of ‘narrativeness’, we will illustrate what are seemingly the least agnate text types produced in this context, one a narrative in the classic sense of Labov & Waletzky (1967), the other an observation. Both were produced in response to Q 10 (‘what happened in surprising success?’), i.e. the question which yielded the greatest proportion of observations.

Example 6-6a

(see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 16)

NARRATIVE

Orientation

Oh we went down to – it was twelve months ago what? – the long weekend just gone, we went down-

We thought we’d go down to Bungendore, just to a show.

Complication

And ... we went in and Terry was standing talking to some people that he met and I came back and I said, “Aw” – it was with Grizzle, one of the young dogs – and I said, “aw, just won best in-group”.

Evaluation

And he said, “Aw, nice”, thinking, ‘wow’, ((laughs)) you know, because that was a bit of a shock.

Because that was our first one with, well, any of the salukis.

Example 6-6b

(see also Vol. 2 – Q 10/I 12)

OBSERVATION

Event Description

Yes, I had a best in-show with my dog, which I didn’t really expect.

Comment

But you have lots of surprises like that because really, if you’re going out to a show you sort of always go out and have your dog looking the best. You should.

But you really- you know, the day that I sort of went to a dog show knowing that I was going to win

something I think you'd have to give it up. It should always- you know, you shouldn't really know exactly that your dog is going to win. Because I think once you get to that stage you might as well get right out of dog showing.

Resolution

And then I had to go in again for best in-show and I came back and I said, "Oh I won runner-up in-show" and I think I could've pushed him over with a feather he was so shocked.

I was too. ((laughs))
But it wasn't until afterwards it sort of hit me.

Completion

That was probably the biggest surprise we've ever had.

Firstly, the two texts 6-6a – b differ in respect of the degree to which they are concerned with the representation of experience – the narrative primarily *tells* 'what happened' while the observation *states* 'what happened & how that affected the narrator'. In terms of the realisation of field, the narrative in 6-6a is indeed concerned with representing an 'activity sequence' constitutive of a specific 'field of experience' while the observation in 6-6b represents very little of what constituted a surprising show success for this dog breeder. In fact, it would be close to impossible to reconstruct a typical show success on the basis of this text.

Secondly, since the texts also represent experiences as being different in relation to the narrator in the sense of being oriented towards the experiential world, i.e. a world external to the narrator, vs. the internal world of the narrator, we might also consider the difference between these two genres one of an *experiential* vs. an *interpersonal* orientation in the sense of Halliday (1973). While the representation of external experiences is concerned with the experiences themselves – and seemingly for their own sake (but see the discussion of narrative genres below) – they may of course include experiences in which the narrator himself is a participant. On the other hand, the representation of internal experiences focuses on the narrator's reactions to external experiences. In fact, we may consider the crucial difference between various generic choices made in the context of narrative questions to be realised via a manipulation of

interpersonal meanings per se since different interpersonal aspects seem to be to the fore in different genres. For example, while in narrative it is the choice of ‘usuality’ in a system of MODALITY (see Halliday 1985c), which realises the counterexpectations characteristic of a Complication or ‘complicating action’ (Labov 1972b), in observation it is choices expressing ‘attitude’ to the events, characters, circumstances, etc., in the text which realise the speaker’s intrusion into the representation of external experiences to such an extent that they in fact come to be a representation of internal experiences.

Such an interpretation of narrative and observation makes it possible to interpret the relative downgrading of the telling of ‘what happened’ in the context of a narrative question to an essential *stating* that ‘something did happen’, i.e. to an Event Description, followed by a commonly extensively elaborated reaction along the lines of ‘how that affected me’, i.e. by a Comment. Implicit in this formulation is a close relationship between the generic choices made, i.e. no matter how ‘non-narrative’ a genre observation appears to be when contrasted with texts which are ‘obviously’ narrative-like, observation and narrative-type genres must be considered agnate choices in a system of genre – both on qualitative and on quantitative grounds.

One important consequence of representing an experience of sequenced events as something approaching a single fact is that there is neither scope nor need for the elaboration of a generic structure which textually represents an experience of events lying outside the text. In fact, the generic structure of observation reflects the quite different goals of an interpersonally oriented text. (See also Horvath & Eggins (1986) on ‘opinion text’, postulated as a fundamental text type along with ‘story-telling’ and ‘informing’ text types.)

The question arises as to whether the production of such observations in varying numbers in response to different elicitation questions can be attributed to the elicitation question constraining the response generically. The results presented in Table 6-2 show that the incidence of observations is lowest in response to Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/accident?’) and Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’), the difference being marginal, and highest in response to Q 8 (‘what happened in funny incident?’) and Q 10 (‘what happened in surprising success?’) with 23% and 35% respectively, the difference between both Q 8 and Q 10, and Qs 8, 10 on the one hand and Qs 1, 6 on the other being quite substantial. While none of the questions actually focuses on temporal sequence in the way in which the ‘recount’ Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’) and Q 7 (‘tell

about today's chores') do, they do focus on a macro-event, a 'happening' which can be assumed to be temporally sequenced.

How is one then to account for the substantially different results between Qs 1, 6 and Qs 8, 10? In the first instance, it seems that what distinguishes Qs 1, 6 from Qs 8, 10 is that while the former pair of questions can in fact not be answered successfully without elaborating the temporal sequencing lying behind the happening probed, the latter pair can. Consider that while Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'), for example, could certainly be answered along the lines of *someone gave me a puppy for a present*, such an answer does not seem to be a satisfactory one – it is somehow felt to be not self-explanatory and thus tends to be backed up by an account, a 'recount' in fact, of the events which did in fact produce the involvement in dogs. Similarly, the emergency/ accident probed in Q 6 relies on an *unfolding* of complicating and resolving events without which the representation of the experience itself cannot possibly succeed in becoming a 'pointful' story in the sense of Labov (1972b). It is no accident then that the question most closely resembling Labov's 'danger-of-death' question does yield a very high proportion of narrative-type texts with only a single instance of the one generic category which appears to be a viable alternative to narrative-type texts, viz. observation, and that Q 1 is responded to in such a homogeneous fashion generically.

In the second instance, Qs 8, 10 seem capable of being answered in a way which does not so much not see the need for giving a temporally-sequenced account of the happening probed, i.e. of funny or surprising incidents, but which chooses to turn certain kinds of experiences into facts in order to be able to comment on them. Funny or surprising incidents cannot only be successfully 'made available' to an interlocutor without a detailed telling, i.e. they can be stated rather than told, they also encourage the foregrounding of highly personal comments, a kind of subjective interpretation of the experience represented. As far as the difference between Qs 8 and 10 themselves is concerned, we must look towards the likely structure of the field events constituting a 'funny incident' vs. a 'surprising success'. While we cannot know anything about the constitutive structure of a funny incident chosen by different interviewees, we do know the structure of the dog show, i.e. the site of the surprising success asked after. Since a dog show is a highly structured knock-out competition, a success at a show would generally involve the exhibitor, and thus presumably the narrator, in a regular move through its stages. The predictable sequence of such moves is therefore likely to

militate against an account of a surprising success being given narratively – i.e. despite its being the site of a success which surprises, pleases, excites, etc., its structure tends to be considered a routine – and instead favours the generic choice of stating a success as a fact which warrants personal comment.

It is contended here that observations represent an entirely appropriate generic choice in the context of a narrative question, and that the production of such texts in quite large numbers cannot be attributed to the elicitation question being one which ‘unnaturally’ constrains the response. The explanation has to be sought in the different degree to which real-world experience is considered ‘tellable’ in the teller’s culture, i.e. is considered suitable for representation in text in certain ways. That this is indeed the likely explanation for the variability between narrative and other text types found in response to narrative questions is further borne out by the distribution of *narratives when analysed at a greater level of delicacy than done so far, and of their incidence relative to that of observations. In other words, if narrative-like genres were understood to comprise a number of distinct yet closely related genres, of which recount and narrative ‘proper’ are but two, then it will be possible to explain the range of generic responses obtained to narrative questions.

Without the benefit of a generic analysis which pays due regard to the issue of delicacy, what is likely to be recognised as a narrative text may range from what Labov & Waletzky (1967:40) call ‘the primary sequence of the narrative’ at one end to a highly structured text with a complex functional organisation of its elements at the other, an interpretation which may of course also be found in Labov & Waletzky’s ‘normal’ narrative of ‘personal experience’ comprising an Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution structure. But while Labov & Waletzky insist that

the degree to which any one narrative approximates this normal form is a significant fact about that narrative--perhaps more significant than any other in terms of fulfilling the originating function of the narrative.

(Labov & Waletzky 1967:40)

they appear to associate established variants of the ‘complex normal narrative’ more with individual narrators’ verbal ability and experience in narrating than with culturally shared practices that have given rise to different functional varieties. This has the unfortunate consequence that all variation at the level of text which is not obviously due to the texts belonging to well-recognised different genres, such as narrative of personal experience vs. joke, has to be explained in terms of individual style, ability,

etc. – which of course may ultimately even be explained in terms of social variation – while the perhaps less obvious cultural, i.e. generic, variation involved is overlooked. The texts adduced as narratives in Labov & Waletzky (1967), for example, are clearly not all instances of ‘fully-formed, complex normal narratives’ – yet with the exception of one of these texts, which is rejected by them as a normal text altogether, there is no discussion as to how these texts might be related to one another as narratives.

Such generic variation has commonly been ignored in work on ‘narrative’ in a functional framework, in practice totally so by Labov & Waletzky (1967) – although they are clearly aware of the agnation to be found as their reference to ‘jokes, ghost stories and surprise endings’ as displaying ‘the most frequent variant [of the ‘normal’ narrative – G.P.] ... where the evaluation ends the resolution’ shows (Labov & Waletzky 1967:41) – and also partly in Labov (1972b) since, although a sub-type of ‘fight stories’ is being described, this is done without it being related to other types of story. A similar defect attaches to the work by Hasan (1984b,c) on the nursery tale which, although it relates that genre in very general terms to genres of literature, also makes little attempt to relate the structure of the nursery tale to that of other tales, stories, etc., in a way which would allow one to distinguish between different kinds of simple stories on the grounds of their different generic structures. (Hasan’s discussion of Placement in fact provides a basis for distinguishing the nursery tale from an essentially unproblematic narrative-type text such as a recount of personal, i.e. actual, experiences by virtue of the semantic and lexicogrammatical differences between Placement and Orientation. Regrettably, she does not take up the possibility of establishing the agnation of these genres.) The problem is partially addressed in Martin & Rothery (1981) by their postulating three related narrative text types, viz. recount, narrative, and thematic narrative, intended to account for the variation found in their corpus of students’ written texts.

In the analyses of the responses obtained to the four narrative questions in the interview schedule, it was found that the generic analyses proposed in the work on genre relied on so far were inadequate to account for the range of narrative texts obtained. Neither the categories recount and *narrative, i.e. ‘narrative’ in the sense of embracing a number of different narrative-type categories, nor recount and narrative, i.e. ‘narrative’ in the sense of a Labov & Waletzky (1967), Martin & Rothery (1981) narrative with a canonical functional structure of (Abstract) ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ (Coda), adequately captured the generic structures of all the

corpus texts. A brief illustration and discussion of the narrative range is necessary at this point since it supports the interpretation of the variation in respect of observations produced in the context of narrative questions.

The analysis itself is based on the responses to the following elicitation questions:

- Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')
- Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?')
- Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')
- Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')
- Q 11 ('tell favourite story')

The responses to Qs 1, 8, 10 and 11 form part of the corpus of texts which are further quantified in respect of certain realisations at the levels of discourse semantics and lexicogrammar.

In order to capture the range of narrative-type texts represented in the corpus we need to ensure that the generic categories postulated are explicitly related to one another in terms of delicacy. For this reason it is proposed henceforth to consider RECOUNT to be a category at the same level of delicacy as NARRATIVE, in the sense of the normal, composite narrative postulated by Labov & Waletzky (1967), and also in the related sense of Martin & Rothery (1981), and to set up two additional categories named ANECDOTE and EXEMPLUM.⁴⁶ (The categories procedure and observation are also considered to be at the same level of delicacy of some putative system modelling generic choices.)

The meanings intended to be captured by the terms anecdote and exemplum within a system of terms encompassing other narrative categories is close to some of their common dictionary definitions:

ANECDOTE:

The narrative of an interesting or striking incident or event. (SOED)

A short narrative of a particular incident or occurrence of an interesting nature.

(Macquarie Dictionary)

EXEMPLUM:

An example; *spec.* a moralizing tale or parable; an illustrative story. (SOED)

An anecdote designed to point a moral, esp. in a medieval sermon. (Macquarie Dictionary)

To some extent, the significance of interpersonal meanings as discussed briefly above in the context of narrative vs. observation is found expressed in these definitions:

While the anecdote is a narrative, relying on the realisation of usuality to create the tensions which sustain it as narrative, it is also one which must be judged ‘interesting’, i.e. the definition allows for the narrator’s intrusion on the experiences represented in text by the addition of attitudinal meanings. Similarly, while the exemplum is also a narrative – variously referred to as tale, anecdote, and story – it is also one which is designed to prescribe behaviour, making choices in a system of modality, something captured definitionally by being referred to as ‘illustrative’, ‘pointing a moral’, ‘giving an example’, etc.

While the anecdote is most closely related to the narrative, the exemplum is closer to the observation. Both anecdote and narrative may be said to be primarily concerned with ‘entertaining’ a hearer with a textual artefact which, in order to be successful, needs to have a status independent of the experiences it represents. On the other hand, observation and exemplum are much more concerned with ‘making a point’ rather than with entertainment, something which is achieved by creating a link between the text as representation of experience and something outside it. In the case of an observation this is the speaker while in the case of an exemplum it is the context of the culture as adduced by the speaker in evidence for what is still his own opinion. In this way the impression is created that in the observation the point is made ‘subjectively’, leading to the foregrounding of interpersonal meanings, while in the exemplum it is made ‘objectively’, leading to the foregrounding of experiential meanings.

The interpretation of certain narrative-type texts as being simultaneously narrative-like and expository-like, nicely brought out by the partial (dictionary) definition of exemplum as ‘illustrative story’, also allows us to see that the text chosen in Section 4.4 to illustrate continuous change at the level of generic structure (see examples 4-35 – 35a) was not aberrant. While it had been analysed as exemplum in a synoptic perspective, its interpretation in a dynamic perspective asserted that the text had ‘moved’ from a strongly narrative orientation at the beginning to a strongly expository one at the end. The synoptic interpretation of 4-35 as an exemplum therefore did no more than impose a ‘meta-generic’ interpretation, a generic interpretation at a more abstract level, on a text the production of which was dynamic by reference to the concept of generic structure at the less abstract level.

⁴⁶The earlier term used for this genre was ‘exemplification’, for example in Nesbitt & Plum (1988).

One example each of anecdote and exemplum, both given in response to Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?'), must suffice to illustrate the generic types being proposed here:

Example 6-7a (Q 6)

[GP: Can you think of one ((i.e. a 'dramatic' incident)), an emergency or something? Have you had any?]

ANECDOTE

Orientation/Crisis

No, only that a month before Christmas my young dog, that's down at Mum's, Popeye – I went down to pick him up to bath him for the show the next day – he'd eaten all his hair out of one side.

Reaction

I nearly killed him. He had a flea allergy. He had only one flea on him and that was it, you know.

Completion

That's something really dramatic though.

Example 6-7b (Q 6)

[GP: Have you ever had a real emergency in a delivery?]

EXEMPLUM

Orientation

I had one bitch whelping in Orange.

Incident

And it was a new lady vet and she decided she wouldn't do a caesarian, that she'd remove the puppies with instruments. And she virtually pulled three of them to pieces. And we got one out alive but the bitch was just a real wreck after it. In fact, she told us to get it branded (!). The bitch recovered but nevertheless it knocked her around.

Interpretation

In this day and age they would never do that; they'd do a caesar – they wouldn't put them through that.

The anecdote in 6-7a depends for its success on the hearer's understanding, assumed by the speaker, that a dog – an old english sheepdog! – which has half its luxurious coat chewed off cannot be exhibited at a dog show, certainly not successfully. In the terms of a classic narrative structure, the Resolution of the Complication created by the dog's action is therefore obvious, viz. the dog's withdrawal from the show. However, the 'real' resolution within the context of an anecdote text as in 6-7a is to be found in the narrator's Reaction, the sole purpose of which is to underline the enormity, i.e. the 'tellability', of the Crisis created in the actions and events told. If the 'punchline' of an anecdote – the similarity to the

conventional genre of the joke being unmistakable – is essentially implicit, the Reaction ensures that the joke is not lost on the hearer.

The exemplum in 6-7b, on the other hand, is only minimally concerned with the telling of complicating events and their resolution by subsequent ones. Quite typically, however, they are made perfectly explicit. But as typically, nothing much is made of them in their textual representation. In fact, in many instances in the corpus, an entire sequence of often dramatic events is told in just a few clauses. What matters in exemplums is not the representation of events as problematic, something typical of both narrative and anecdote and reflected in their respective generic structures, but instead it is the cultural significance of the ‘macro-event’, i.e. the significance of the events in the context of the culture in which the text is told. As a consequence, we typically find the significance of the events related made explicit in what we have called here Interpretation.

The differences between narrative, anecdote and exemplum are captured in their respective generic structures. These text types achieve their closely related yet crucially different goals by just one, but highly significant, variation in the middle part of the text without any variation to the beginning or end:

| | <u>Beginning</u> | <u>Middle</u> | | <u>End</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| NARRATIVE: | | Complication | ^ Evaluation | ^ Resolution |
| ANECDOTE: | | Crisis | ^ Reaction | |
| EXEMPLUM: | | Incident | ^ Interpretation | |

While both narrative and anecdote are focused on a crisis, narrative alone creates a balanced movement of rising tension, sustained suspense and falling tension, i.e. the classic generic structure of Complication, Evaluation, and Resolution. An anecdote, on the other hand, creates a Crisis but does not resolve it explicitly – in the well-told anecdote, the resolution is a cathartic outburst of laughter, a shocked (but audible!) silence, a gasp, etc. The narrator’s explicit, and linguistically realised, Reaction emphasises the critical nature of the events told in the Crisis, often by reiteration. And the exemplum downgrades the tellable events to a mere Incident whose only function is to serve as the raw material for the making of a point that lies totally outside the text. This it does via an explicit Interpretation of the Incident. While the ‘evaluative’ elements in narrative and anecdote thus relate to the text itself, adopting the text as their frame of reference, the evaluative element in exemplum relates to the context

which gave rise to the experiences represented in the text, thus adopting a world outside its textual representation as its frame of reference.⁴⁷

In the light of the more delicate generic analysis proposed here, the most pertinent results presented in Table 6-2, which had collapsed the more delicate distinctions made in the analysis above under a single category labelled *narrative, are re-presented in Table 6-3:

Table 6-3: Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative
(Partial re-presentation of results in Table 6-2)

| Q | Genre | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----|---------|-----|---|-----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|-------------|---|--------|-------|
| | recount | | | narrative | | anecdote | | exemplum | | observation | | others | |
| 1 | 32 | 91% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 9% | 0 | 0% | 35 |
| 6 | 7 | 20% | 7 | 20% | 7 | 20% | 9 | 26% | 1 | 3% | 4 | 11% | 35 |
| 8 | 0 | 0% | 8 | 23% | 14 | 40% | 5 | 14% | 8 | 23% | 0 | 0% | 35 |
| 10 | 2 | 6% | 5 | 15% | 1 | 3% | 13 | 38% | 12 | 35% | 1 | 3% | 34 |

Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')

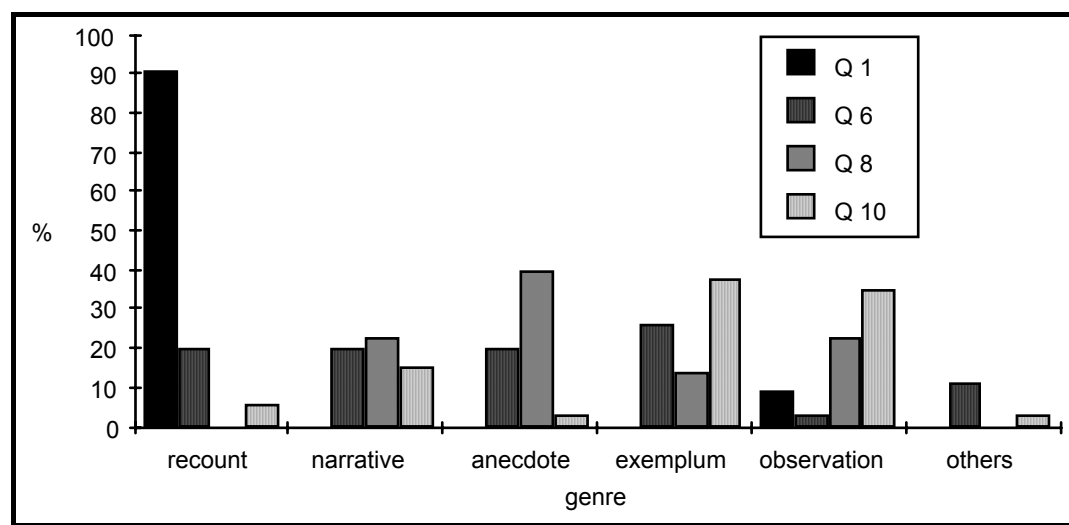
Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?')

Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')

Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')

The most obvious, and of course logical, result of the re-analysis of the generic category *narrative is the breakdown of the bimodal distribution into narrative-type texts on the one hand and observations on the other. When the distribution is graphed it becomes quite clear that the incidence of observations is not particularly high if compared to the various narrative categories; see Figure 6-4 below:

⁴⁷The exemplum is obliquely related to the type of narrative identified by Martin (1984e); Rothery (1986b) as 'serial', i.e. a kind of narrative with an endless succession of minimally developed sequences of Complication ^ Resolution which they found to be especially prominent in boys' 'story' writing in junior years at school, typically of a rather gory kind. They see this genre as being modelled on the serial in popular culture, typically television today although the serialised novel has of course a long tradition which was, before television, continued by the Saturday afternoon movie built around the 'cliffhanger'. Its point would also seem to be closer to making a statement about what is seen as important, for example by small boys in their (fantasy) world, rather than to entertain with a narrative (of vicarious experiences).



Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')
 Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?')
 Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')
 Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')

Fig. 6-4: Genres elicited in response to questions aimed at narrative

However, the most significant gain from a more delicate generic analysis of narrative-type texts lies in the light it sheds on the distribution of the generic category *exemplum*, i.e. the category which appears the least narrative: (i) *exemplums* are found among the responses to every question focusing on an incident of one kind or another but *not* to the question which comes closest to actually focusing on temporal sequence, i.e. Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'); (ii) they are found to constitute a quarter of all texts given in response to the nearest equivalent to the classic narrative 'danger-of-death' question, i.e. Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?'); (iii) their highest incidence is found in response to Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?'), thereby showing that the choice of a type of narrative text which is least concerned with building up a textual artifice intended to 'entertain' in the widest sense is closely related to the choice, and high incidence, of observations in respect of Q 10 ; and (iv) their lowest incidence in response to an incident-focused question is found among the responses to the one question which most overtly seeks to elicit an entertaining response in the conventional sense, i.e. one that will make the hearer laugh, i.e. Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?').

By reversing our focus we now return to the issue of an interview question's 'narrativeness', judged on the basis of the text types given in response to the narrative

questions. While it could be argued on the basis of the incidence of respectively narrative-type and non-narrative-type responses, specifically observations, that Q 1 is the most narrative of all questions (cf. Figure 6-3 above), the fact that every single narrative-type text produced in response to Q 1 was in fact a recount (cf. Table 6-3) probably constitutes evidence against such a proposition. The generic homogeneity of the responses to Q 1 should establish this question as a ‘recount’ question – it is highly successful in eliciting recounts but gives us no sense of the generic variation that appears to be naturally found in a narrative context.

On the other hand, Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/accident?’), which is modelled on the most widely known, and perhaps most widely used, question in sociolinguistic studies may indeed be seen as a classic narrative question since it results in a generic variability among the responses which must be considered more ‘natural’. Furthermore, the almost equal distribution of the four narrative genres identified – graphed in Figure 6-5 below – provides evidence for the naturalness of the seemingly less narrative exemplum since it constitutes the largest category of all the narrative genres given in response to Q 6.

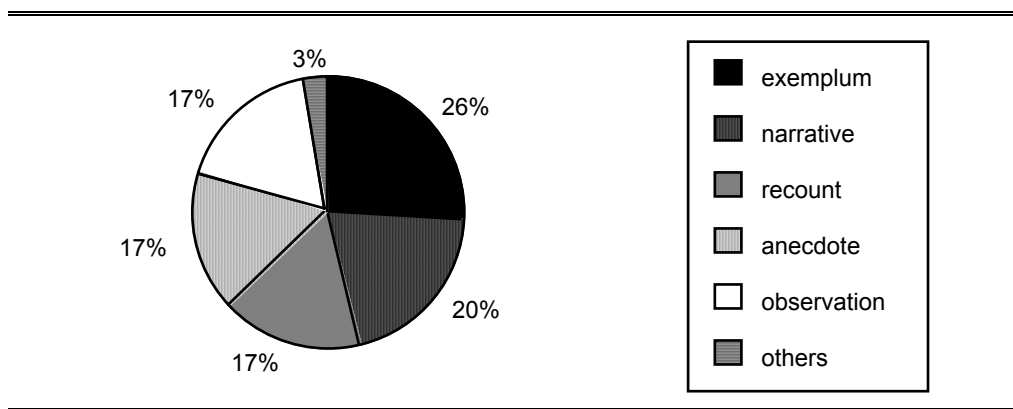


Fig. 6-5: Distribution of genres elicited in response to Q 6 (‘what happened in emergency/accident?’)

The only problematic texts given in response to Q 6, collectively ‘other’ in Figure 6-5 but categorised as report and description respectively in Table 6-3, appear to be those which in some sense state the fact of some experience, similarly to the observation, but then go on to describe that fact, either as an instance of a general class of facts, i.e. in a report, or as a specific fact, i.e. in a description. In either case, the resultant text is – like observations – not only non-narrative but unlike observations it cannot be related to the range of responses given to narrative questions except as an

attempted elaboration of a minimal response which largely fails, as for example the text given as 6-6 below:

Example 6-6 (Q 06)

GP: So you've never had an emergency with a litter?

I: I've had one where I had to turn around- I've had to rotate the puppy. It actually started to come out backwards. It was ... one of our bitches, it was her first litter. So I virtually had to rotate it around, and hold her up and pull it down. Never hurt it at all.

The text in 6-6 is coded a 'description' since that is the only way in which the fact of the emergency can be seen to be elaborated. Although the description implies a temporal sequence of events underlying that single fact, the sequence is not so much downplayed, something often done in exemplums, but instead built into the description of the emergency itself, typically via some kind of modulation as in *So I virtually had to rotate it around, and hold her up and pull it down*. Texts of this kind – two each of report and description – seem to get off to a false start, i.e. they answer the question, relevantly and adequately, but then seek to elaborate the response in a way felt to be more appropriate to the 'talk-oriented' nature of the elicitation context since that is clearly not a question & answer session. However, having given a 'complete' response it does not allow itself to be turned into something akin to an Abstract, for example, but instead the elaboration results in a reiteration of the same fact which merely chases its own tail.

The above interpretation of the texts obtained in response to narrative questions, i.e. to Qs 1, 6, 8 and 10, may be summarised by adopting several complementary perspectives on the generic categories postulated to account for them; see Figure 6-6.

| GENRE: | | recount | narrative | anecdote | exemplum | observation |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <u>orientation:</u> | | ← experiential focus | | interpersonal focus → | | |
| metafunctional | | representational | | interpretative | | |
| 'real world' | | independent (text as artefact) | | dependent (text as reflection on context) | | |
| 'contextual' | | account | enthrall | amuse | make a point 'objectively' 'subjectively' | |
| 'purposive' (to:) | | | | | | |

Figure 6-6: Multiple gloss on genres produced in response to narrative questions

Fig. 6-6: Multiple gloss on genres produced in response to narrative questions

In a perspective on the kinds of meaning which are typically foregrounded in the context of narrating, we notice that these are essentially experiential vs. interpersonal meanings, corresponding to Halliday's distinction between experiential and interpersonal metafunctions. We would contend that the texts produced in that context, normally seen not only as 'naturally' experiential since concerned with the representation of experience, whether real or imagined, personal or vicarious, but often as experiential par excellence, in fact are better seen as foregrounding meanings which lie on a cline from mainly experiential in the case of recount to mainly interpersonal in the case of exemplum, with narrative, anecdote and exemplum in between on a 'continuum' of narrativeness. Observations then represent simply an extension of the cline at the mainly interpersonal end. While there are undoubtedly also interpersonal meanings expressed in recount and, conversely, experiential meanings in observation, their relative significance in all the above genres is reflected – and realised – in their different generic structures.⁴⁸

In a perspective on the 'real world' of experience the texts represent, recount and narrative are strongly *representational* whereas exemplum and observation are strongly *interpretative*, with anecdote falling somewhere in between. (Procedures might have to be considered 'totally' representational, at any rate the most representational of all narrative-type texts.) In a perspective on the degree to which a text may be said to be

⁴⁸The detailed exploration of the realisation of interpersonal meanings in text is beyond the scope of this study. However, there is little doubt that it is the interaction of experiential and interpersonal meanings which create the range of narrative-type texts found to have been produced in this study. The fundamental theoretical problem appears to be the need to recognise – and the difficulty of doing so in textual analytical practice – a distinction between interpersonal meanings which have purely local significance and those which have a global significance in text. The problem, most generally put, is a feature of the general property of text, viz. that choices at different planes are realised probabilistically, and it is manifested in two ways especially which directly affect textual analysis, viz. place and degree of realisation.

The theoretical possibility of having a structural stage (which is ordered relative to other stages) realised non-sequentially was recognised long ago by Mitchell (1957: 43) who observed that 'Stage is an abstract category and the numbering of stages does not necessarily imply sequence in time'. But finding specifically evaluative meanings throughout the text, for example, led Labov (1972b: 366–370) to argue for the non-discrete realisation of Evaluation as the norm, considering its discrete realisation – its 'synopticisation' so to speak – as a middle class aberration which was essentially dysfunctional. While his strong position on the realisation of Evaluation thus constitutes an explicit revision of Labov & Waletzky (1967), who considered it realised as a discrete stage not only coming between Complication and Resolution but by virtue of doing so making the very recognition of Complication and Resolution possible, Labov & Waletzky (1967: 39) had in fact already addressed the issue by discussing the 'embedding' of a stage, specifically Evaluation, in the narrative as a whole, claiming that the embedding may be ordered on 'a scale of degrees' ranging from 'internal' to 'external'.

Responding to the same range of problems in textual analysis, Hasan (1984b) identifies two realisational dimensions in particular as their source, referred to by her as cross-cutting axes of 'discrete/non-discrete' and 'explicit/in-explicit' realisations. And Labov & Waletzky's (1967: 35) reference to the possible 'fusion' of adjacent stages is echoed by Hasan's (1984b: 83) view that the realisation of some stage may be 'interspersed or included' in the realisation of another. Similar patterns of generic realisation are handled by Martin & Rothery (1981) under the headings of 'embedded/included' realisation of stages.

However, some of the realisational problems involved are capable of being addressed with some analytical certainty. For example, the fusion of successively realised stages is surely at least partly one which pertains to the unit of linguistic analysis, from a unit of generic structure down to a unit of language, from clause complex to clause to group/phrase, etc. And such fusion should in turn be distinguished from the structural embedding of generic stages where one stage is realised by another stage or an entire generic structure, in other words by a concept of embedding which is unlike that intended by Labov & Waletzky (1967) and closer to that claimed by Longacre (1983); see also Section 6.3.4.

self-referencing in order to succeed as text, recount, narrative and anecdote are relatively *context-independent* since they present a text as an ‘artefact’, contrasting in this respect with exemplum and observation which are relatively *context-dependent* since they present a text as a ‘reflection on its context’.

And lastly, in a perspective on a text’s ‘purpose’ it may be said that while the recount seeks to *account*, the narrative to *enthrall*, and the anecdote to *amuse*, the exemplum and observation are concerned to *make a point*. It is in fact the distinction between an exemplum making its point ‘objectively’ by adopting the cultural context of the text as its point of reference vs. the observation making its point ‘subjectively’ by adopting the speaker of the text as its point of reference which gives the impression of the two types of text also being differently focused metafunctionally.

The interpretation of both narrative and non-narrative texts proposed here allows us to relate the different genres obtained in response to narrative questions, i.e. to Qs 1, 6, 8 and 10, to one another, both the different categories of narrative-type texts to each other as well as those collectively to the observations obtained in response to the same questions. While a systemic account of genre would ultimately seek to model the choices underlying the production of such closely related or agnate genres in terms of a system capable of generating the different generic structures which define and constitute these genres, at this point of the account of the textual variability found in the corpus it must suffice to say that the text types identified above may be seen to lie on a multiply coded continuum.

6.2.3 Thematic Narrative

One question in the interview schedule was intended to elicit a THEMATIC NARRATIVE, viz. Q 11 (‘tell favourite story’). The hypothesis underlying this question was that by offering the interviewee the opportunity to choose any ‘theme’ whatsoever, that theme was likely to go unannounced linguistically and might thus provide evidence for the generic structure of a specifically ‘thematic’ narrative as postulated by Martin & Rothery (1981). In addition, it was hoped to test the strength of the folk-linguistic term ‘story’ to constrain a response generically.

The many problems inherent in generic analysis, all ultimately bound up with the probabilistic realisation of context in text, are unlikely to be solved by any one researcher in one fell swoop. However, the investigation of the realisation of interpersonal meanings in narrative text and their significance to fundamentally change what is usually seen as experientially-focused text would certainly make a good doctoral dissertation.

The typical response obtained to this question is indeed a narrative as defined in the preceding discussion, with exemplum and anecdote being roughly equal second. The actual distribution, following the generic analysis of narrative-type texts presented so far, is shown in Table 6-4 below. The implications of this distribution relative to the discussion above of a range of narrative genres and their relation to the genre observation will be evident in so far as it confirms the naturalness of such a range of responses.

Table 6-4: Genres elicited in response to question aimed at thematic narrative

| Q | Genre | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----|---------|----|-----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|-------------|----|------------|----|-------|
| | recount | | narrative | | anecdote | | exemplum | | observation | | exposition | | |
| 11 | 0 | 0% | 10 | 48% | 4 | 19% | 5 | 24% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% | 21 |

Q 11 ('tell favourite story')

The important question to be discussed at this point is whether it is possible, or indeed desirable, to recognise a distinct generic structure the only distinguishing basis of which is the non-discrete realisation of an element of structure called 'theme'. A genre thematic narrative was postulated by Martin & Rothery (1981) to account for narratives which did not so much state a theme as 'realised [it] indirectly through the linguistic device of foregrounding' throughout the text, the success of which they saw as 'depend[ing] on the schematic structure of narrative text' (Martin & Rothery 1981:12). It appears from their discussion of student writing that they consider the explicit statement of a theme, be it prospectively in an Abstract or retrospectively in a Coda, both strategies being extremely common in oral narrative, less sophisticated than the implicit thematising through foregrounding. It is not altogether clear whether they consider even the retrospective stating of a theme, the 'tacking on of a moral' at the end, to then turn what might have been a thematic narrative into a plain narrative.

Such a view of narrative presents serious difficulties for the analysis of texts produced in the context of an interview since, as argued in Chapter 5, in a text given in response to a question in an interview, and perhaps in response to a question generally, a theme can almost always be inferred from the negotiation of the question. Any number of responses to Q 11 ('tell favourite story') did announce a theme of some sort, usually coded Abstract, i.e. they made a cataphoric 'meta-statement' concerning the

text about to be produced. Such themes ranged from the ‘favourite story’, which despite its lack of specificity may still be foregrounded as theme, to the ‘funny thing’, the ‘heartbreak story’, the story demonstrating a dog’s ‘cunning/gentleness’, etc., dog people’s ‘madness’, and so on. Without a single exception the texts given in response to Q 11 make their theme explicit. (At times the theme may not be included as part of the text as presented in Vol. 2 simply because we excluded the negotiation of the question from the ‘codable text’; see particularly Q 11/I 04 and Q 11/I 36).

Furthermore, a number of narrative-type texts which are not narratives ‘proper’ according to the generic structure postulated as criterial of such a genre also have Abstracts and at times, though more rarely, even Coda. But, like other narrative-type texts, they also typically deliver thematically what they promised (in an Abstract), or what they said they delivered (in a Coda). Since the explicit statement of a theme would seem to rule out a narrative as a candidate for the generic status of thematic narrative, are other narrative texts which do *not* state a theme explicitly then to be considered ‘thematic anecdotes’, ‘thematic exemplums’, etc.?

For the purposes of this study at least, the generic category ‘thematic narrative’ will not be recognised and texts will not be coded as such. The distinction between explicitly and implicitly thematised narratives may be a valuable one in written genres, and specifically in the teaching of writing, which was the context for the categorisations by Martin & Rothery (1981), but it does not seem to be an essential one in oral genres. Since no particular generic problems were found to attach to the responses to Q 11, the reader is referred to the data in Volume 2 for exemplification of the typical narrative-type text elicited.

The second question of interest is whether the term ‘story’ in the elicitation question has any constraining influence on the response generically. There seems no way of answering this question conclusively though it is surely not an accident that the question which asks for a ‘favourite *story*’ is responded to with the greatest proportion of narratives found among the responses to all narrative questions, i.e. Qs 1, 6, 8, 10 and 11, as Figure 6-7 shows:

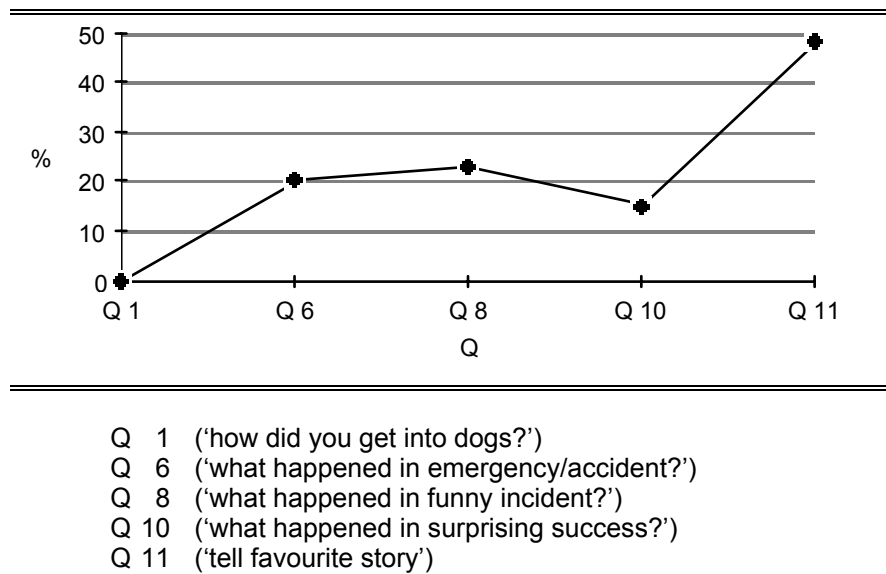


Fig. 6-7: Incidence of narrative 'proper' in responses to narrative questions

On the other hand, quite a number of responses repeat the term 'story' and tell what most clearly are not narratives but texts belonging to other narrative-type genres. (Furthermore, the term 'story' may be offered by speakers as gloss on a text given in response to an elicitation question which itself did not use the term at all, for example in the Coda closing a recount *And that's the story how I got into dackies.*) And the one response most unlike a narrative, viz. an exposition, not only responds by reiterating the 'favourite story' part of the elicitation question but also makes explicit what it is that speakers might be responding to when they are cued to tell a 'story' but do not respond with one:

Example 6-7 (Q 11)

GP: You got a favourite story about your dogs ... (text continues) ?

I: I have a problem with my mother. I suppose you'd call that a favourite story because it's going over the same old thing time and time again. ... (text continues)

Here 'favourite story' clearly does not in the least refer to the generic structure of a text to be told, or even of one often told, but instead to the field experience to be represented in text, i.e. to an often-repeated experience to whose next instantiation a remark such as *the same old story* is the classic exasperated reaction.

It would appear therefore that while the folk-linguistic label 'story' in a question cue has considerable power to constrain a response generically, i.e. to steer the response in the direction of a narrative-type response, it is by no means used

consistently by speakers as the name for a narrative-type text or indeed interpreted as a cue to produce a text that would meet the generic structure of a narrative proper. While the folk-term ‘story’ may be misleadingly used in scholarly discussions of narrative-type texts (see Hasan 1984b:71) as well as in the practice of those concerned with teaching narrative especially in primary school, a theme running through the writings by Martin, Rothery, and others, for example Martin & Rothery (1981), its use in other, non-reflective, contexts, for example in the use of ‘news-story’ in journalism, is unlikely to lead to its equation with ‘narrative’, however defined. What is of interest here, of course, is how a widely used term such as story is interpreted by ordinary speakers when called upon to *act* upon it in an every-day sense.

6.3 Expository-type Texts

6.3.1 Report (1)

Four questions in the interview schedule were intended to elicit reports, the term being used here as a superordinate category for different kinds of generic – rather than specific – description and explanation. In this section on report (1), two questions are grouped together which may reasonably be expected to yield text types which are, if not alike, at least closely related, viz. Q 2 (‘describe ideal dog’) and Q 5 (‘describe ideal buyer’). Although the ‘objects’ in focus in these two questions are not alike except by reference to a ‘mental picture’ the interviewee might have of each object, i.e. only at some higher level of abstraction, the question cue *describe* used for both questions aimed to find out to what extent such generalised descriptions might be alike generically by virtue of being constrained in this manner. The responses obtained, however, suggest very strongly that asking someone to describe something is likely to result in the most diverse range of responses generically.

Two texts may serve to illustrate the extremes of a range of responses which are all ‘descriptive’ in some sense:

Example 6-8a (Q 2)

[GP: Could you describe that mental image of your ideal basset for me?]

Example 6-8b (Q 2)

[GP: Would you be able to describe your ideal borzoi?]

Well, my impression of the borzoi probably varies somewhat from some of the other people who’re in

I'd like to breed a dog that's heavily boned, low to ground, with a nice head, nice domed head and low-set ears, good ears that fold and are very fine in texture, good level top line, powerful hindquarters, sound in front, sound in movement.

That's basically what you're trying to breed in a basset. ((laughs)) But it's a tall order when it comes to the reality of it.

the breed, and would horrify some of them probably. ((laughs))

It's a very elegant breed. It's been called the aristocrat of dogdom, and there has been an aura of aristocracy surrounding it, and therefore people think that, if you own a borzoi, you have a lot of money. Not true, especially in my case. But, my impression of a borzoi is, sure, elegance and aristocracy, but ... the supreme hunter. They were bred to hunt the wolf, in Russia, in Siberia, specifically in very hard climes, and my impression of them is the absolute supreme hunter.

I used to race my old dog, and also his daughter – I don't race them now on the race track – and to see a borzoi in full flight is beautiful: poetry in motion.

If both these texts can be said to be generalised ('generic') descriptions, more accurately reports, which at some level are alike generically, they certainly describe their objects to a very different extent: text 6-8a comes close to the description which makes up the official RASKC 'standard' of a recognised breed while 6-8b is concerned with conveying an impression of the essential characteristics of a breed.

Most texts differ in what they choose to describe, e.g. physical/psychological characteristics, a dog's specialist uses, etc.; they also differ in terms of their level of description, e.g. detailing characteristics similar to the listing in 6-8a vs. sketching impressions similar to 6-8b; they differ in terms of what a breeder is aiming to achieve in his breeding program vs. how the breeder is trying to achieve those aims; and they differ in terms of an experientially oriented description vs. an interpersonally oriented statement of a breeder's attitude to the whole business of breeding the 'ideal dog', as in example 6-9:

Example 6-9 (Q 2)

GP: Would you be able to describe to me what your ideal beagle looks like?

I: Well, I judge them.

There's a standard laid down but I still find my own particular breed is the hardest breed of the lot to judge. Because you're more intimately involved with the lines and the types and so on. And even though there is only one standard, and I've written articles in magazines saying that there is only one standard, there is still things in your mind that may be different to what other people think.

I see a dog and I like it and I say, "Well, that's what I like." And something out of my yard is something like what I'm after. It's not the ideal thing but it's there. Whereas a lot of them I look at and they don't do a thing for me at all.

And that's primarily what this judging nonsense is all about: even though you got a standard to judge to, it's still a question of beauty in the eye of the beholder.

A perhaps even more varied range of texts was obtained in response to Q 5 ('describe ideal buyer/owner'). In terms of the ground covered in the texts, example 6-10 is probably representative of what interviewees adduce in support of what an ideal buyer or owner might 'look' like:

Example 6-10 (Q 5)

GP: Do you have a mental picture of what's the right buyer or owner for one of your pups?

I: Well, I'm very particular about where my pups go to. I've knocked back a lot of people.

GP: How would you describe the type you'd be looking for?

I: Well, someone who generally loves dogs. They want a pet. We all try to breed for our dogs to be good show dogs but my main concern is that the dog, whether it turns out to be a terrific show dog or else turns out to be a mutt, goes to a loving family.

I prefer people with children – not too little. Most of the little kids don't know what they're doing. With a little pup, they're not supervised whether they, you know, really hurt them. So I usually hope that they learn and understand. And just that they're going to take good care; that they're very interested; they've got proper fences; they listen, they talk to you – they're interested how the pups are fed; what happens in the future, particularly with a bitch – if they intend to mate her or not. You know, it's just the people and their attitudes are the main concern and that they'll take proper care: they won't feed them garbage and ...

You know, that's my main concern with all my puppies: that they go to good homes.

But responses also deal with a great range of topics that could only with some hesitation be called (part of) a (generic) description of ideal buyers or owners. For example, they deal not only with potential buyers but with the dogs as well, describing both in terms of physical and psychological characteristics, thereby implying of course that, for example, the proverbial 'little old lady' is unsuitable as owner of a very active dog; they deal with the business side of breeding and selling pups and, in many ways, with the entire range of topics relevant to the breeding, selling and keeping of dogs.

The obvious question, and the one to the fore in this study, is whether the enormous range of responses in terms of field is nevertheless given in a limited range generically, a range limited enough for us to postulate a small number of generic structures reflecting a goal which could be glossed as reports, i.e. as generic descriptions. In some very general sense it is probably the case that the responses are generic descriptions – they are generally *not* considered to be irrelevant responses, for example. On the other hand, just as many texts given in response to narrative questions were observations rather than narrative-type texts, so some of the reports elicited in response to expository questions, i.e. specifically in response to Q 2 ('describe ideal dog') and Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?') but also to Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?') and Q 9 ('explain dog showing') (see below), will probably also have to be coded observations.

Quite generally, it would appear to be the case that the interaction of field and genre in the context of 'describing' some object, including one that would appear to be rather uncontroversially describable as a physical object where the only possible variation is between one breed of dog and another, is so complex as to lead to texts which on the whole resist a description in terms of a small range of generic structures similar to that found to account for a range of narrative-type texts.

This impression of an essential ‘underdetermination’ of a theoretical construct ‘report/description’ is borne out by Horvath’s (1985) work on description. Horvath similarly found that the descriptions of primary schools given by her interviewees also ranged over a great number of ‘topics’, all of which were relevant to a description of the speaker’s school in some very general sense. More importantly, the four types of ‘description’ postulated to account generically for the texts obtained were ‘rarely categorical’, resulting in ‘complex types’ instead (Horvath 1985:139). An ambitious attempt to provide support for the essentially impressionistic assigning of texts to textual types such as ‘tour’, ‘map’ and ‘inventory’, themselves defined by reference to some semantic organising principle, via a quantification of the texts’ realisational patterns at the level of the clause succeeded in accounting for only 21% of the variance found between the texts said to belong to the different text types postulated.

There is no reason to think that had text types been motivated by different yet agnate generic structures, i.e. by following the strategy adopted in this study, the end result would have been different. On the contrary, I suspect that it would have been found impossible to account for the textual variation in as few unique generic structures as there were text types postulated, including both categorical and complex text types, since defining a text type in terms of a generic structure makes the criteria for saying that a given text is an instance of a particular text type much more stringent than a definition of a text type in terms of some one semantic principle said to characterise it. Such semantic organising principles have received particular attention in the context of the description of ‘space’, for example in Schegloff (1972), and are referred to by Fries (1983) as a text’s ‘method of development’. In the context of the descriptions of an apartment (Linde 1974; Linde & Labov 1975), or a primary school (Horvath 1985), such semantic ‘pegs’ on which to hang a text may be glossed as ‘temporality’ in a tour, ‘relative location’ in a map, or ‘addition’ in a list or inventory.

It would appear that, compared with narrative questions for example, a question seeking to elicit a description is based either on a completely inadequate understanding of a very complex interaction between the field asked to be described and what it means to describe, generically speaking, or that the concept of a genre ‘report/description’ is in fact inappropriate, i.e. not supported by the facts as found in ordinary, daily linguistic behaviour. While the very limited success of Horvath’s attempt to provide grammatical evidence for the categorisation of descriptive texts may be due in part to an as yet underdeveloped theory concerning the realisational

relationship between a semiotic construct such as ‘report/description’ and choices at various strata of the linguistic system, the possibility cannot be ignored that ‘report/description’ as a semiotic construct itself is underdeveloped or, more seriously, mistaken.

One likely explanation for the generic underdetermination of ‘report/description’ is that descriptive strategies are typically borrowed from whatever structure the speaker considers the object of description to have, the descriptions of space being excellent examples of this. In other words, the field structure of the object of description provides the structure of its textual representation. If however the object of description itself does not lend itself readily to an organisation of its component parts, or such parts are not readily perceived, the resulting descriptions will have little in common generically since no one overall organising principle is likely to be employed by speakers generally. Additionally, the lack of an obvious way of organising the component parts of the object to be described seems to lead to a general lack of agreement among speakers as to what constitutes the necessary and sufficient detail(s) of description, even when the object is as well known to the speakers, and as precisely identified, as some particular breed of dog. In summary, it appears to be the case that the general function of genre in our culture, viz. to relate aspects of field to one another in such a way as to lead to a more abstract organisation of the world in text, has not (as yet?) led to the development of a commonly shared, and thus clearly defined, genre of description.

This state of affairs is in sharp contrast to that found to obtain in respect of narrative texts. While the actual or imagined experience to be represented textually in descriptive texts seems to constrain the text generically, either leading to texts which are organised very simply, though often effectively, e.g. via listing, or to texts which appear to be lacking in textual organisation altogether, the actual or imagined experience to be represented narratively does not shape narrative texts in any significant way. While it must be considered axiomatic that experience can be represented textually in any way the speaker chooses – although what speakers actually do choose to do textually is largely governed by cultural convention – it nevertheless appears to be the case that experience is rather directly, almost iconically, represented in descriptive texts while such direct representation in narrative-type texts is essentially limited to its ‘recapitulat[ing] experience in the *same order* as the original events’ (Labov & Waletzky 1967:21; emphasis added). It may therefore be said that whereas

the generic structure of descriptive texts is largely determined experientially, i.e. by the structure of the field to be represented in text, the generic structure of narrative texts is not – instead, as has been argued here, it is considered to be essentially determined culturally.

It is considered that an analysis of the responses obtained to Q 2 ('describe ideal dog') and Q 5 ('describe ideal buyer/owner'), which seeks to account for the textual variation in terms of a theory of genre, is not feasible within the constraints of a quantitatively oriented study such as this. A first step towards characterising 'report-like' texts generically is taken in Section 6.3.2 below in respect of Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?') and Q 9 ('explain dog showing') but the work necessary to provide the theoretical underpinning for a detailed generic analysis to bear fruit is so substantial as to rule out the investigation of any other questions and would thus change the focus of this thesis out of all recognition. For this reason no attempt will be made to account for these texts in any further detail, either qualitatively or quantitatively.

6.3.2 Report (2)

A second type of report was aimed at with Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?'). In contrast to the two questions which explicitly asked an interviewee to *describe*, this question sought to gain a report/description by exploiting the habitual aspect of typically temporally sequenced events. While Q 7 ('tell about today's chores') in particular had resulted in procedural texts, and so as a question intended to elicit recounts had clearly been a failure, Q 3 set out deliberately to obtain a report at least part of whose realisational strategy might be akin to that followed in procedures. By introducing the question as one concerned with the *behaviour* of the dog, however, it was hypothesised to result in a report stressing state, i.e. the snapshot view of the behaviour, rather than action, which obviously constitutes the behaviour.

Some of the remarks made above concerning the range of things described, with a subsequent range of 'generic structures' were the concept readily applicable, also apply to the responses elicited to Q 3. For this reason, the following discussion will be limited to exploring briefly the basic distinction between a report-like and a procedure-like strategy followed in the texts elicited. The different strategies are illustrated with examples 6-11a and 6-11b:

Example 6-11a (Q 3)

REPORT-TYPE TEXT

They always go through the same sort of performance of being very agitated and turning circles; a lot of licking themselves, and being generally distressed. Even half a day before the actual first delivery.

And I always with this breed and also with the smaller breed, the dachshunds, I always used to have them in a room where I was sleeping so that I was on hand and be alert for the first one. Just in case there were any problems.

Example 6-11b (Q 3)

PROCEDURE-TYPE TEXT

Oh well, I put paper in the whelping box, they start making a bed in the paper. And they pant. As it gets closer, sometimes you see a spot where there's been water and after they do most of those things, well, then they start to strain. Well, for the first puppy, they can strain, on and off, for a couple of hours, you know. Then a water bag appears, sometimes, not always. They do things different ways at times. And then eventually, the first puppy starts to come down.

The two texts bear out the contention that 'report/description' as a text type or genre is primarily constrained by the field organisation of the object to be described: Both texts have a 'method of development' of sorts which in text 6-11a, following a 'report-like' strategy, is simply to list all the prominent characteristics of the object to be described, i.e. to 'add' item to item, while in text 6-11b, following a 'procedure-like' strategy, it is by following a pre-existing temporal order of prominent characteristics that a report is arrived at. The latter principle is not only readily recognisable, and thus capable of imposing some recognisable order on the characteristics of the object to be described, i.e. to be represented in text, it thereby becomes the identifying characteristic of a type of text by default. While such a 'semantic peg' on which to hang a text is a simple device compared to the textual organisation of a narrative, for example, it is a far more powerful one than a device such as simple listing, which can only be inferred on the basis of there being a collection or list of things in a text that must be assumed to be unordered.

The distribution of texts given in response to Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?') in terms of their following either a reporting/descriptive or procedural strategy will be shown at the end of Section 6.3.3 below in Table 6-5.

6.3.3 Report (3)

A third type of report was aimed at with Q 9 ('explain dog showing'). In contrast to the other questions aiming to elicit reports, this question adds a potentially constraining cue *explain* to an otherwise very strongly skewed question as far as the field events being probed are concerned. Of all the questions in the interview schedule, only Q 9 is concerned with events the organisation of which is not only a temporal one but is one which institutionalises temporal sequencing, viz. in the organisation of the dog show. It is therefore of some interest to discover the extent to which a constraint such as an instruction to explain is likely to override the field constraint inherent in the organisation of the events being explored.

As in the discussion of report (2) above, we will limit ourselves to exploring the differences between responses in terms of report-like vs. procedure-like strategies being followed. These may be illustrated with examples 6-12a and 6-12b:

Example 6-12a (Q 9)

REPORT-TYPE TEXT

Well, handling is not a great deal of rules or anything like that. The dogs have to be kept on your left, they've got to move properly, they are not to be pulling or lagging behind. I think everyone's got their own standards which they think their dog should be ().

I think my dog should walk beside me, not, you know, dragging me all around the ring. And standing, well, they've got to stand there and

Example 6-12b (Q 9)

PROCEDURE-TYPE TEXT

Well, firstly, all the dogs will come into the ring and the idea is for your dog to just show itself, head up, tail up and really stride out. Each dog is examined separately. Generally, with beagles, it's on the table and the judge will examine each dog separately on a table and look at different features of the beagle, which I explained before. Then each dog will be walked individually of course during that time. As the dogs are moving away, he's looking at the rear movement, the side movement and, coming back towards him, the front movement.

they've got to know that the judge is going to handle them.

And they can show temperament in the ring, I don't care if they growl or want to attack something else as long as they're doing what they're

told. They can sit there and growl all they like as long they're standing there. You know, so that's it basically. I always call that sort of good manners in the dogs anyway. They've got to know how to behave.

That's about as far as the rules go, you know, the judge will tell you to walk and all of that. And if your dog doesn't move properly, or is playing up, or he is trying to get something else over the other side of the ring, well, he is obviously not going to move properly.

And any dog that can show itself, plus if it has a good handler that can get the best out of that dog by keeping its head up and its tail wagging and really moving that dog out, it's going to look better than one that isn't real happy about being in there.

The two different strategies are as prominently represented in the texts given in response to Q 9 ('explain dog showing') as they were in response to Q 3 ('how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?'). But while at one level the choices made by speakers in respect of Q 9 appear to be the same as those in respect of Q 3, at another level they are quite different: Responses adopting a report-like strategy rather than the seemingly more readily available procedural one appear to tend towards a 'list' in the context of a field which is only weakly organised in terms of temporal sequence, such as a dog's behaviour prior to whelping, but towards an interpersonally oriented text akin to an observation in the context of a field which is strongly organised in terms of temporal sequence, such as a dog show.

Since we found that observations are commonly produced in the context of a narrative question, such a question virtually by definition probing experience which is organised in terms of temporal sequence, we are justified in considering texts which strongly foreground interpersonal meanings, such as observations, not as some kind of aberration, some kind of 'second-best' choice generically, but instead as a legitimate alternative choice to the more congruent one foregrounding experiential meanings. In other words, observations must be considered part of a natural range of responses generically.

The texts following a report-like strategy in response to Q 9 are reports in the very general sense of being descriptions, explanations, accounts, etc., but there is no compelling evidence for the postulation of a generic structure unique to a type of report we would wish to gloss ‘explanation’. The great abundance of folk-linguistic terminology seemingly naming types of text are best considered semantic glosses for texts produced in a context which sets up an expectation for a description, an explanation, etc., without, however, leading to recognisably different texts. In other words, what might be a description in one context might well serve as an explanation in another.

The distribution of the responses to Q 3 (‘how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?’) and Q 9 (‘explain dog showing’), both aiming at reports, is shown in Table 6-5 according to the strategies they followed, such strategies being reflected in different generic structures. In this respect such a semantic characterisation of the text overall is not unlike that of the text types ‘map’, ‘tour’, etc. postulated for descriptions in other work:

Table 6-5: Incidence of reporting vs. procedural strategies followed in texts elicited in response to report questions (2–3)

| Q | Textual Strategies | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|-------|
| | report-like | | procedure-like | | Total |
| 3 | 15 | 60% | 10 | 40% | 25 |
| 9 | 9 | 25% | 27 | 75% | 34 |

Q 3 (‘how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?’)
Q 9 (‘explain dog showing’)

On the basis of the relative incidence of report-like vs. procedure-like strategies followed in texts elicited in response to questions aiming at a report of some kind, it is concluded that any existing temporal organisation of the object of a report is likely to be adopted, overriding any generic constraint in a question cue which could incline the response towards other, less specific, ‘reporting/descriptive’ strategies. Despite the temporal organisation found in the context of Q 3 (‘how do your dogs alert you to a whelping?’) being relatively weak, it is nevertheless utilised in 40% of all responses. On the other hand, the question cue *explain* in Q 9 (‘explain dog showing’) overrides in only 25% of all responses the strong temporal organisation inherent in the experiences the interviewee is asked to explain, thus leading to a reporting rather than a procedural text.

6.3.4 Exposition

Two questions were asked in order to elicit expositions, viz. Q 12 ('is dog showing a sport?') and Q 13 ('what do you think of children in showing?'), referred to in Chapter 3 as 'Exposition (1)'. The main difference between them is that in Q 12 a 'thesis' is put forward while in Q 13 the interviewee is encouraged to do so. The hypothesis underlying these two questions was that since speakers commonly present theses in natural discourse, often belittled as mere opinions, which they then argue for or 'defend', it should be possible to elicit text types which are more usually associated with more formal contexts and/or the written language. It was further hypothesised that the degree to which it was made explicit in the elicitation question that an exposition was being aimed at should not be significant if exposition was indeed a type of text which occurs naturally in spoken language – although it is clearly considered a written genre students need to be explicitly taught in our schools, and without much reference to any oral model.

The third question aiming to elicit an exposition, viz. Q 14 ('your views on big city dog problem'), referred to in Chapter 3 as 'Exposition (2)', will not be discussed here since it had been found to be most conducive to highly interactional discourse and was therefore not pursued during the interviews as a question to elicit 'codable' responses (see discussion in Section 5.3.3.2.1).

The texts elicited in response to Qs 12 and 13 are almost uniformly expositions: their generic structure corresponds closely to that hypothesised by Martin & Rothery (1981) of Thesis ^ Argumentⁿ ^ (Conclusion). Two examples of an oral genre of exposition, illustrating a typical response to each of the two questions, must suffice to demonstrate the well-foundedness of the view that a genre exposition is not limited to the speech of the highly-trained orator or the prose of the accomplished writer:

Example 6-13a (Q 12)

[GP: What do you think of the idea that showing is a sport?]

Thesis

Exactly, exactly that. A sport, halfway between a sport and a hobby – it's a little bit undefinable. But yes, definitely.

Argument 1

Example 6-13b (Q 13)

[GP: What do you think of children being involved in showing, in handling?]

Thesis

I like showing, I like the children to show, because it teaches them to be able to lose, to be good sports.

Argument 1

I have never been a win-crazy person in the dog world. And there are a lot that are sheer win-crazy – they go out to win and that's it. And if they don't, they get most irate.

Argument 2

But to me ... When my children were younger it was a complete family thing. Now that they're older, they have their own interest – it's the wife and I now.

But I go to a show with the specific purpose of having an enjoyable day with my wife and my dog and in the sport and the hobby that I'm interested in and if I win, it's a bonus to me. Nothing more or less.

If I don't win ... I won't say that I don't get upset if I think my dog was better on the day than another one but that's a personal thing –

that's just quite human, I think. I might get upset sometimes but mostly not.

I go out to have a good day and if I have a good day, well, I've enjoyed my sport the way I intended originally.

Conclusion

And that's exactly what it is – sport and hobby combined. Yeah.

And I think this is very important – if you can learn to lose in life, well, it helps you in life. And that's very important.

Argument 2

In the handling side, like in the obedience side, the kiddies have done quite well in that. I think it's very good with cattle dogs, that they can handle a dog like a cattle dog, because they're the type of dog that can fly out and they have to be on the alert the whole time and control that dog completely at all times.

Conclusion

It teaches them to be responsible people.

While expositions may adduce a varying number of Arguments in support of a Thesis – typically however in a strongly symmetrical two-part Argument such as in text 6-13a rather than in the weaker form of listing a number of Arguments not all of which are strongly linked to the Thesis as in text 6-13b – the differences between the total number of 71 texts given in response to Qs 12 and 13 are minimal.

An example of a single-Argument exposition – which also employs a narrative-like Argument – is given in example 6-14 below:

Example 6-14 (Q 13)

Thesis

I think it's a marvellous idea.

Argument

You know, a friend of mine has a little tot. Anne-Marie would be about six now. I think she's been handling dogs younger even – they're only supposed to be from five on – I think she's handled ... She would take any ... My big dog, she'd grab hold of him and take him in the ring. No fear of the dog, she'll set him up. "Get your foot over there!" you know. "Put your head up here!" you know. She knows how to handle them – it's natural, she's not frightened.

It's beautiful to see a child that's not frightened of a dog. And the dogs know it – they love her. That little tot will trot in there with the dog.

I won't let her in with Kim – if I can help it – because Kim will go for male dogs. Because he'll just drag her.

But she'll take a little dog in, one that she doesn't even know. "Can I take your dog in?" and in she goes, and she'll set that little dog up and pushes it down, "put your head round!" and, you know, she handles it beautifully.

And she enjoys it. Because she gets a ribbon or she might get a bag of chips or something, you know.

Conclusion

No, I think it's lovely. I think it's very nice.

Although some expositions appear to foreground narrative-like Arguments, generically these are as clearly expositions as those which, like the texts in 6-13a – b, maintain a relatively distanced – objectified if not necessarily objective – perspective. The Argument in 6-14 is not itself considered a narrative in the way in which such a text type was defined by recourse to a generic structure but merely argues narratively, i.e. it 'recounts' the generic procedure the protagonist is likely to follow. (Cf. also the remarks pertaining to the exposition labelled a 'story', example 6-7 in Section 6.3.3, which is not a narrative but merely adopts its nomenclature).

While the argument that 'surface structure narrative of any length and complexity inevitably involves a quantity of embedded surface structure exposition' (Longacre 1983:14; emphasis in orig.) must be held to apply in the other direction as well, i.e. structural elements of exposition must also be able to be realised by narrative, genuine examples of some text type functioning as the realisation of some element of generic structure are not uncommon, and this phenomenon has been handled via the concept of embedding.

Only three texts out of a total of 71 are not expositions but must instead be considered reports. The lack of generic variability in the responses to the two expository questions is surely remarkable, especially when it is considered that the texts were produced not just orally but without the slightest chance of any preparation. The contrast with the variability of the responses to the successful narrative questions, i.e. especially Q 6 ('what happened in emergency/accident?') ('how did you get into dogs?'), Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?'), Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?'), and Q 11 ('tell favourite story'), in general, and the heterogeneity of the narrative-type texts given in response to these questions in particular, cannot be overemphasised. It would therefore seem to be the case that a genre exposition is a natural one which is readily produced, i.e. one which therefore must be widely shared among the members of the speech community. In addition, since the genre exposition is far less elaborated generically than narrative genres, it would also appear to be far less important than these in the life of the ordinary speaker. It may well be the writer rather than the speaker for whom considerations of economic success make the mastery, and thus also elaboration, of an expository genre mandatory.

6.4 Relating Elicited Genres to Elicitation Questions

The discussion of the responses elicited has generally focused on individual elicitation questions, often in great detail. In this section, we will briefly bring together the results of the generic coding of the corpus texts under the heading of narrative vs. expository elicitation questions in Table 6-6 below:

The figures in Table 6-6 require only brief comment over and above the main discussion in this chapter. Firstly, based on a more delicate analysis, the large number of texts currently observed to fall into both the categories report and procedure will probably not only be redistributed over a wider range of report-like genres, similar to the reanalysis of narrative-like genres, but also partly assigned to existing categories, specifically to observation. Such a reanalysis of the texts would lead to a distribution of texts which reflected the dichotomy between experientially and interpersonally oriented texts observed above in the context of the discussion of narrative genres. More importantly, it would demonstrate that the production of observations, which are neither narrative nor expository-like, in the context of both narrative and expository questions is no accident but instead a valid, and common, choice.

Table 6-6: Genres elicited in response to narrative vs. expository questions

| Genre | Narrative Qs | Expository Qs |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | no. of texts | no. of texts |
| recount | 59 | 0 |
| procedure | 24 | 37 |
| recount \approx procedure | 7 | 0 |
| anecdote | 25 | 0 |
| narrative | 30 | 0 |
| exemplum | 32 | 0 |
| observation | 32 | 0 |
| report | 2 | 100 |
| description | 2 | 0 |
| exposition | 2 | 68 |
| Total no. of texts | 215 | 205 |

Secondly, although the distribution shown in Table 6-6 is partly the result of having carried out a more detailed analysis of the texts given in response to narrative questions than of those given in response to expository questions – in other words, the distribution being at least partly an artefact of the analysis which thereby renders the results less interesting than they might otherwise be – to a quite significant extent the distribution of genres in response to generically ‘informed’ elicitation questions confirms a fundamental hypothesis concerning the mutual predictability of question & answer in generic terms.

The two generic categories which are likely to be strongly represented in response to both narrative and expository elicitation questions as the result of a more detailed analysis of the responses to expository questions, i.e. procedure and observation, in some sense represent the end poles of such mutual predictability: While in a procedure the speaker adopts the most readily available principle of textual organisation, viz. by borrowing temporal sequence from the structure of field, in an observation the speaker adopts the least predictable, if not least available, by opting out of either a narrative or an expository orientation and instead chooses a strongly interpersonal one. Such an unexpected choice, however, is precisely what is needed in order to keep the system functional in terms of maximising its information-carrying potential.

Thirdly, based on an average number of approximately 32 ‘codable texts’ per elicitation question, we observe that the seven narrative questions have contributed slightly fewer than their predicted 226 texts to the corpus, and the six expository questions slightly more than their predicted 194 texts. And although many factors contribute to whether a question asked of an interviewee actually leads to a codable

text to be included in the corpus, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, it must be of some interest that overall narrative questions are more or less as likely to lead to generically codable texts as expository questions.

These results are important for two interrelated reasons: Firstly, they show that the concept of genre is very much part of a fundamental hypothesis, shared by speakers generally, viz. that questions and answers must to a significant degree be mutually predictable if the discourse itself is to be judged coherent; and secondly, that the concept of genre is indeed capable of being made part of linguistic theory in the sense of being developed into a (class of) category which can be deployed replicably. If nothing else, it is the contribution such results can make to the development of a theory of text which amply justifies the careful step-by-step empirical investigation of data the collection of which itself was richly, though at times mistakenly, informed by theory.

Our concern in this chapter has been to give an account of genre which was both qualitative and quantitative – resulting in the inevitable compromises. Due to the need to limit the work involved in any detailed analysis of a large corpus, both at the level of generic structure and at the level of language, it was decided to pursue the more detailed inquiry on the basis of an essentially ‘narrative corpus’, i.e. the corpus of 125 texts presented in Volume 2. For this, only four out of the five major narrative questions were chosen, excluding the responses to Q 6. (Although it was suggested above that Q 1 should be considered a ‘recount’ rather than a narrative question, it is not doing violence to it or to our analysis in Section 6.2.2 to include it among the ‘narrative’ questions for further discussion.) The choice of the particular four narrative questions was motivated by the fact that each of them was found to be characterised by a particular genre being produced prominently in response to it. For example, Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’) led mainly to recounts; Q 8 (‘what happened in funny incident?’) led to a larger proportion of anecdotes than any other question; Q 10 (‘what happened in surprising success?’) led to the largest proportions of exemplums and observations respectively; and Q 11 (‘tell favourite story’) led to the largest proportion of narratives.

Chapter 7:

Social Representativeness of Texts

In this chapter we will be concerned with the implications of the social stratification of the sample of speakers which make up the respondents in the fifty sociolinguistic interviews conducted for the purpose of collecting a corpus of texts for the study of text structure. There are at least four issues pertaining to social stratification which are of considerable interest in the context of a study of text: (i) the selection of speakers, viz. from among the members of a ‘single interest’ group; (ii) the distribution of speakers in terms of a predetermined set of social characteristics, viz. sex, age and socioeconomic class; (iii) the speakers’ contribution to the number of ‘codable texts’ in the corpus, expressed in terms of the social distribution of texts; and (iv) the social stratification of text structure itself, i.e. the social distribution of the generic structures, genres or text types represented in a corpus of texts. It is only in the light of giving a satisfactory account of the first two issues that we can evaluate the data design for its suitability in the study of the textual variation found in the speech community at large and, more importantly, that at least as a partial consequence of demonstrating such suitability we may not only have confidence in the account of the social distribution of text structure found to obtain in the corpus but also grounds for believing that some generalisation to the speech community may be valid.

7.1 Selection of Speakers in Sample

The interviews for this study were carried out by myself between December 1981 and April 1982, effectively taking circa three months. Several trial interviews were conducted, as well as a further seven with speakers of British English, none of which is included in the corpus. All interviewees resided in the larger metropolitan area of Sydney, many in the outer suburban belt. Travelling distances of up to 50 km made the data collection both time-consuming and physically demanding.

Interviewees were found by accessing the contact network existing within the dog fancy, initially on the basis of information publicly available on breed clubs, their office bearers, meeting places, etc. I introduced myself as a student at the University of Sydney – department unnamed – who was conducting research for a dissertation on a ‘single interest’ group such as the dog fancy. The purpose of the interview was

explained as an attempt to build up a social portrait of a very diverse group of people united by a common interest, in this case the breeding and exhibiting of dogs. Since the social heterogeneity of the dog fancy is proudly asserted time and again by dog fanciers, and used by them as an argument against those who see them as a peculiar clique, this explanation tapped into a widely perceived need on the part of dog fanciers to explain and even defend themselves and their hobby.

It was always stressed that my interest, and the focus of my research, lay ‘in the people behind the dogs’ and not in the animals themselves. In this way, any unintended challenge to the prospective interviewee’s status as ‘expert on dogs’ was avoided and fears of a kind of ‘industrial espionage’ alleviated. Once the network had been accessed, most misgivings as to my intentions were easily overcome by using another dog fancier’s recommendation. Such recommendations proved invaluable at the point of first contact, always per telephone, when a potential interviewee’s agreement to an interview was sought.

Four requests were made of a potential interviewee at the time of first contact: (i) that one person was to be interviewed at a time, (ii) that a period of about one hour be set aside for the interview; (iii) that permission be given to tape-record the interview; and (iv) that the interview be conducted at the prospective interviewee’s home. No such specific demand was ever refused once an interview had been agreed to, and few people contacted refused an interview outright.

Neither the tape recording nor the time required ever presented a problem – as reported by many previous researchers, interviewees more often than not promptly forgot that they were being recorded. The recording equipment used consisted of a portable cassette recorder, Marantz Superscope, model C 207, with a Sony clip-on microphone model ECM-16 (Lavalier type). Most interviews took about 45 minutes – very few less – but a substantial number exceeded 45 minutes or one side of a cassette tape. This led at times to the unsatisfactory situation where the beginning of the answer to an elicitation question would be recorded on one side and its continuation on the other – with a gap due to the turning-over of the cassette which rendered the recorded response incomplete and thus useless as a ‘codable text’.

The question primarily to be addressed in this section concerns the degree to which an identifiable group within the speech community might still be representative of that speech community. Obviously, restricting the sample to members of a group such as

the dog fancy may introduce a serious sampling bias with the potential to distort the results, i.e. the results may only be valid for the members of the group rather than be generalisable to the larger speech community. In order to address both this potential constraint, a brief description of the dog fancy is given below.

All active breeders/exhibitors of dogs must be members of an official body, the Royal Agricultural Society Kennel Control (RASKC), which controls the activities of the dog fancy in the state of New South Wales through the registration of breeders and exhibitors generally, and of dogs specifically. The latter aim is essentially achieved by determining what counts as a pedigreed dog of a given breed via the setting of breed standards and the indirect supervision of shows, that is, by making rules for the conduct of shows and by the licensing of show judges. Very few breeders/exhibitors occupy any position in this organisation, and none of the interviewees did. The RASKC functions essentially like a government bureaucracy charged with overseeing certain non-governmental activities.

Though there is a formal membership criterion, viz. paying annual fees, it is not a reliable guide to being a member of the dog fancy for two reasons: one, membership of the RASKC is very fluid (according to the RASKC there were some 7000 registered members in NSW at the time the interviews were conducted but only half of these were considered 'active', i.e. paid dues in any one year); two, although paid-up membership is a precondition for the registration of a litter, i.e. for serious breeding and absolutely for the showing of a dog, it cannot be said that the person who does not breed or show for a few years is no longer a member of the fancy.

A partial guide to membership of the group of dog fanciers is provided by the membership of some eighty 'breed' clubs, e.g. the Airedale Terrier Club, such clubs sometimes being more embracing by extending to a 'group' of breeds, e.g. the Working Dog Club. Total membership is hard to gauge but is probably below 3000. Every one of these clubs constitutes a group in one of several senses, with their permanent structures of offices, committees, etc. and of functionaries drawn from among club members. However, membership of the dog fancy is not definable by reference to membership of breed clubs for two reasons: one, total membership of the dog fancy must include all those who have an active interest in its activities; and two, the clubs with their pseudo-umbrella organisation, the RASKC, neither constitute the focal point of the dog fanciers' interest nor do they provide the context for it.

The focal point of the dog fancy is the dog show. It is the physical setting where all members, so-called active members as well as club members (two categories which need not overlap), unregistered partners and presently inactive members alike, meet. It is the organisation of the show, i.e. of the dog show as institution, partly reflected in the organisation of breeding from which it is ultimately derived, which sheds the most light on the structure of the dog fancy as a whole. The organisation of the show is based on the dog: it groups dogs according to individual breeds and then breeds into six groups, e.g. gun dogs, working dogs, etc. Members of the dog fancy ‘naturally’ coalesce around breeds, and, though less so, around groups of dogs.

Some evidence of such interactional patterns is provided by the chain selection of interviewees via referral from one actual or potential interviewee to the next. The 50 interviewees in the sample represent ‘links’ in only three chains, with no connections between chains, and the referrals within each chain are primarily based on ‘same breed’, with an average of 64%, and secondarily on ‘same group’ (excluding ‘same breed’), with an average of 27%. Group members’ purely social interactions with other members also appear to be largely constrained by the organisation of the dog fancy. However, judging by the comments of interviewees, many group members seem to interact with other members only as dog fanciers and not also as friends, neighbours, kin, etc.

While the interactional patterns obtaining between members of the dog fancy could probably be fruitfully described by means of a ‘social network’ analysis as developed in sociology (see Barnes 1969; Mitchell 1969), a group such as the dog fancy cannot possibly be compared with types of groups which effectively constitute a community within the larger speech community and which are therefore likely to exhibit linguistic distinctiveness (cf. Milroy 1980). There is no evidence to suggest that the members of the dog fancy not only do *not* share the larger community’s ‘common evaluation of the same variables which differentiate the speakers’ (Labov 1966a:82), such common evaluation widely considered to be the defining characteristic of a speech community, there is also none to suggest that they have an alternative system of linguistic values.

Instead, the dog fancy is much more like the classic ‘voluntary association’ in that it unites people from diverse social, and also national, backgrounds (see 7.2 below), who in addition may reside in widely dispersed locations. Its members only common denominator is the interest in the dogs and the activities associated with following that

interest. Such a single common interest cannot possibly give rise to a unique *linguistic* system ‘of organized diversity held together by common norms and aspirations’ (Gumperz 1982:24; following Wallace 1966, Sherzer 1974) capable of constituting the basis of its followers’ identification as a separate speech community. The proposition that the dog fancy might constitute a linguistically distinctive group, and thus a sample of speakers drawn from the dog fancy by definition a sample which cannot be representative of the speech community at large, must be rejected.

Nevertheless, an element of bias may be introduced into the sample, over and above the fact that it is drawn from a group that is self-selected by virtue of its members’ common interests, by the method of chain-selecting interviewees. Traditional dialect studies have at times been criticised for introducing an obvious class bias, which often went unrecognised, via chains such as town clerk to school teacher to minister etc. (see Pickford 1956). In addition, a less quantifiable bias is suggested by Pickford to have been introduced in such studies by the researcher’s ‘choosing only persons of “sympathetic intelligence”, who were “hospitable, honest, self-confident in personal character”’ (Pickford 1956:218, quoting Bloch 1935:3-4). The latter kind of bias seems to be introduced in this study by interviewees, i.e. *not* by the interviewer, when they try to think of a *suitable person for you* [i.e. the interviewer] *to speak to*.

A ‘suitable’ potential interviewee was variously characterised as *being* knowledgeable *on dogs*, *not being taciturn*, *not being too talkative* or *not being crazy*, i.e. not holding ‘extreme’ views on matters of breeding & showing dogs. Such an overt principle of ‘preselection according to suitability’ thus took as its point of departure the interview as a form of verbal interaction as well as the content of the specific interview in which the speaker had just participated. However, an attempt at quantifying the application of the putative criterion, i.e. at quantifying an interviewee’s ability to predict other group members’ suitability in terms of the implicit demands of the interview schedule, proved inconclusive.

While random sampling is obviously logically impossible if a ‘single interest’ group such as the dog fancy is to be accessed, and at any rate linguistically nonsensical in any study focusing on text, it is certainly important to guard against the self-selection of ‘good’ interviewees, or their selection by especial recommendation. Similarly, referrals to the outstanding expert, to the breeder who has turned his hobby into a successful business, or simply to someone who follows different interests within

the dog fancy, e.g. obedience rather than showing, are all fraught with the danger of rendering the interview dysfunctional in terms of the efficacy of the method of data collection since applicability of the interview schedule and comparability of texts go hand in hand.

A second potential constraint deriving from the use of interviewees who are members of a group, and who are largely chain-selected, pertains to the ability to repeat the interview many times. Doing ‘the same thing’ many times over makes little sense to most people, especially when seemingly eliciting information about the same topic, yet the image presented by the interviewer, the ostensible reason for the interview, the methods of data collection, and the data aimed at in the sense of genre and field choices, in brief, all the choices in terms of genre and register which are an essential part of the data design, need to be maintained across all interviews in the interest of controlling the variables potentially affecting the data. However, the very fact that interviewees know that other group members have been or will be interviewed, as well as the likelihood of an exchange of information between interviewees about the interview itself, both completed and pending, would seem to militate against such consistency.

Quite remarkably, no interviewee ever alluded to the content of another interview already conducted and only a few alluded to the fact that such interviews had taken place, at times with a personal friend. However, not once did an interviewee imply that any of the elicitation questions had in a sense already been answered by someone else, i.e. that the information ostensibly being sought had already been given. All that seemed to matter in order to successfully repeat the interview, and thus maintain the data design, was to present each interview as a fresh search for information in the form of yet another dog fancier’s point of view.

7.2 Social Stratification of Sample

The composition of the sample is largely constrained by the composition of the dog fancy as it exists in Sydney (rather than in the state of New South Wales, in Australia or in the ‘English-speaking world’ – all possible communities within which a ‘dog world’ is to be found.) For example, all interviewees are of Anglo-Saxon descent, i.e. there are neither second-generation non-Anglo immigrants nor Australian Aborigines in the sample, just as it is claimed by interviewees that there are none in the dog fancy

either. On the other hand, many dog fanciers are first-generation British immigrants but since the study sought to focus on those members of the speech community who are also native speakers of Australian English, no British speakers were included in the sample. While any sample of exclusively native speakers of Australian English, which could of course include the children of immigrants, whether actually born in Australia or not, is thus from the outset unrepresentative of an ethnically extremely diverse society, a sample drawn from a group within the larger Australian community is likely to be even more unrepresentative. (See Horvath 1985 for a study which incorporates ‘ethnicity’ as one of its social variables.)

While ethnicity is therefore controlled via having only speakers of one ethnic group in the sample, a second variable potentially contributing to unrepresentativeness, viz. geographical provenance, is not controlled at all. It turned out to be the case that 43 out of the 50 interviewees were natives of Sydney. Whether there are ‘local dialect’ differences to be found at the level of text and its realisation in lexicogrammar is a question that must be left for future investigations.

The three social variables controlled in the study, leading to a conventionally stratified sample, are sex, age, and socioeconomic class, and the remainder of Section 7.2 will be concerned with the distribution of speakers in the sample in terms of these three variables.

7.2.1 Sex and Age

There are 25 men and 25 women in the sample, sex being the variable which is most easily controlled for in sampling. The issue of whether the category should be seen in terms of (biologically-determined) sex or (socially-constructed) gender will not be entered into here. The reason is twofold: one, the traditional quantitative studies in the Labovian paradigm operate successfully with the concept of sex, and this study is, in its quantificational orientation, modelled on Labovian studies; two, while there are good reasons to doubt that limiting an investigation to the concept of sex is ultimately justified in the context of a study focusing on text – while it probably is justified when the focus is on phonological or low-level syntactic variation as in most Labovian studies – there is a need for providing quantitative evidence for the validity of both concepts in respect of the same phenomena, i.e. it still needs to be demonstrated that, for example, the choice and/or realisation of some genres is (partially) determined by

either sex or gender. While this study therefore attempts to investigate the likely determination of a few selected phenomena in discourse by sex, among other categories, it will have to be left to other studies to investigate the same questions by reference to the complementary category of gender. (For a discussion of gender with reference to text and genre, see Poynton 1985; Thwaite 1983.)

The age of interviewees overall ranges from 26 years to 61 years, broadly reflecting the age range of participating adults in the dog fancy. Although a substantial number of children, especially pre-teens, participate in the dog fancy together with their parents, neither older teenagers and young adults nor older people are strongly represented; young people seem not to be attracted to this hobby in great numbers and older people find it physically too demanding. The dispersion of interviewees in terms of their age is graphed in Figure 7-1:

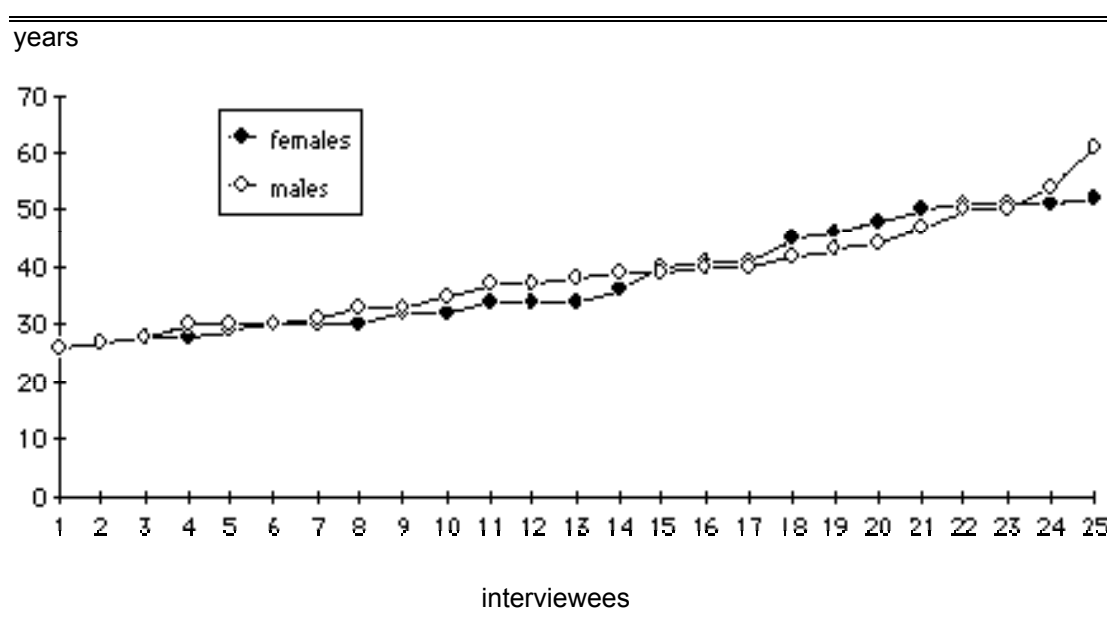


Fig. 7-1: Age distribution in speaker sample

An examination of the age range represented in the sample shows that the dispersion of interviewees in terms of age is so even as to make any grouping of the interviewees on the basis of their actual age meaningless. Although different generations must be represented in an age range spanning 35 years, there is no meaningful cut-off point between the two generations most likely represented.

Since there is no 'natural' division in an age range between 26 and 61 years, generational divisions being relative to a particular age, a grouping of interviewees into

a ‘younger’ and an ‘older’ age group is equally meaningless. The age range, means and medians for interviewees are shown in Table 7-1:

Table 7-1: SEX x AGE distribution in speaker sample

| Speakers | A g e (years) | | |
|----------|---------------|------|--------|
| | range | mean | median |
| male | 26 – 61 | 38.6 | 38 |
| female | 26 – 52 | 37.8 | 34 |
| total: | 26 – 61 | 38.2 | 37 |

The table shows that despite there being a wider range for males than females, there is little difference between the mean and the median for both sexes. In fact, the small difference is almost entirely due to one male interviewee who at 61 years of age is seven years older than the next oldest male at 54 years.

7.2.2 Socioeconomic Class

The question as to whether – and if so, which – speakers in the sample could be considered alike in terms of what is often loosely referred to as ‘class’ is of some interest in this study, just as it is in the classic sociolinguistic study, and its investigation is therefore discussed at some length. The question of speakers’ likeness is of course of interest only because of its consequences for the study of linguistic variation, and some of the questions which derive from this interest may be identified as: (i) Is it possible to adopt a research methodology of focusing on a ‘single interest’ group and still arrive at a sample of speakers which reflects some of the social (class) diversity of the speech community? (ii) Is it possible to evaluate the nature of the speech event ‘sociolinguistic interview’ in terms of any possible class bias? (iii) Is it possible to correlate the speech of different social class groups with their production of text, be it by focusing (a) on genre itself or (b) on some linguistic realisation of genre? While the discussion of question (iiib) will be postponed until Chapter 8, the other questions will be addressed in this chapter.

Although the speakers in quantitative linguistic studies are commonly grouped according to some sociological model which assigns them to some position on a scale reflecting social hierarchy, such classification of speakers is quite notoriously fraught with problems. Linguists have to rely on sociologists to provide them with the model of a social hierarchy in a given society which is sufficiently explicit to assign speakers in

an unambiguous and replicable manner. And while it is common for linguists to report a social grouping of their linguistic informants in terms of their membership of a 'class' or 'socioeconomic class', e.g. Labov (1966a), Shuy, Wolfram & Riley (1968), there is generally little concern shown for the theoretical basis of the concept since the linguist's interest is essentially in grouping members of the speech community in terms of their being 'alike' in some sense, indicators of such 'likeness' being found in the models of sociologists.

However, while linguist researchers generally seem content variously to adopt terms such as class, socioeconomic class, socioeconomic group, etc., for sociologically defined groups of speakers in their samples as if these terms were in fact not only largely equivalent but also transferable between speech communities, the actual basis of the coding of speakers typically varies from study to study, usually due to different sociological models being used as in the two studies by Labov and Shuy et al. cited above. Some of the most commonly used indices of such groupings are, in various combinations: occupation, which principally distinguishes between manual and non-manual; status relative to occupation; income; education; and housing, considering type of dwelling, location, and ownership. Quite obviously, there is much scope for variation not only in how such indices are constructed but also in how they are used to classify speakers. It is therefore not uncommon to find linguists reporting difficulties in using such sociological models for the assigning of speakers to hierarchically ordered groups (for examples see Shuy et al. 1968; Horvath 1985).

Similar problems were encountered in this study which sought to classify speakers on the basis of models of socioeconomic status, which in one form or another have been the most widely used ones in quantitative linguistic studies in Australia. The best-known of these is by Congalton (1962, 1969), which operates with either a 4-point or a finer 7-point occupational status scale constructed on the basis of two popular ranking exercises carried out in Sydney. Other models are by Lancaster Jones (Jones & Jones 1972), and the ANU 2 model (Broom et al. 1977) which attempts to rank all occupations on the basis of Australian census data. But while these ratings purport to be measures of 'socioeconomic status' rather than class they may in fact not even be this but instead merely be ways of 'capturing popular perceptions of the 'general goodness' of occupations' (Goldthorpe & Hope 1972, cited by Broom et al. 1977:62).

Congalton's scheme, in its 7-point version, was used by Shnukal (1978) as one of two unweighted indicators of social class, the other being an index of educational achievement based on Wild (1974), in order to arrive at a social class index score. However, the input of a speaker's educational level produced no appreciable difference in the ultimate social class grouping since Shnukal found a, totally predictable, unmarked association to obtain between the categories manual vs. non-manual occupations on the one hand and educational achievement on the other. Ultimately, Shnukal's analysis of social class reduces to an occupationally based analysis, resulting in only two groups in the study referred to as middle class and working class respectively. Nevertheless, the results of the linguistic analyses of phonological and low-level syntactic variation led Shnukal to observe that 'This rather arbitrary division into two classes yields surprisingly consistent correlations between social class (as here defined) and linguistic behaviour.' (Shnukal 1978:33), i.e. to a validation of her social class analysis.

Horvath (1985) also used Congalton, except in its 4-point version, the later *ANU 2* model not having been available at the time her study was begun. However, the model was not found to be entirely satisfactory for a number of reasons, leading her to observe that 'It would be true to say that Congalton was used only as a rough guide.' (Horvath 1985:47). The significance of having to work with an unsatisfactory coding scheme for the assigning of speakers to groups on the basis of occupation is minimised in Horvath's study by

the primary analytical tool used (principal components analysis) [which] allows initial analysis of the linguistic data without requiring the aggregation of the speakers according to socioeconomic class and hence minimizes the problem of inappropriately classifying speakers.

(Horvath 1985:47)

It was possible to proceed in this way since Horvath's study was largely concerned with phonological variation, which in numerous studies has been shown to be highly sensitive to and indicative of social grouping (see Horvath & Sankoff 1987 for a detailed discussion). Such a procedure is not available to a study such as the current one since next to nothing is known about any potential conditioning of generic or high-level syntactic variation by social variables.

A further step taken by Horvath needs to be noted, similar in its implications to the one taken by Shnukal, viz. that the four groups of (i) professional, (ii) skilled (closer to

professionals), (iii) skilled (closer to unskilled), and (iv) unskilled are ultimately regrouped, combining (i) and (ii), and renamed middle class (i)/(ii), upper working class (iii), and lower working class (iv). In other words, both Shnukal and Horvath move unhesitatingly from a classification of speakers based on occupational status to calling such groupings ‘classes’. Furthermore, neither the actual assigning of occupational status groups to particular classes nor the different levels of delicacy employed, e.g. two levels of working class vs. one of middle class in Horvath, is considered to warrant any discussion. Yet since such decisions can logically be expected to affect the interpretation of linguistic data, they would ideally either be motivated by sociological theory or by a demonstration that a particular grouping is linguistically meaningful while some other, equally possible one, is not.

Since both Congalton’s scheme as well as the *ANU 2* model were available at the time this study was undertaken, it was possible to investigate whether a coding of all speakers in the sample on the basis of both schemes would yield largely identical results. If so, the use of both would allow a certain ‘fine-tuning’ of the coding not available to earlier studies. In spite of the misgivings voiced above concerning the unquestioned ‘translation’ of occupational status groups into groups labelled classes, the same practice is, provisionally, followed here. Contrary to the practice of Shnukal and Horvath, however, the basic 4-point differentiation of the scales by both Congalton and *ANU 2* is maintained. As in those two studies, the assignment of married women who did not have any current occupation, in effect giving their occupation as ‘housewife’, was based on their husband’s occupation. The results of the two codings are shown in Table 7-2 below:

Table 7-2: Sample coded for occupational status (= ‘socioeconomic class’) on the basis of two sociological models

| Class | Congalton | | ANU 2 | |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| | no. | % | no. | % |
| LWC (lower working) | 4 | 8.0 | 12 | 24.0 |
| UWC (upper working) | 25 | 50.0 | 15 | 30.0 |
| LMC (lower middle) | 21 | 42.0 | 20 | 40.0 |
| UMC (upper middle) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6.0 |
| total: | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 |

The disparity in class membership on the basis of these two models is quite startling, most prominently so in respect of lower and upper working class. Recalling

the occasional practice of collapsing social class groups, an amalgamation of these two groups, for example, would disguise most of the difference between the two sets of results as the proportion of speakers falling into working class would be 58% (Congalton) vs. 54% (*ANU 2*). Similarly, though not nearly as dramatically, an amalgamation of the two middle class groups would reduce the differences to an unchanged 42% (Congalton) vs. 46% (*ANU 2*). In all, a total of 13 speakers – constituting 26% of the total number – are coded differently by the two models.

In the light of the rather different bases of the two models, i.e. popular status ranking of occupations vs. ranking informed by sociological theory, some differences must of course be expected. Examples of different codings are the assignment of the occupation of, respectively, surveyor and insurance assessor, both self-employed, to the lower middle class group by Congalton vs. the upper middle class group by *ANU 2*. In other words, the model informed by theory generally places self-employed members of the professions, a combination of entrepreneur and possessor of higher education, at the top of the social scale while the ranking of the professions in popular surveys is much more influenced by how individual professions are popularly perceived, with the medical profession generally, and the legal profession selectively, usually coming out on top.

Conversely, we may identify a bias between the two models working in the opposite direction in the light of the fact that occupations such as fireman, train driver, self-employed dog beautician, i.e. someone running a ‘dog parlour’ from home, and greenkeeper are considered upper working class by Congalton but lower working class by *ANU 2*. Once again, it would appear that what is to the fore in the popular ranking is indeed the ‘popular perception(s) of the ‘general goodness’ of occupations’, in the characterisation by Goldthorpe & Hope (1972) cited above, while the theoretically informed model is more concerned with a model of society as reflected in individual occupations.

The problem with two such different analyses is of course how to reconcile them. It is at this point – when closely examining each instance of divergent coding – that grave doubts as to the validity of both codings begin to affect the unfortunate linguist researcher attempting to apply such sociological models. It seems inevitable that an examination of each such case leads one to consider factors other than the individual speaker’s occupation and to become painfully aware of the major deficiency of such

models, viz. that they are not really designed to assign a number of individuals to a place on a hierarchical scale with the object of grouping together those individuals who are socially 'alike'.

The same problem is also part of a number of other studies of class in Australia and the occasional attempt by sociologists at overcoming this particular problem in their own research, i.e. applied to their own sample, may well in the end be no more scientific than a lay person's might be (cf. Chamberlain 1983:38ff). On the other hand, while Davies' (1967) study is exemplary in its detailed account of the particular class assignment arrived at for some 146 informants, the total number of 14 finely graded social classes, the age of the study (originally conducted in 1962) and indeed its very close attention to a social portrait of just the informants makes it less than an ideal guide to the coding of a sample in linguistic research. And discussions of class such as Wild (1978), which provide no basis for the assignment of individuals in some sample at all, are of little help to the sociolinguistic researcher no matter how theoretically sound such a study might be.

Yet the researcher who has gained some knowledge of each individual speaker's objective material circumstances in the course of his study invariably seems to end up in the position of not being able to fully rely on the sociological models available to him. However, any attempt to do something about this risks his being 'damned if he does and damned if he doesn't', i.e. he will be damned if he accepts the results of a coding he knows to be unsatisfactory but equally if he tries to change some of the codings in the light of his own understanding since that will raise the charge of playing sociologist without being qualified to do so.

A brief discussion of just one case, which is fairly typical of some of the problems encountered, might be instructive: A female interviewee of 28 years of age; she does simple clerical and some secretarial work; she has reached Intermediate Certificate level (leaving school at 15); she is married to a man of less educational achievement who has always worked in trucking and as a removalist, i.e. he is essentially an unskilled labourer; they own their own house, which is modern, spacious, extremely well appointed and situated in a very affluent southern suburb of Sydney. They did not win their money in the lottery, however: they now own a small trucking business in partnership with another owner-driver; the woman proudly refers to herself as company secretary and to her husband as company director; their small daughter goes to ballet

classes, and all their neighbours are either middle class or certainly equally upwardly mobile, and very clearly on their way up there – just as the interviewee and her husband are.

According to Congalton, the interviewee is upper working class, according to *ANU* 2 she is lower working class. Yet there is really nothing to distinguish her from so many other middle class people in life style and aspirations, material and otherwise, except perhaps that she and her husband have probably more money than the average middle class family. Their working class background is impossible to ignore but so are their efforts, materially and non-materially, to be elsewhere. They are much more like so many lower middle class people whose occupation might not earn them a lot of status but nevertheless the wherewithall to be exactly what they want to be – whether it is acknowledged right now, by themselves or their neighbours, or not. It is most certainly going to be done within the next five or ten years.

The main problem with both codings is that they group speakers together who are really not ‘alike’ in terms of their place in a social hierarchy, and, conversely, that speakers who are ‘alike’ end up being in different places. The most common source of such mismatches clearly relates to upward mobility – a general problem in any analysis of social or socioeconomic class.

Rather than use one or the other coding, I decided to use the information gathered in the process of interviewing for the assignment of speakers to groups the members of which could be said to be ‘alike’ by virtue of occupying a similar place in a social hierarchy. But whereas the two models employed above were concerned with a ranking by occupational status, and perhaps by socioeconomic status, the resultant ranked groups only being labelled ‘classes’ on the basis of conventional practice in sociolinguistic research as argued above, neither ‘socioeconomic status’ nor ‘class’ can legitimately be claimed to be the basis of the grouping of ‘like’ speakers pursued in this study. For this reason the groupings will be referred to simply as ‘(social) groups’, ranked from 1 (‘low’) to 4 (‘high’), although where necessary we will indicate a ‘correspondence’ between such group labels and conventional class labels in the interest of easy interpretability.

The following information had become available in respect of most, though not of all, speakers: interviewees’ occupation and, in the case of married female interviewees, the husband’s occupation as well as the woman’s occupation before marriage; level of

educational achievement and/or school leaving age; home ownership as well as type of housing and type of neighbourhood/suburb; father's occupation; children's schooling and/or occupation. Lacking a sociologist's training I am clearly not qualified to propose an alternative scheme for the assignment of the speakers in this sample to some group on a hierarchical social scale on the basis of an objective, materially-based index, i.e. something comparable to the sociological index used by Labov (1966a), for example. Instead, the information available to me was used in an essentially informal way to arrive at a recoding, referred to as 'GP', where the original codings were considered to be deficient. (See Appendix C for a number of examples of such recodings, in fact all 14 of those recodings which differed from both the Congalton and the *ANU 2* codings, together with the information which formed the basis of the recoding.)

The results of the recoding, together with the results of the original codings tabulated above, are tabulated in Table 7-3 as well as displayed graphically in Figure 7-2 in order to highlight the main effects of the recoding.

The main difference overall between the recoding and the original codings on the basis of the Congalton and *ANU 2* models is that there has been a shift to the two higher groups, i.e. to groups 3–4, and away from the two lower groups, i.e. away from groups 1–2. In all there are 14 speakers whose assignment to a social group differs from both the Congalton and the *ANU 2* coding. However, in only one case, viz. that of the female speaker described above, does the threefold coding actually result in three different codings. Within these two broader groups, the major differences are that the recoding strikes a balance between those of the two other codings in respect of the lowest group, viz. 14% (GP) vs. a low of 8% (Congalton) and a high of 24% (*ANU 2*), while it has put more than twice as many interviewees into the highest group than the *ANU 2* coding did, a category not occupied by any speaker at all according to the coding following Congalton. It is obvious that compared with both original codings the recoding has resulted in a much more even distribution of the speakers in the sample on the basis of their being socially alike: while the bulk of the speakers are in groups 2 and 3, in roughly even proportion, a much smaller, and equal number, is found in groups 1 and 4.

Table 7-3: Comparison of different codings of sample as hierarchically-ordered groups of 'like' speakers (1=low – 4=high)

| Social group | Congalton | | ANU 2 | | GP | |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 1 (\approx LWC) | 4 | 8.0 | 12 | 24.0 | 7 | 14.0 |
| 2 (\approx UWC) | 25 | 50.0 | 15 | 30.0 | 16 | 32.0 |
| 3 (\approx LMC) | 21 | 42.0 | 20 | 40.0 | 20 | 40.0 |
| 4 (\approx UMC) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6.0 | 7 | 14.0 |
| total: | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 |

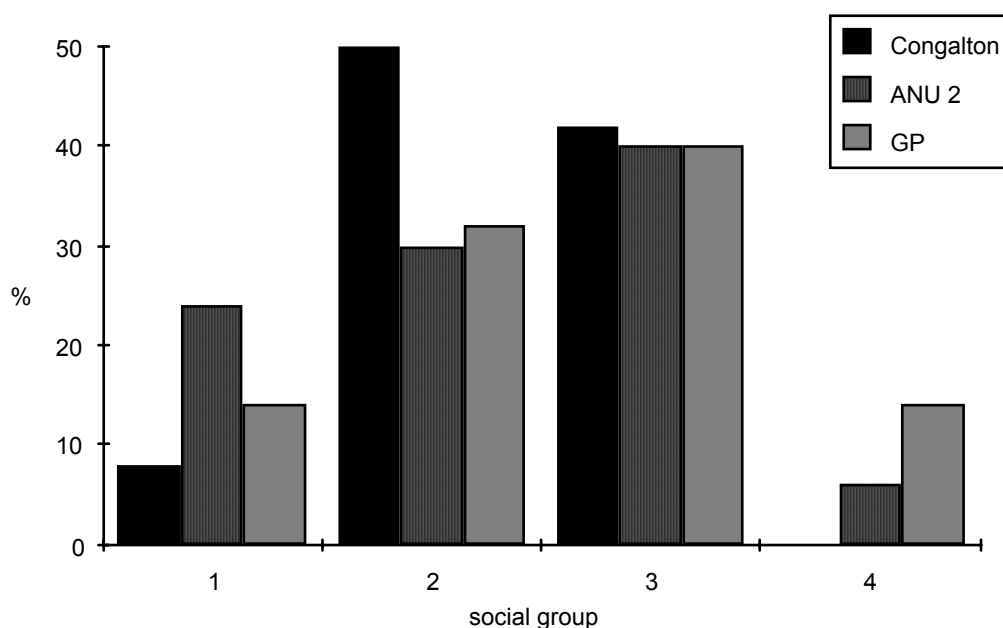


Fig. 7-2: Comparison of different codings of sample as hierarchically-ordered groups of 'like' speakers (1=low – 4=high)

While this result was arrived at on the basis of coding a small group of individuals without any pretension to being some kind of model, or indeed reflection, of society, and for that reason is remarkable in its symmetry, it is not really all that surprising in the light of what is known about the dog fancy and its membership. In Australia the dog fancy appears very much dominated by those people who in some sense socially occupy the middle ground, differing in this respect very strongly from the quite unrelated sport of greyhound racing (and breeding) which is widely perceived as the

domain of people at the lower end of the social scale.⁴⁹ If anecdotal evidence may be trusted, the dog fancy in Australia might well also differ socially quite markedly from those in Great Britain and the United States, both of which are said to be strongly characterised by the involvement of people at the upper end of the social scale. Another telling difference between the dog fancies in Australia and Great Britain on the one hand and that in the United States on the other concerns the emphasis placed on the ‘expert amateur’ in the area of showing or ‘handling’ in the former and the professional expert in the latter. Undoubtedly, the involvement of paid experts in what for most people is a hobby is likely to entail a different social make-up of the dog fancy.

Bringing together all the information discussed above, the social stratification of the sample may be briefly shown in two more tables showing, respectively, the cross-classification of the final social group coding times sex (Table 7-4), and that of the social group times age times sex (Table 7-5):

Table 7-4: SOCIAL GROUP x SEX distribution in sample

| Social group | S e x | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | male no. | female no. | total no. |
| 1 (≈ LWC) | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 2 (≈ UWC) | 9 | 7 | 16 |
| 3 (≈ LMC) | 9 | 11 | 20 |
| 4 (≈ UMC) | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| total: | 25 | 25 | 50 |

⁴⁹Greyhound racing is perceived to be the ‘battler’s’ sport (*Good Weekend* supplement to *The Sydney Morning Herald* 3/10/87), a *battler* being defined in Wilkes’ (1978) *Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms* as ‘a toiler, one who struggles for a livelihood. Anyone so styling himself asserts his apartness from the affluent class’. Although the classic image of the ‘little Aussie battler’ is certainly not limited to urban dwellers – there are also ‘battlers of the bush’ (*Good Weekend* supplement to *The Sydney Morning Herald* 10/10/87) – the image of the battler was once certainly associated, if not synonymous, with working class people. On the other hand, mass unemployment today has turned many people into ‘battlers’ who would not ordinarily consider themselves working class. As far as the issue of upward social mobility is concerned, the same *Good Weekend* article had this to say about its reflection in popular sport: ‘It (i.e. greyhound racing – G.P.) could be the last of the working-class sports. Australian Rules football has always crossed the social spectrum. Rugby League used to be played mainly by truck drivers and waterside workers, but is now as popular on Sydney’s North Shore as it is in the western suburbs. Even boxing attracts the upwardly mobile and those who think they have arrived.’

Table 7-5: SOCIAL GROUP x AGE x SEX distribution in sample

| Social group | A g e | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--------|-------|
| | (mean no. of years) | | |
| | male | female | total |
| 1 (≈ LWC) | 32.5 | 30.0 | 30.3 |
| 2 (≈ UWC) | 37.3 | 40.1 | 38.7 |
| 3 (≈ LMC) | 39.6 | 36.0 | 37.3 |
| 4 (≈ UMC) | 51.6 | 45.8 | 48.7 |

Whereas the distribution of the sexes across each of the social groups is very even indeed, and the age difference between the sexes in each of the social groups equally negligible, there is a noticeable increase in the average age from group 1, the lowest group, to the intermediate groups 2–3 and again to group 4, the highest group. Whether this is a reflection of the composition of the dog fancy, of society at large, of the willingness of dog fanciers to participate in such a study, or pure chance has to remain a matter for idle speculation.

7.3 Social Neutrality of the Sociolinguistic Interview

It is of some interest to discover whether a sociolinguistic interview can ever be ‘neutral’ with regard to interviewees’ social characteristics, i.e. whether it is possible to gain responses to elicitation questions, and specifically ‘codable texts’, equally from all participants in such a broadly-based data collection and without prejudicing the answers generically or in any other way linguistically. For example, Horvath expresses serious misgivings concerning the suitability of the sociolinguistic interview:

A great deal of consideration needs to be given to finding topics and text types that are equally appropriate to all speakers within the sample, taking account of socioeconomic class and cultural background differences. It may be that the sociolinguistic interview, at least in its present state of development, will be found inadequate for studies of text across a speech community sample.
(Horvath 1985:178)

If the sociolinguistic interview were indeed shown to be an essentially middle class context, for example, as Horvath has at times asserted (p.c.), then its validity in research would be seriously compromised.

It is not altogether clear exactly what would count as evidence that the sociolinguistic interview, either in general or in some particular design and execution,

is or is not essentially a middle class context, for example.⁵⁰ I propose to investigate this question of the general applicability of the sociolinguistic interview, i.e. its ‘neutrality’ to speaker type, by looking at speakers’ responses in two ways: (i) by comparing the social group distribution of speakers in the sample with the contribution speakers belonging to different social groups made to the number of texts in the corpus; and (ii) by comparing the frequency with which speakers belonging to different social groups chose recount as one of the two major strategies in their responses to an elicitation question which puts the speaker under stress generically, viz. Q 4 (‘tell about whelping’).

Although many factors are likely to affect whether answers to elicitation questions in an interview are gained in the first instance, and whether such answers are usable as texts in an empirical study concerned with the issues of contextual comparability and generic differentiability (see Chapters 5 and 6 for discussion), a comparison of the social group distribution of speakers in the sample with the number of texts in the corpus contributed by speakers belonging to those social groups seems one way of exploring the proposition that the sociolinguistic interview is a middle class context since middle class speakers – more or less equivalent to speakers belonging to social groups 3–4 in this study – may be expected to behave more ‘cooperatively’, thus contributing a disproportionately large number of texts to the corpus. The results of the comparison are shown in Table 7-6 below:

⁵⁰Schiffrin (1981: 45, fn.1) reports Wolfson’s (1976, 1978) argument ‘that narratives told during sociolinguistic interviews are not likely to contain the HP [the historical present tense, i.e. the use of the present tense for the recounting of past-time events – G.P.] – that it is more likely when speaker and hearer share norms of interpretation and evaluation’; and Anthony Kroch’s argument that the incidence of HP in narrative in the context of the sociolinguistic interview is therefore a good indicator of the quality of fieldwork methods, ‘with interviews becoming more like natural conversational situations’ in the case of increased use. While there are some (narrative) texts in this corpus which use the HP, the reliability of HP as an indicator of situational ‘naturalness’ must surely depend on its sociolinguistic distribution in a particular speech community, e.g. one would need to know how its use in American English compares with Australian English. More importantly, however, it is not at all to be taken for granted that the incidence of a syntactic feature such as HP, however meaningful in the construction of narratives by those speakers for whom HP is in fact part of their dialect (see Schiffrin 1981), is a reliable indicator of an interview’s ‘neutrality’ in respect of social class as far as the elicitation of texts is concerned.

A similar point is in fact made by Schiffrin (1987: 45) herself in a recently published study of DISCOURSE MARKERS, i.e. of the items *well, but, oh, you know*, etc., when she says that ‘Characterizing the speakers whose discourse markers we are studying is difficult, then, because we do not know which social features to describe, or even whether discourse markers are linguistic features which are socially distributed within a speech community.’ The reason is clearly that our knowledge of any association of grammatical variables with social variables is extremely limited, quite unlike the situation in the study of phonological variation; cf. again Schiffrin (1987: 44).

Table 7-6: Distribution of speakers in sample according to SOCIAL GROUP compared with distribution of texts in corpus attributed to them

| Social group | Speakers | | Texts | |
|--------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| | no. | % | no. | % |
| 1 (\approx LWC) | 7 | 14.0 | 58 | 13.8 |
| 2 (\approx UWC) | 16 | 32.0 | 131 | 31.2 |
| 3 (\approx LMC) | 20 | 40.0 | 173 | 41.2 |
| 4 (\approx UMC) | 7 | 14.0 | 58 | 13.8 |
| total: | 50 | 100.0 | 420 | 100.0 |

A comparison of the percentages of speakers from each social group and percentages of texts from the corresponding social group shows negligible differences. We therefore reject the hypothesis that middle class speakers, i.e. speakers in social groups 3 and 4, will be overrepresented in the corpus on account of the sociolinguistic interview being a middle class context.

An alternative attempt at an answer to the question concerning the neutrality of the sociolinguistic interview investigates the degree to which speakers appear to conform with the way in which an elicitation question is asked when this is clearly not a very natural way of asking a question in respect of some particular experience. The discussion of the two recount questions in Chapter 6 concluded that neither Q 4 ('tell about whelping') nor Q 7 ('tell about today's chores') were well designed to elicit recounts since they emphasised temporal sequence in the context of habitually recurring events. Of these two questions, Q 4 is the more interesting here since 59% of all responses were clear recounts despite the fact that 'mixtures' of recount/ procedure, procedures, observations, and reports appear to be the more natural type of response generically.

If the sociolinguistic interview were indeed a middle class context, a middle class 'speech event' so to speak, we would hypothesise that it is middle class speakers rather than working class speakers – speakers belonging to social groups 3–4 rather than 1–2 in this study – who respond by paying close attention to the generic cue in the question, viz. 'to tell what happened during that last whelping, from beginning to end'. The results of the comparison, giving observed and expected frequencies of occurrence for both recount and non-recount, are shown in Table 7-7 below:

Table 7-7: Recounts produced in response to Q 4 by SOCIAL GROUPS

| Social group | Recount | | Non-recount | | total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | frequency O | E | (Observed vs. Expected) O | E | |
| 1 (\approx LWC) | 4 | 2.97 | 1 | 2.03 | 5 |
| 2 (\approx UWC) | 6 | 4.75 | 2 | 3.25 | 8 |
| 3 (\approx LMC) | 5 | 7.12 | 7 | 4.88 | 12 |
| 4 (\approx UMC) | 4 | 4.16 | 3 | 2.84 | 7 |
| total: | 19 | 19.00 | 13 | 13.00 | 32 |
| df 3 $\chi^2 = 3.266$ p = 0.3524 | | | | | |

The result of a chi-square test performed to test the hypothesis H_0 that the speakers in each social group produce the same proportion of recounts as non-recounts shows that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, the differences in the frequency with which recount and non-recount are chosen are statistically insignificant and cannot be ruled out to be due to chance.

But even if the proposition that the sociolinguistic interview is a middle class speech event is not borne out by the available evidence, the question as to whether the sociolinguistic interviews in this study are socially ‘neutral’ is clearly not answered by investigating class alone since we may well find that males consider an interview context in quite a different light compared with females. (While in principle age is of course also relevant to such a question, in this study it is not a useful index of such neutrality on account of the continuous age distribution of speakers; see discussion in Section 7.2.1 above). However, in order to investigate any possible skewing of the sociolinguistic interview in favour of one or the other sex, we will need to take into account their social group membership as well so as not to hide any possible contribution the speakers’ social group makes to the ‘social’ distribution of the texts in the corpus.

In order to easily compare the contributions made to the corpus by speakers of either sex cross-classified with their social group membership, expressed in the number of codable texts, we present the average number of texts produced by the speakers in each such cross-classified category in Table 7-8 below. The truly outstanding results of the comparison in Table 7-8 pertain to the female speakers in social groups 3 and 4: We notice that females in social groups 3–4 contribute on average a much greater number of texts to the corpus than males in the corresponding groups – in the case of

social group 3 almost twice as many texts as the males in the same group. Similarly, the females in social groups 3–4 produce a much greater average number of texts than the females in social groups 1 and 2 – in the case of social group 3 almost three times as many texts as the females in social group 2.

Table 7-8: Average no. of texts contributed to corpus by speakers
categorised according to SEX X SOCIAL GROUP

| Social group | Males | Females |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | average no. of texts | average no. of texts |
| 1 (\approx LWC) | 9.33 | 7.50 |
| 2 (\approx UWC) | 7.67 | 5.64 |
| 3 (\approx LMC) | 7.78 | 14.71 |
| 4 (\approx UMC) | 6.25 | 11.00 |
| total: | 7.68 | 9.12 |

Since the two social groups 3 and 4 correspond in some sense to a category ‘middle class’, and perhaps upper and lower middle class respectively, the intriguing question suggesting itself here is whether the textual ‘overrepresentation’ of women in these social groups vis-à-vis both men (in the same groups) and women (in the other two groups 1–2) – and especially so in social group 3, i.e. in the ‘lower middle class’ group if the grouping employed in this study were indeed readily translatable into the conventional social class terminology – might not be akin to the phenomenon of ‘hypercorrection by the lower middle class’ observed by Labov (1966a, 1966c). Is it not plausible, one might ask, to consider the textual overrepresentation in this corpus of especially ‘lower middle class’ women to be caused by pressures analogous to those which cause hypercorrecting behaviour in other linguistic contexts?

Whatever the function of such hypercorrection in linguistic change, there is little doubt that it is the pressures of desired – or simply felt to be expected – upward social mobility which underlie such linguistic behaviour, pressures which are evidently more keenly experienced by lower middle class women. And since hypercorrecting amounts to an attempt at emulating the linguistic norms of those members of the speech community who are perceived to be socially superior, could not the ‘success’ of especially lower middle class women – such success here being defined as exceeding the expectations of cooperative behaviour typical of any sociolinguistic interview by contributing disproportionately to the number of codable texts in the corpus – be considered the result of their attempt at accommodating themselves to a context which

for most interviewees is probably associated with endeavours that are both foreign and prestigious, as for example in journalism and research generally?

If the textual overrepresentation of women in social groups 3 and 4 in the corpus may indeed be so interpreted, the question remains as to whether this assists in answering our original question after the social ‘neutrality’ of the sociolinguistic interviews in this study. It seems not unreasonable to hypothesise that the number of codable texts contributed to the corpus by members of different social groups may indeed be an indication as to whether speakers consider the interview context an ‘ordinary’ context for talk within which – though it may have its own unfamiliar rules – they will behave linguistically true to themselves or whether they consider such a context ‘foreign’ to such an extent that it will constrain their linguistic behaviour, essentially rendering the context dysfunctional from the point of view of obtaining data that is unaffected by the presence of an observer.

I would contend that the results of the comparison in Table 7-8 are at least indicative of the elicitation context indeed being ‘ordinary’ rather than markedly middle class since the only speakers who could conceivably be said to interpret the interviews as ‘middle class speech events’ are women in social groups 3 and 4, i.e. in the upper and especially lower middle class groups. It seems to me that a somewhat similar pattern would need to be identified among the men in order to argue successfully that a general middle class bias attaches to the sociolinguistic interviews in this study. In the absence of such evidence an interpretation of the observed pattern as evidence of middle class hypercorrection would appear to be the most plausible.

On the basis of the evidence used to investigate the social ‘neutrality’ of the sociolinguistic interviews in this study we would appear to be justified in claiming that the study presented here does indeed constitute a development of the sociolinguistic interview to the point where it is suitable for the study of text across the speech community. Undoubtedly other measures need to be developed to both assess current methodology and to further refine it. It is for this reason that the attention paid to a description of a theoretically informed data design in Chapter 3, and to the detailed critique of the design which constitutes an integral part of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, is to be understood as a necessary contribution to the further development of the sociolinguistic interview as a research tool.

7.4 Social Stratification of Genre

The last question to be addressed concerns the distribution of the (the types of) generic structure found in the corpus, i.e. of the genres or text types in accordance with the analyses in Chapter 6. This question is of some interest since it has at times been hypothesised that genres are differentially distributed in society, and that the basis of such differences are to be found in the stratification of society itself. In many ways, the hypothesis of generic difference is an extension of the hypothesis advanced by Bernstein and his co-workers in the sixties and seventies which, at its most general, considered the linguistic differences at the level of lexicogrammar exhibited in response to the demands of the same context by speakers of different social class backgrounds to be a reflection of the social stratification of society, such differences being referred to as ‘codes’ (Bernstein 1971; Adlam 1977), ‘coding orientations’ (Hasan 1973) or ‘sociolinguistic coding orientations’ (Halliday 1985a:41ff).

The link between the distribution of genre and the social stratification of society has at times been couched in terms of ‘ideology’ or different ‘discourses’, for example by Kress (1985). Similarly, Poynton (1985) claims that it is part of the social construction of gender in our society that males and females are given differential access to genres from the earliest age, both in society at large and in the education system, and that they thus not only come to favour different genres but in fact are to some extent associated and even identified with different genres.⁵¹ The stereotypical views of men as ‘factual *and* scientific’ and of women as ‘emotional *but* caring’, for example, would then have their generic reflections in the views of men as ‘givers of expositions’ and of women as ‘tellers of stories’, such dichotomies of course being rather revealing about the power structure of society. Heath’s (1982, 1983) ethnographic description of the different ways in which boys and girls learn how to talk – and learn how to talk differently – in the black town of Trackton, previously rural and now ‘mill’ town, provides powerful evidence for the contention that there may be significant generic differences between members of the same community on the basis of key social differences, such as gender, and that such differences are a function of social stratification, i.e. ultimately of the distribution of power in any community (and between communities).

⁵¹I wish to thank Cate Poynton for discussing the issue of socially conditioned generic variation with me.

Linguistic evidence which would bear on the hypothesis of semantic variation at the level of genre is scant at this stage although even Labov, who was the most vociferous opponent of the position ascribed by him to Bernstein in the 1970s (see especially Weiner & Labov 1983 for Labov's views; and Atkinson 1985 for a recent discussion of the debate), suggests in Labov (1972b:396) that 'evaluation' and 'syntactic elaboration' in narrative show evidence of a middle class 'overdevelopment' which is dysfunctional relative to a working class vernacular. In other words, he interprets the lexicogrammatical differences in the realisation of evaluation in particular to be evidence of a semantic difference between social classes at the level of text. Horvath (1985) finds that the choice of different text types in the context of a description of the speaker's primary school is correlated with age (adults vs. teenagers) and ethnicity (Greek Australians vs. native-born Australians) while Linde (1974) asserts that there are no differences between the very similar text types produced by her New York respondents which could be attributed to social class; but note Horvath's (1985:135) criticism of the lack of any actual investigation of this question by Linde (1974). And Tannen (1982) found cross-cultural generic differences between the Greek and American women asked to retell a story told wordlessly on film, the former seeing themselves 'as acute judges of human behavior and good story tellers' and the latter 'as acute recallers (or good experimental subjects)' (Tannen 1982:4); see Chafe (ed.) (1980) for an account of the 'pear story' project.

The investigation of any differential distribution of genres, i.e. of possible generic differences between speakers on the basis of their social characteristics, will be limited to those texts which had been produced in response to the narrative elicitation questions in the interview schedule, i.e. to Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'), Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?'), Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') and Q 11 ('tell favourite story'); see also discussion in Chapter 6. The total number of interviewees represented in this subset of 125 texts – henceforth simply referred to as corpus (125) in order to distinguish it from the complete corpus (420) – is 48, i.e. two of the fifty interviewees did not produce codable texts in response to any of these four narrative questions. The number of texts contributed by individual interviewees to corpus (125) ranged from one to four, with an average number of 2.6 texts per speaker. The rate at which speakers contributed is shown in Table 7-9:

Table 7-9: Speakers' rate of contribution of texts to corpus (125)

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| No. of texts contributed: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| No. of speakers: | 5 | 16 | 20 | 7 |

Since by disproportionately contributing to the corpus individual interviewees' generic preferences are at least in theory able to affect the distribution of genres for the speaker sample as a whole some control over this would be desirable. However, short of limiting each speaker's contribution to a single text – which would also sharply reduce the number of speakers represented since one would certainly also wish to control for the elicitation question – there seems little we can do to control for the possibility of introducing bias of this kind. However, having demonstrated some degree of social neutrality for the complete corpus (420) in the previous section we may ignore this issue for the smaller corpus (125).

Turning now to investigating the social distribution of genres in corpus (125) itself, we begin by briefly considering a problem which is likely to beset any empirical study of text which seeks to quantify and statistically analyse any of the many contextual and linguistic phenomena which characterise it, viz. the need for an amount of data sufficient for statistical analysis. In this study, for example, we wish to consider the social factors sex and social group membership, these two variables having two and four categories respectively, viz. male and female on the one hand and social groups 1–4 on the other, yielding a total of eight cells. (As above, age will not be considered here but see Chapter 8.) The elicitation question must be considered since it may well have a bearing on generic variation, and genre itself needs to be included since otherwise it could not be accounted for. These two variables have four and six categories respectively, viz. Qs 1, 8, 10 and 11 on the one hand and recount, narrative, anecdote, exemplum, observation and exposition on the other, yielding a total of 24 cells. A cross-classification of social and 'textual' conditioning factors, 8 times 24, yields a table with a total of 192 cells. However, seeking to account for the distribution of genres in this corpus our unit of analysis is naturally 'a text', and of this there are 'only' 125 tokens. (The size of these texts is not an issue at this point – but see discussion in Chapter 8.) Plainly, even a corpus as large as the one forming the basis of detailed analysis in this study is insufficient for a statistical analysis which seeks to ask

so many questions – and yet a much larger corpus for which a researcher could be fully accountable is likely to exceed a single researcher's resources.

The problem of small numbers in the statistical investigation of quantitative data is usually attempted to be overcome by following a practice of aggregating numbers, i.e. by collapsing categories. Since aggregation may either obscure relationships between phenomena or falsely claim such relationships where there are none, its use is neither recommended nor necessary:

It is rather difficult to find contingency tables in the biological or social science literature that contain zero cell values, let alone zero marginal totals. This is mainly due to suggestions on the collapsing of categories that are found in most elementary statistical textbooks. It is my opinion, however, that when the categories for a given variable are truly meaningful, collapsing of categories is not necessarily a good procedure, especially given the availability of the methods just described [i.e. log-linear methods – G.P.].

(Fienberg 1977/1980:142)

Nevertheless, to some extent we will also adopt the practice of collapsing categories but not, I hope, without having duly voiced the necessary caveat as to the reliability and generalisability of the results presented.

In order to demonstrate the impossibility of asking questions concerning all of the contextual conditioning factors that have been accounted for in this study in a statistical analysis we will simply tabulate the results of the generic coding for the texts produced in response to each of the four elicitation questions in corpus (125) but ignore their correlation with social conditioning factors; see Table 7-10 below:

Table 7-10: Distribution of genres in corpus (125) by ELICITATION QUESTION

| Q | Genre | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-------------|-------|------------|------|-----------|
| | recount | | narrative | | anecdote | | exemplum | | observation | | exposition | | total no. |
| | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | |
| Q 1 | 32 | 9.52 | 0 | 6.44 | 0 | 5.32 | 0 | 6.44 | 3 | 6.72 | 0 | .56 | 35 |
| Q 8 | 0 | 9.52 | 8 | 6.44 | 14 | 5.32 | 5 | 6.44 | 8 | 6.72 | 0 | .56 | 35 |
| Q 10 | 2 | 9.25 | 5 | 6.26 | 1 | 5.17 | 13 | 6.26 | 12 | 6.53 | 1 | .54 | 34 |
| Q 11 | 0 | 5.71 | 10 | 3.86 | 4 | 3.19 | 5 | 3.86 | 1 | 4.03 | 1 | .34 | 21 |
| total: | 34 | 34.00 | 23 | 23.00 | 19 | 19.00 | 23 | 23.00 | 24 | 24.00 | 2 | 2.00 | 125 |

While the total number of texts given in response to each of the four elicitation questions ranges from 21 to 35 texts, the expected frequency of texts per genre – on the

assumption of equal likelihood of occurrence – ranges from a mere 0.34 texts (exposition in response to Q 11) to 9.52 texts (recount in response to Qs 1 and 8). Such small numbers have always been considered to present serious problems for significance testing although it is said that ‘at least for tests conducted at a nominal 0.05 level of significance, the goodness-of-fit statistics often achieve the desired level when minimum expected cell values are approximately 1.0’ (Fienberg 1977/1980:173), such value being far less conservative than the often recommended minimum cell value of 5. Although this minimum cell value of 1.0 could be achieved in Table 7-10 by excluding the category exposition from further consideration without any great resultant loss of information, any further cross-classification of elicitation question with social factors would certainly result in the expected frequencies per cell falling well below 1.0.

The problem of small numbers makes it impossible to carry out any significance testing of the social distribution of the genres on the basis of the responses given to individual elicitation questions. Furthermore, it is evident from Table 7-10 that Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’) does not contribute to the generic variation in this corpus since it is almost uniformly responded to with the genre recount; see discussion in Section 6.2.2. Only three texts fall into a different generic category, viz. the single generic category observation. As a consequence, not much would be gained by investigating the social distribution of the genres produced in response to Q 1, especially since the diverse social characteristics of the three speakers responsible for the observations are unlikely to skew the results: female, social group 2; female, social group 3; and male, social group 1.

Instead, an investigation of the social distribution of genres on the basis of the corpus (125) as a whole has to suffice, investigating the factors sex and social group but ignoring the conditioning factor elicitation question. The results are presented in Tables 7-11a – b below:

Table 7-11a: Distribution of genres in corpus (125) according to SEX

| Sex | Genre | | | | | | | | | | | | total no. |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-------------|-------|------------|------|--------------|
| | recount | | narrative | | anecdote | | exemplum | | observation | | exposition | | |
| | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | |
| | frequency (Observed vs. Expected) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| male | 17 | 17.95 | 14 | 12.14 | 12 | 10.03 | 9 | 12.14 | 13 | 12.67 | 1 | 1.06 | 66 |
| female | 17 | 16.05 | 9 | 10.86 | 7 | 8.97 | 14 | 10.86 | 11 | 11.33 | 1 | .94 | 59 |
| total: | 34 | 34.00 | 23 | 23.00 | 19 | 19.00 | 23 | 23.00 | 24 | 24.00 | 2 | 2.00 | 125 |
| df 5 $\chi^2 = 3.275$ p = 0.6577 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The distribution of genres shown for males and females in Table 7-11a, and ignoring the effect of social group, leads us to conclude on the basis of the chi-square test that there is no association between speakers' sex and their choice of genre.

Testing for any association between genre and social group, the problem of expected frequencies per cell being smaller than 1.0 arises due to the generic category exposition having been chosen only twice in the entire corpus (125). As already suggested above, this problem could easily be overcome here by excluding exposition from further consideration. The total number of genres is thus reduced to five and the total number of texts accounted for to 123; see Tables 7-11b:

Table 7-11b: Distribution of genres in corpus (125), minus 2 expositions, according to SOCIAL GROUP

| Social group | Genre | | | | | | | | | | total no. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|-----------|
| | recount | | narrative | | anecdote | | exemplum | | observation | | |
| | frequency (Observed vs. Expected) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | O | E | |
| 1 (≈ LWC) | 5 | 5.25 | 5 | 3.55 | 4 | 2.93 | 4 | 3.55 | 1 | 3.71 | 19 |
| 2 (≈ UWC) | 10 | 11.89 | 6 | 8.04 | 9 | 6.64 | 10 | 8.04 | 8 | 8.39 | 43 |
| 3 (≈ LMC) | 13 | 12.44 | 7 | 8.41 | 6 | 6.95 | 8 | 8.41 | 11 | 8.78 | 45 |
| 4 (≈ UMC) | 6 | 4.42 | 5 | 2.99 | 0 | 2.47 | 1 | 2.99 | 4 | 3.12 | 16 |
| total: | 34 | 34 | 23 | 23 | 19 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 123 |
| df 12 $\chi^2 = 12.101$ p = 0.4376 | | | | | | | | | | | |

The distribution of genres shown for males and females in Table 7-11b, and ignoring the effect of sex, we conclude on the basis of the chi-square test that there is no association between speakers' social group and their choice of genre.

We find therefore that, at least within the statistical constraints due to the size of the corpus, the social conditioning factors sex and social group appear to be not significant in the speakers' choice of genre. However, far from this finding constituting evidence that genres may after all not be differentially distributed in the community, this outcome would seem to support strongly the contention advanced in Section 7.3 above, viz. that the sociolinguistic interviews in this study are indeed socially 'neutral'. As was demonstrated in Section 7.1, all the speakers represented in this study occupy the same role vis-à-vis their subject as well as their interactant, i.e. neither their involvement in what they are asked to talk about – their hobby – nor their social relationship to the interviewer differs on the basis of their sex or social group membership. In other words, at least in the context of the interviews of this study, speaker's access to different genres is not regulated by social stratification.

However, it should be emphasised that the semiotic choice investigated in this section, i.e. genre, while at one level being a readily recognised choice, at another level is the most abstract of choices investigated in this study since it is itself realised by other, progressively more 'linguistic' choices. It is those types of choices, i.e. lexicogrammatical ones, which will provide another opportunity for investigating the question of social conditioning and thus of semantic variation, something done in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8:

Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

8.1 Theme and Clause Complex: Two Aspects of Text Structure

In this chapter we will seek to provide some quantitative evidence for the realisational relationships hypothesised to obtain between genre, register, and language by investigating the only hard evidence there is, viz. the language patterns which constitute the text said to be the realisation of contextual meanings. In particular we are interested in investigating the concept of generic structure as it has been applied in the analysis of the texts which form that subset of corpus texts referred to in Chapters 6 and 7 as corpus (125), i.e. of those 125 texts which were produced in response to the so-called narrative questions: Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?'), Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?'), Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') and Q 11 ('tell favourite story'). Since these texts form a corpus which comprises essentially narrative-type texts on the one hand and observation texts on the other – but only two texts which are clearly non-narrative, viz. expositions – any quantification of this corpus is by default concerned with texts which may be said to be typical of a context of narrating although they are not all of a narrative text type proper; see discussion in Chapter 6.

Although the linguistic categories employed in any such enterprise are clearly just as much theoretical abstractions as the contextual categories for whose existence the patterning of linguistic categories is intended to provide evidence, the former are generally better defined than the latter and their analysis is thus likely to lead to the expectation that any correlation we may find to obtain between these two sets of categories does in fact constitute supporting evidence for the contextual categories posited to account for the actual texts in any given sample. Any such validation of contextual categories of a more obviously linguistic kind, such as generic structure and register, can only ever be indirect since both can only be accessed via their expression in language. On the other hand, contextual categories of the social kind, i.e. speakers' attributes such as sex, age, and social group membership, of course are typically established independently of the language used by those speakers and what is to be

investigated is not the validity of social categories as such but instead their significance in the production of text – the realisation of social meanings in text simultaneously with the realisation of other contextual meanings.

The choice of a linguistic variable for a quantitative investigation of the contextual conditioning of text – contributing towards the ‘distributional accountability’ to a data base in order to complement the ‘sequential accountability’ or qualitative investigation in terms of the discussion in Section 6.1 – poses a number of problems. These range from the linguistic problem of choosing a variable which is likely to be sensitive to the contextual variation to be investigated, to the statistical problem of choosing one which is realised in a sufficiently large number of tokens in order to be able to interpret the results of any counting on the basis of a suitable statistical analysis, to the practical problem of actually being able to carry out the very time-consuming analytical work necessarily involved in accounting for a large amount of data.

In the light of such constraints two linguistic variables have been chosen for the quantitative investigation of generic structure, viz. (i) the choice of clausal theme or topic, i.e., put at its simplest, that which comes first in any given clause (see Section 8.2.1 for analysis of Theme in SFG); and (ii) the choice in a system of clause complex-type relations, i.e. the simultaneous choice in a system of logico-semantic relations cross-classified with a system of taxis (see Section 4.2 above and Section 8.3 below for analysis of the clause complex in SFG). Both variables involve the making of choices which are realised at the level of the clause: Theme – capitalised in accordance with the conventions of SFG to indicate its status as a function in the structure of the clause – is typically realised by first position in the clause, as for example by *man* in the classic headline *man bites dog*. On the other hand, a particular clause complex-type relationship, for example paratactic elaboration ‘marked’ by, say, *in fact* as in *The man defended himself vigorously – in fact, he bit the dog*, constitutes a functional relationship between two clauses in the larger structure of the clause complex while also formally realised at clause rank.

The primary reason for the choice of these particular variables is to investigate quantitatively a hypothesis which has been put forward in various guises, viz. that choices made at the level of the clause in some sense reflect choices made at the level of text. This has been expressed most elegantly in the proposition put forward by Halliday (1980b, 1982) that a clause may be considered a metaphorical analogue of a

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

text. However, while metaphorical analogies between clause and text may be demonstrated in individual texts, it is the potential of their generalisation to the relationship between contextual meanings and language in text which is the particular challenge of a quantitative analysis of a large number of texts.

In respect of the choice of Theme, for example, first position in a clause may be of interest from a generic perspective for two reasons: Firstly, since the experiential content of a clause which is typically realised by the clause Subject often corresponds to the main protagonist in a certain type of text, for example in a narrative, the organisation of such information at clause level may well be reflected in the overall organisation of the text since such choices may cumulatively function to create a pattern text-wide which is typical of some particular genre.

Secondly, it is also in first position in the clause that we find the linguistic forms belonging to an essentially closed set of grammatical items *oh, well, so, but, and*, etc., i.e. those formal items which have been much discussed under headings such as discourse markers, boundary markers, misplacement markers, frames, etc., and which, in a perspective on text structure, may be considered to function as boundary markers of generic stages, both prospectively and retrospectively. The choice of Theme may thus function as both the dispersed and the discrete realisation of contextual choices in terms of the patterns of realisation hypothesised in Section 1.3.

On the other hand, the choice of clause complex-type relations as the other variable for an investigation of text structure is not motivated by existing hypotheses concerning the relation of clause to text, except perhaps in a very implicit fashion. Although Halliday's analysis of the clause complex is substantially different from traditional analyses of the 'sentence', its partial overlap with conventional concepts of coordination, subordination, apposition, etc., notwithstanding (see below), the recognition and analysis of any 'packaging' device such as the sentence-cum-clause complex – and the sometimes discussed notion of paragraphing, whether in written or spoken language – deserves further exploration for its significance to text structure as understood in this study.⁵² Since texts are typically realised not only in clauses but also in grammatical units larger than the clause, whether such a unit be considered a

⁵²Chafe (1986: 48), for example, argues that sentences in spoken language 'seem to belong to the category of phenomena which are under more rhetorical control' although whether sentences are actually intended to be the same as the so-called 'extended clauses' – which seem an uneasy cross between clause and clause complex; see also fn.9 in section 8.3 – is not really clear. Nevertheless, Chafe argues that it is units larger than the single clause, in his terminology 'extended clauses', which are 'the units speakers explicitly fasten together with overt markers of connection ... [and] which make(s) them appear to be important building blocks of language' (Chafe 1986: 41).

sentence (in writing), a clause complex (in speech), or a paragraph (which may or may not be a unit appropriate to speech), the choices made in the systems which create such units by virtue of relating clauses to one another have themselves the potential to create text-wide patterns and thus to realise contextual meanings in a dispersed fashion without making reference to any particular stage.

Such meanings may indeed be those captured in the concept of generic structure since, for example, a predominant choice of ‘and’ or ‘and then’ type meanings in a system of logico-semantic relations would constitute a partial realisation of the temporal organisation of narrative-type texts. Conversely, they may be related to contextual meanings of a social kind, for example by the realisation of ‘maleness’ in a predominant choice of hypotaxis and of ‘femaleness’ in one of parataxis, an association suggested by Jespersen’s claim (1923:251) that ‘men are fond of hypotaxis and women of parataxis’.

The fact that clause complex-type relations, i.e. the conjoint systemic choices in the systems of logico-semantics and taxis, are not hypothesised here to be associated with any particular stage but instead to characterise some genre as a whole is partly a response to the fact that such relations may in principle not be chosen at all in text and partly to the fact that, since a generic stage is typically not co-extensive with a clause complex, several generic stages may be wholly or partially realised by one clause complex. In other words, just as it is possible for a lengthy text to be realised in a succession of single clauses, equivalent to the ‘simple sentence’ of traditional grammars, so it is for a clause complex to cut across two or more generic stages since a minimum of two clauses is required for a clause complex-type relation to have been chosen while no such requirement attaches to the realisation of a generic stage. Although in the unmarked case the boundaries of a generic stage tend to coincide with those of a clause complex, clause complex-type relations cannot be realisationally related to generic stages.

(However, a text of some length, say, one exceeding two dozen clauses, which is realised by a large number of single clauses not standing in a structural relationship to one another is likely to be perceived to be unusual – though not necessarily as aberrant; see for example text Q 08/I 10 in Volume 2 which recounts a certain interaction between a dog and a cat, viz. a jointly committed theft, as a kind of dialogue between

them which is realised in a succession of ‘quoted’ wordings in either single clauses or clause complexes comprising a quoting and one quoted clause.)

The choices of Theme and clause complex-type relation in text naturally complement one another in the organisation of text in the following way: Since the (interclausal) clause complex-type relations create units which themselves are not structurally related to other such units, any clause complex-initial Theme potentially serves to link those units, i.e. one clause complex to another, as a series of ‘macro’ messages. In fact, the thematic linking of such message units is not limited to clause complexes but must obviously also include any single clauses which are structurally unrelated to any other, i.e. the so-called ‘simple sentences’ of traditional grammar. (As a matter of terminological convenience, i.e. in order to aid the subsequent discussion, these will be referred to as ‘simplexes’, adopting a term used by Huddleston (1966) without, however, following Huddleston in setting up a rank scale of English where complexes of the clause, group, etc., are considered to occupy a rank in addition to the (simplex) clause, group, etc.)

If our contention is correct that the packaging of text achieved by means of clause ‘complexing’ is significant in the organisation of the text – and while it is inconceivable that such a ubiquitous and prominent structuring device could be meaningless, it does of course not follow that it must be significant in generic structuring – then it follows that the choice of Theme in sentence-initial position, i.e. initially both in the clause complex and in the single clause which has not entered into a clause complex at all, may be more significant than the choice of Theme in those clauses in clause complexes which are in non-initial position. (This formulation will have to be amended to take account of those clause complexes in which a structural relation of dependency obtains between an initial beta and a subsequent alpha clause; see Section 8.2.2 below.) It is therefore hypothesised that in an investigation of Theme relative to generic stage it will be the clause complex/simplex-initial Themes which have the greater likelihood of demonstrating a correlation.

A quantitative account of the choice of Theme and clause complex-type relations in the texts of corpus (125) can only be a partial account of the likely linguistic realisation of generic structure since other systems will also contribute to realising generic structure. Furthermore, there is of course no question that a quantitative account of just two linguistic variables could in any way constitute a full account of the ‘meaning’ of a

text – an attempt more likely to succeed for a single text; see for example the analyses by Halliday (1985b, 1987b) and Fries (1985a) which are conducted in an essentially quantitative style of analysis not dissimilar to that argued for in this study.

An account of even a limited number of the linguistic realisations of the generic stages identified in the 125 texts of our corpus, however, must serve as an important and necessary means of testing the accuracy of the generic coding of the corpus itself – which in effect constitutes a testing of some of the hypotheses advanced in Chapter 6 regarding the status of different generic stages, for example the contention that genres differ significantly only in respect of their middles but not also their beginnings and endings, and whether the distinctions intended to be captured by differently named stages are well motivated.

8.2 Functional Hypotheses concerning the Role of Theme in Text

Two hypotheses in particular have been put forward by scholars working in the tradition of the Prague School on Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) which focus on the role of clausal theme in the creation of a text, viz. (i) that its choice over a whole text is indicative of the *structure* of the text, discussed under various headings, for example as ‘thematic progression’ by Danes (1970a, b; 1974), Fries (1983) and as ‘theme dynamics’ by Enkvist (1973, 1978); and (ii) that its choice is indicative of the *nature* of the text, discussed by Fries (1983) as reflecting the text’s ‘method of development’. Both notions are closely related to one another and in fact tend not to be clearly distinguished, as shown for example by Halliday’s adoption of the term ‘method of development’ for both (cf. Halliday 1985c, 1987b).

In respect of the hypothesis relating to text structure it is argued that the choice of Theme in individual clauses – when examined text-wide, this is, always allowing for minor perturbations of overall patterns – reveals a text’s ‘staging’ of its, say, (narrative) episodes or (expository) arguments. In narrative it is not only typically found that a character – in the sense of one of its *dramatis personæ* – will serve as the most common ‘point of departure’ of the message at clause rank but also, and more importantly, some one particular character will persist as the thematised participant in a grammatical sense over a ‘section’ of the text such that the particular section is likely to come to correspond to a functionally-definable stage at some level of abstraction. In exposition on the other hand it is unlikely to be a character which plays a role made

significant in the text overall by its thematisation but instead some abstraction which carries the argument at some particular stage.

The pattern created, however, may not only be characterised by different semantic abstractions, such as those pointed to in narrative and exposition, but also by differences in the patterning itself. If a pattern may be created by the relative persistence of one thematised participant being followed by some other participant gaining thematic prominence, and holding it over some section of the text, another kind of patterning may itself be characterised by a continual change of Theme. For example in a live commentary on a game of football, the stages concerned with the reporting of the game-in-progress are likely to be characterised by a pattern in which a new participant is first introduced into the text in rhematic position and, once introduced, moves into thematic position in the next clause – iconically representing the movement of the ball from one player to the next. In grammatical terms, the movement from Rheme to Theme in such a text is of course, at least in the unmarked case, also indicative of the changing roles in transitivity occupied by particular characters from one clause to the next.

While most of the writers cited above seem to be in broad agreement that the thematic patterns potentially created in different texts are due to some kind of ‘interaction’ between Theme and Rheme, Fries (1983) stresses their potential to create text structure while Enkvist (1973:186) stresses their potential as ‘stylistic discriminants’ useful in deciding questions of authorship or ‘texts of different kinds’.⁵³ In other words, Enkvist highlights not the text structuring potential of thematic patterning but instead its potential for generic classification or authorial identification. This different perspective permits us to make the connection to another kind of pattern of the choice of Theme text-wide which is addressed by Fries (1983) under the heading of ‘method of development’.

A text’s ‘method of development’ is considered by Fries to characterise the nature of the text in question since it is making a constant, and thus prominent, contribution to its texture by reference to cohesion and register as the sources of a text’s ‘unity’ in the terms of Halliday & Hasan (1976); see discussion in Section 2.1.2. This is seen to be achieved via a consistent choice being made from some semantic domain which is realised in thematic position throughout the text. To take one of Fries’ examples, a text

such as one of the apartment descriptions discussed by Linde & Labov (1975) is likely to adopt as its method of development some expression of ‘relative location’, typically realised in adverbial groups such as *to the right, further down*, etc. In essence, a text’s ‘nature’ – its texture in the essentially non-structural sense in which the term is used in Halliday & Hasan (1976) – is captured in the predominant choice of Theme at clause level since the ‘point of departure’ of the clause as message is ultimately a reflection of a ‘semantic peg’ on which the text as a whole has been hung. Applied to the above example, we may say that in the description of the lay-out of an apartment an expression of relative location functions as a metaphor for the text as a whole.⁵⁴

A functional role in text for Rheme alone, i.e. which is not considered to be realised ‘interactionally’, is considered by Fries (1983) to be that of carrying a text’s POINT – that which the text is about. This role is thus in contradistinction to a text’s method of development realised in Theme, i.e. the semantic ‘peg’ on which a text is hung. In Fries’ view then, a text proceeds as a kind of bifurcation of two strands of global meanings, method of development and point, whose local realisations may simultaneously structure the text globally in a generic sense via their interaction, reflected in the ‘thematic progression’ of the text. Halliday (1985b) adopts both concepts in his analysis, except that he considers the realisation of a text’s point to be found in the New of the informational system rather than the Rheme of the thematic system, making the same distinction between Rheme and New noted in fn.2 this chapter.

There are at least three reasons for the tendency not to distinguish sharply between the two steps taken in Fries’ (1983) argumentation, viz. (i) that ‘thematic progression correlates with the structure of a text’; and (ii) that ‘thematic content correlates with the method of development of a text (and the nature of the text)’: Firstly, Theme(s) which correlate with the structure of the text as a staged, goal-oriented social process tend to be generalisable semantically at some level of abstraction and thus come to represent a single principle characterising the text, a single ‘method of development’. For example, the typical *organisation* of narrative in terms of a succession and/or interaction of a very few ‘characters’ or *dramatis personae* in thematic position is simultaneously also

⁵³Halliday (p.c.) in fact considers Theme/Rheme patterns to be interpretable as patterns involving Theme and New in line with his view that ‘the interaction of the thematic and informational systems is the clause grammar’s contribution to the creation of texture in discourse’ (Halliday 1985b: 40); see section 8.2.1.

⁵⁴Cf. also Grimes’ (1975: 323) view that ‘Every clause, sentence, paragraph, episode, and discourse is organized around a particular element that is taken as its point of departure’, something he refers to as the speaker’s ‘stag[ing] for the hearer’s benefit.’ Despite the term ‘staging’ clearly implying (text) structure in the context of ‘discourse’, it would appear that Grimes is also concerned with something closer to Fries’ ‘method of development’.

Chapter 8:

Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

characteristic of narrative (as distinct from exposition, say) by having ‘character’ (rather than abstract ‘principle’ or ‘quality’, say) as its ‘method of development’.

Secondly, Theme(s) which characterise the nature of a text by virtue of some semantic attribute they have in common – ‘content’ being too experiential a focus as shown by the above example of ‘relative location’ since that may not be part of the transitivity structure of the clause and thus not part of its TOPICAL THEME but instead be realised in what Halliday calls TEXTUAL THEME; see Section 8.2.1 below – are likely to be functioning simultaneously in a text-structuring way at some level of generic abstraction and thus come to be associated with some rather than with all stages of the text. For example, the *characteristic* concern of narrative with ‘characters’ or *dramatis personæ* which leads to its thematisation of characters is mainly found in certain stages, especially those concerned with the crisis stages of Complication and Resolution, but hardly in those stages concerned with introducing, evaluating and concluding a narrative.

Thirdly, as pointed out above with reference to the position taken by Enkvist, organisational patterns themselves may be so strongly identified with particular types of text that it is not the ‘thematic content’ which correlates with a text’s method of development or nature but instead the pattern of thematic organisation. This would appear to be particularly so in the case of descriptive texts where the choice of Theme is essentially dictated by the need to ‘cover’ all aspects of the object to be described, especially when no obvious organisational principle akin to that of ‘relative location’ is available, for example simple ‘listing’; see also discussion in Chapter 6.

Since the goal of the quantitative investigation of Theme in this chapter is to test aspects of the hypotheses of generic structure advanced in this study, both discursively in Chapter 6 and as embodied in the analysis of corpus (125), we need to ask how the functional hypotheses concerning the role of Theme in text discussed above can be related to generic structure *and* addressed quantitatively. It would appear that the clearly related issues of a text’s method of development and of its thematic progression can be addressed fruitfully only by relating the realisations of clausal Theme at a rather general level to the generic stages of those texts, i.e. for a type of Theme whose realisations are not specific as to the lexical content of individual Themes in the many texts studied. For example, we would expect a predominant realisation of Theme in a way which allows for the potential realisation of ‘character’, i.e. by Themes which are

potentially co-referential, to correlate not only with narrative-type genres generally but also specifically with the crisis stages in narrative-type genres – thereby reflecting, and partially realising, the functional role of such stages in narrative. Similarly, we would expect other stages, such as an end stage, to correlate with a choice of Theme which is not at all concerned with the realisation of character but instead by a Theme which foregrounds its metatextual function by making anaphoric reference to events already related in the text, i.e. by either extended reference or text-reference, since it is part of the meaning of an end stage to ‘wrap up’ the text.

The extent to which the choice of Theme at clause rank can be related to patterns of a generic kind, be they seen in terms of one or the other perspective, will be discussed in Sections 8.2.2-3 below which deal specifically with the quantitative analysis of Theme and the interpretation of results. Two of the concepts mentioned above will not be investigated, viz. (i) the notion of the ‘point’ of a text, said to be realised by a consistent choice of Rheme (Fries) or New (Halliday); and (ii) the notion of Theme – Rheme (Fries) or Theme – New (Halliday) ‘interaction’. The reason is a twofold one: (i) intonation was not analysed for the complete corpus (125) and thus no statements can be made about the realisation of New; and (ii) on the basis of an exploratory study of a putative Theme – Rheme interaction in the 21 texts given in response to Q 11 (‘tell favourite story’) it was concluded that a Theme – Rheme interaction was extremely rare, a definite pattern of such an interaction only being identifiable with some degree of certainty in the case of one text. In that text, the movement between Theme and Rheme reflected iconically the change in transitivity roles of two or three participants, the changing roles played by two or three ‘characters’ in the development of a narrative text.⁵⁵ Since interaction of this kind appeared to be neither common in the texts

⁵⁵The identification of patterns of ‘thematic progression’ (Danes, Fries) or ‘theme dynamics’ (Enkvist) is far from simple and the difficulties involved in establishing particular patterns, including very simple ones, make me suspect that many of the *possible* patterns suggested, especially by Danes (1970a, b), will be found to have no text-theoretical basis, i.e. even if some of the more complicated patterns could be identified reliably in some particular text they might well not be able to be interpreted by reference to some contextual theory of meaning.

A similar problem was also found to beset an investigation carried out by the current writer into the seemingly patterned distribution of the different characters thematised in the texts of corpus (125). It was noticed in a number of texts that if the thematised characters in a given text were ranked in order of their relative frequency – such frequency being taken to be an indication of their importance in the text – the most frequently thematised character occurred about twice as frequently as the next most frequently thematised character, and that about twice as frequently as the next one, etc. Additionally, and this is what made the ‘pattern’ a potentially interesting one, the less frequently individual characters occurred, the more there were of them. In other words, type A not only occurred twice as frequently as the next most frequent type but there would also be two of type B, say type B_1 and B_2 , and four of type C, viz. C_1 , C_2 , and so on.

produced in a context of narrating nor, judging by the one clear example of Theme – Rheme interaction found, correlated with text structure the investigation of such patterns was not pursued any further.

8.2.1 The Analysis of Theme in SFG

The interpretation of theme followed in the analysis of the corpus texts is that developed by Halliday (1967b, 1970a, 1985b,c), an interpretation which is closely related to the work of Prague School linguists on Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP); see Vachek (1966). The principal assumption is ‘that the clause has the character of a message: it has some form of organization giving it the status of a communicative event’ and that the form of organisation is that of THEMATIC STRUCTURE, specifically a THEME – RHEME structure (Halliday 1985c:38). The message structure is essentially speaker-oriented: the speaker chooses as Theme some part of his message as ‘that which is to be talked about’ – ‘the point of departure for the clause as message’ (Halliday 1967b:212) – leaving the remainder as the Rheme of the clause.

In English, Theme is realised by first position – in other words by order – such that in the above clause *The message structure is essentially speaker-oriented* the Theme is *the message structure*. The Theme may itself be ranged on a cline from unmarked to marked, with markedness depending on the system of mood, such that in English the Subject of the clause in declarative, typically realised by a nominal group, is the least marked Theme – as in the above example – whereas for example in the opening clause of this paragraph *In English, Theme is realised by first position ...* it is the wording *in*

This appeared to be yet another example of the rank-frequency relationship known as Zipf’s Law, which claims ‘that a list of word-types from a large body of text ranked in order of frequency will show a *constant* decrease in the frequency with which they appear (with the exception of the most common words)’ (Bailey 1969: 220; emphasis in orig.). This claim has attracted and divided linguists and statisticians alike ever since Zipf (1935) formulated his ‘law’; see Cherry (1957/1966) for a brief introduction from a statistician’s point of view. In practice, this meant that most texts had one or two principal characters, several major ones, a greater number still of minor ones, and a whole raft of characters which were thematised only once, in some sense perhaps analogous to a stage play. (The relative ranking of (grammatical) participants in discourse is of course not a new idea; cf. for example Propp’s (1958) ranking of participants and props, and Grimes’ (1975) ranking of events and participants.)

While a pattern of this particular relationship of type (of character, i.e. by referential identity) to token (i.e. by frequency of occurrence) – in other words a pattern where there are few major but many minor characters – would appear to be wholly predictable as the pattern typical of a narrative-type text, other patterns are not only imaginable but were also found in the data. For example, both the reverse pattern of (relatively) many major characters and (relatively) few minor characters was found just as we found one text (of considerable length) in which only three characters were thematised, and each with the same frequency. However, a lengthy investigation of these patterns in all of the 125 texts failed not only to identify these and possibly other patterns wholly convincingly – there were quite a number of texts which seemingly fell into one or another pattern yet whose type/token ratios were either not nearly as neatly of the 2:1 order as originally hypothesised or whose patterns did also not entirely conform to a descending, ascending or level one – but much more importantly from my point of view the pattern could neither be interpreted by reference to any of the conditioning factors accounted for in this study, i.e. elicitation question, genre, etc., nor by reference to everyday notions such as ‘quality/entertainment value/excitement/etc.’ (of narrative, anecdote, etc.), on the basis of simple inspection. And so, irrespective of the intellectual respectability or otherwise of Zipf’s Law, the investigation was abandoned since at least at this point the ‘patterns’ observed cannot be claimed to be linguistically of any interest.

English, functioning as Adjunct in the mood structure of the clause and realised by an adverbial group. In this example, as so commonly in writing, the Theme is explicitly ‘picked out’, and thus marked compared to the unmarked Subject Theme, by being separated from the Rheme by punctuation, thus capturing an equally common intonational pattern by which Theme and Rheme are realised in separate tone groups. The most marked Theme, however, is that which is mapped onto the Complement, often used to great effect as in example 8-1 – see also example 8-3 in Section 8.2.3.2 below for a more extensive representation – where the Rheme in one clause becomes the highly marked Theme in the subsequent one:

Example 8-1

... you know we’re having a bad day.

A bad day we had on Sunday, you know, because she just did not want to show for some unknown reason.

The analysis of the clause as a Theme – Rheme structure is clearly related to the analysis of the clause in terms of a TOPIC – COMMENT structure (see Li 1976 for a representative collection of papers) but differs most importantly from that conceptualisation by seeking to account for the distribution of information in discourse by two distinct but interacting systems rather than by one system alone, the two approaches being referred to by Fries (1983) as the ‘combining’ vs. the ‘separating’ approaches to theme. Halliday considers the speaker to organise his discourse *simultaneously* as ‘message’ (about the forthcoming discourse) by reference to a THEMATIC SYSTEM with the features Theme/Rheme and as ‘information’ (about the preceding discourse) by reference to an INFORMATION SYSTEM with the features GIVEN/NEW (Halliday 1967b). According to Halliday

The difference can perhaps be best summarized by the observation that, while ‘given’ means ‘what you were taking about’ (or ‘what I was talking about before’), ‘theme’ means ‘what I am taking about’ (or ‘what I am talking about now’); and, as any student of rhetoric knows, the two do not necessarily coincide.

(Halliday 1967b:212)

While the choices made in the thematic system are realised in lexicogrammatical choices at clause rank directly, the choices made in the information system are realised in so-called ‘information units’ in a system of intonation (see especially Halliday 1967c, 1970b), and thus need to be mapped onto elements in the structure of the clause

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

in order for them to be expressed in any verbalisation. And so while the choices in the two systems are independent ones, this mapping of two kinds of structure onto one another leads not only to message unit and information unit, i.e. clause and tone unit, being co-extensive in the unmarked case, but also to an unmarked association of Theme with Given, and of Rheme with New.

Furthermore, Halliday argues that a clause Theme may itself mirror the metafunctional organisation of the clause (and of all language – see discussion in Section 2.1.1) by potentially having an internal structure comprising ideational, interpersonal and textual elements, and that it may thus be considered a ‘multiple’ Theme:

The Theme-Rheme structure is the basic form of the organization of the clause as message. Within this, the Theme is what the speaker selects as his point of departure, the means of development of the clause. But in the total make-up of the Theme, components from all three functions may contribute.

(Halliday 1985c:53)

So for example a clause such as *So naturally I got very defensive* may be said (i) to link the ‘clause as message’ to other clauses by a TEXTUAL THEME *so*; (ii) to assign the clause a value in the ‘discourse as exchange’ by an INTERPERSONAL THEME *naturally*; and (iii) to introduce the (representation of the) significant experience or ‘content’ in the clause by an ideational element *I*, referred to as TOPICAL THEME.

However, while the clause is considered always to be the output of three semantic systems or metafunctions simultaneously, Theme is only potentially multifunctional since only the ideational element or topical Theme is considered obligatory in a major clause – allowing for ellipsis and branching – while interpersonal and textual Themes are optional. The topical Theme is that clause element which has a function in transitivity as either a Process, a Participant, or a Circumstance, more specifically a function as Actor, Goal, Circumstance of Manner, Location, Extent, etc. The topical Theme is concerned with ‘content’, with ‘what the clause is about’, and thus corresponds most closely to the topic in topic/comment analyses. For practical purposes, anything following the topical Theme, delimitable by reference to transitivity, is considered the Rheme.

Three types of textual Theme are identified by Halliday: (i) a CONTINUATIVE THEME realised by a continuative such as *oh, well, yes, no, now, I mean*, etc.; (ii) a CONJUNCTIVE THEME realised by a conjunctive Adjunct such as *in fact, in other*

words, actually, anyway, at any rate, etc.; and (iii) a STRUCTURAL THEME realised by a paratactic conjunction such as *and, but, so*, etc. or a hypotactic conjunction such as *because, if, although*, etc. Since conjunctions are the most common markers of a structural relationship between clauses, structural Themes are the most common textual Themes and their thematic status is therefore not very prominent. On the other hand, whenever a conjunction does not mark a structural relationship between clauses but instead functions ‘cohesively’ its thematic status is likely to be much more significant; see also Section 8.3 below. Similarly, since continuative and conjunctive Themes do not function structurally, their frequency of occurrence is less than that of structural Themes and, correspondingly, their thematic status is greater.

Interpersonal Themes are realised by modal Adjuncts such as *probably, luckily, in my opinion*, etc.; mood elements such as WH- items in WH- interrogatives and finite verbs in polar interrogatives; and vocatives. Since modalities and especially vocatives may occur other than in thematic position, i.e. preceding the topical Theme, their thematic status is more prominent than that of WH- items and Finites since the latter always occur in thematic position. Both mood elements in interpersonal Themes and structural Themes thus have a very limited thematic status for the same reason – there is no genuine choice involved.

And lastly, while the typical sequence of the elements in a multiple Theme is textual[^]interpersonal[^]topical, as in the example *So naturally I got very defensive* above, textual and interpersonal Themes may occur in reverse order as in *Probably because I complained*, i.e. in the kind of explanatory comment which is often delivered as an afterthought. Furthermore, several interpersonal meanings may be realised prosodically throughout the clause just as there may be several textual Themes as in *well, anyhow, at the same time I thought I’d better just do as he told me*. In all cases, however, the analysis of a multiple Theme proceeds only up to and including its topical Theme so that any interpersonal elements in particular which follow the topical Theme are considered part of the Rheme.

A further category of Theme which is of some interest in the context of text structure is that of a ‘clause as Theme’, the potential for which exists in the structure of the clause complex, specifically one involving hypotaxis (see Section 4.2 and Section 8.3 this chapter). In the case of hypotactically related clauses, one clause is modified by another, viz. the dominant Head (‘alpha’) clause by the dependent Modifying (‘beta’)

clause, such that in *she'll show if she's in the mood* the clause in first position is modified by the clause in second position. However, since hypotactically related clauses may occur in either sequence, i.e. in $\alpha^{\wedge}\beta$ sequence as in the above example or in $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence, one or the other clause may be thematised relative to the remainder. (Apart from being a clause-length Theme in the structure of the clause complex, each clause entering into a clause complex of course has the potential for a multiple Theme in the clause itself.)

For example, it is quite obvious that the $\alpha^{\wedge}\beta$ sequence *she'll show if she's in the mood* makes a different thematic choice compared with the $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence *if she's in the mood, she'll show* in terms of the events represented and their realisation in the transitivity structure of each clause, viz. *showing* vs. *being*. More importantly, however, in the case of a $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence the particular logico-semantic relation characterising the modification of the Head clause – in the above example ‘condition’ marked by *if* – becomes the dominant Theme of the entire clause complex by virtue of the foregrounding of that clause on which the success of the dominant clause depends, i.e. of the Modifying beta clause. On the other hand, no such abstract Theme ‘condition’ could be said to be the dominant Theme of the $\alpha^{\wedge}\beta$ sequence, thus leading to an interpretation of rising dependency as a case of a ‘markedness’, the β clause being the marked Theme.

8.2.2 The Quantification of Themes with Text-Structural Potential

The quantification of Theme, like any quantification of linguistic choices, will be guided primarily by some hypothesis concerning the patterning of linguistic realisations and only secondarily by a goal of complete accountability in the form of reporting the total distribution of all Themes in all environments. In this case this means that the quantification is designed with a view to providing us with some understanding of how the generic structuring of text may be achieved and/or supported by the choice of Theme.

Of the three types of Theme postulated by Halliday, it is the textual and topical Themes rather than the interpersonal Theme which are of special interest in an investigation of text structure where that is understood to be constitutive structure, in other words generic structure as the concept has been used in this study. Other types of text structure are imaginable, for example prosodic structure, and in such a structure

the choice of interpersonal Theme is likely to be very significant; see Martin (1987) for an exploration of some of the relevant issues. Perhaps the most important reason for the prominence of constitutive structure in the corpus texts of this study – a prominence which permits the texts to be considered in a synoptic rather than a dynamic perspective as argued in Chapter 4 – is that because speakers may have a reasonable expectation that the hearer will accept the validity of the speaker's goals, the achievement of those goals does not require any interactional (dynamic) work. Instead, they are capable of being achieved in a prospectively determined structure which is relatively static and whose stages are more or less clearly marked.

A preliminary investigation of all types of Theme in a substantial number of texts in this corpus also showed that the incidence of interpersonal Themes is far below that of textual and topical Themes, with only about 7% of clauses having an interpersonal Theme compared with about 60% textual and 92% topical Themes. On account of their low incidence alone we may conclude that interpersonal Themes are unlikely to be significant realisations of generic structure, i.e. that they have a global function in text, although they may of course play a significant role locally, for example within recreated dialogue in especially narrative texts. It is tempting to consider their status to be akin to that of vocatives: their choice is largely optional, except in interrogative clauses, and their placement in the clause variable. Two realisations of interpersonal meanings, of modality to be precise, occur with very high frequency in declaratives, viz. *I think* and *I suppose*. These are considered interpersonal metaphors functioning like modalities in a single clause structure rather than clauses with a genuine transitivity structure of their own. Such interpersonal Themes are unlikely to contribute anything to the structure of a text – nor indeed to its texture in the sense of Halliday & Hasan (1976) – which is not to say that they may not be significant at a local level.

We should briefly comment on the likely reasons for the difference in the incidence of the three major types of Theme in text, reasons which are both linguistic and quantificational. The high incidence of topical Theme comes as no surprise since all clauses which are major and/or finite can be expected to have a topical Theme. Exceptions are elliptical clauses, both exophoric and endophoric, and branched clauses; the former may allow us to infer the Subject, and thus the most likely topical Theme (see Halliday 1985c:89ff), and the latter always do so. (A further exception may be constituted by clauses which are incomplete yet whose inclusion in a comprehensive analysis of a given text is important for other investigative purposes.) As it became

clear in the analysis of the Themes of whole texts that topical Themes realised mainly characters in field (rather than events or settings), and which were themselves realised as (grammatical) participants, it was decided to include as topical Themes those ellipted and branched Themes which could unambiguously be inferred from their co-text. Equally in response to the nature of the thematic patterns in the texts in this corpus, it was decided to code as topical Theme the ‘addressee’ of the typical Subject-less imperative. While the overall result of these coding decisions has been to increase the relative frequency of topical Themes, it is unlikely that they would have changed the rank-order of the different types of Theme.

The greater frequency of topical than textual Themes is essentially due to two factors: Whereas the incidence of topical Themes depends largely on the status of the clause being major and/or finite, the incidence of textual Themes depends to some extent on the status of the clause relative to the clause complex since it is much more common for non-initial clauses in clause complexes to have a textual, especially structural, Theme than for those which do not enter into a clause complex with other clauses, i.e. for the ‘simple sentence’ of traditional grammar or simplex as we have called it as a matter of terminological convenience. However, while topical Themes are virtually obligatory in major and/or finite clauses, with the exceptions noted above, textual Themes are not even obligatory in the case of non-initial clauses in clause complexes – for example paratactic elaborating clauses typically have no structural marker and hence rarely a textual Theme. Furthermore, since the incidence of minor and/or non-finite clauses, which may have a similarly low potential for topical and textual Themes, is much lower than the incidence of simplexes in monologic texts, it is the realisation of clauses either as simplexes or as members of clause complexes, and if the latter whether clause complex-initial or not, which has the greatest effect on the relative frequency of topical vs. textual Themes.

8.2.2.1 Textual Themes

Textual Themes, i.e. continuative, conjunctive and structural Themes, are the most obvious choices for marking generic stages thematically and their investigation will form one half of the quantification of Theme. The quantification of the three types of textual Theme has been carried out in the following manner: Continuative Themes, realised formally by items such as *oh*, *well*, *yes*, *no*, *now*, etc., as well as conjunctive Themes, realised formally by such locutions as *however*, *meanwhile*, *on the other hand*,

I mean, etc., have been accounted for collectively rather than individually. Structural Themes, i.e. those realised by conjunctions, either coordinating ones such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *then*, etc., or subordinating ones such as *when*, *because*, *unless*, *seeing (that)*, etc., have been split into three ‘subcategories’ on the basis of their realisations in order to account as far as possible for the ubiquitous *and* : (i) ‘*and* only’; (ii) ‘*and* + other conjunction’, such as *and then*, *and if*, etc.; and (iii) ‘conjunctions other than *and*’, i.e. *but*, *if*, *because*, etc.

The reason for treating coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *so*, *but* and *then*, i.e. those formal items commonly realising paratactic relations between clauses, and also *because*, a common realisation of a (usually) hypotactic relation, as discourse markers akin to those formal items which function exclusively as continuative Themes, viz. *oh*, *well* and *now*, and as conjunctive Themes, viz. *you know* and *I mean*, is of course to be found in the fact that conjunctions, both coordinating and subordinating ones, are not restricted to realising structural relations, i.e. relations between clauses, but may also function ‘cohesively’ in the sense of Halliday & Hasan (1976), and that when they do, they are considered to have an increased potential for functioning in a text-structuring way.⁵⁶

Although a conjunction functioning cohesively clearly constitutes a textual Theme, it is perhaps slightly inconsistent to refer to it as a structural Theme simply on the basis of its realisation also being the typical realisation of a structural relationship between two clauses; by contrast, the labels continuative and conjunctive are primarily motivated by the functions they serve and their class labels are derived from these functions. Strictly speaking, when conjunctions are thematised sentence-initially, i.e. either in a single clause that is not part of a clause complex, also referred to here as simplex, or in the first clause of a clause complex which is *not* the beta clause in a rising dependency sequence, we should no longer speak of that conjunction realising a structural Theme since it does not mark a structural relationship between two clauses. However, in this study the distinction will be accounted for by keeping such sentence-initial realisations of (textual) Themes distinct from those which are non-initial, thus obviating the need for postulating either a distinct category of textual Theme – which it

⁵⁶Aggregating the different realisations of Themes under the heading of continuative and structural Theme respectively makes it difficult to relate the quantitative work carried out here to work such as Schiffrin’s (1987) on discourse markers, except in a very general way. This is particularly so since the formal items investigated by Schiffrin for example, viz. *oh*, *well*, *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *because*, *y’know* and *I mean*, fall into both the categories continuative and structural in the SFG model of Theme followed in this study. The locutions *you know* and *I mean* are particularly troublesome since, although they most commonly realise a conjunctive Theme, they at times function structurally by explicitly marking an elaborating paratactic relationship very similarly to locutions such as *in fact*.

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

is not – or by amalgamating the typical realisations of conjunctive Themes with those formal items normally functioning as the realisations of structural Themes.

At first separate coding categories of continuative and conjunctive Themes were set up for those Themes which were realised by more than one formal item. For example, continuative Themes may be realised by a second item, whether also belonging to the category of continuative Theme as in *oh no, yes well*, etc., or to some other subcategory of textual Theme as in *well I mean* (continuative + conjunctive Theme) or *well then* (continuative + structural Theme). Similarly, conjunctive Themes may combine with one another as in *meanwhile however*, etc. However, these coding categories were eventually abandoned and aggregated with the ‘simple’ categories of continuative and conjunctive Themes respectively since the incidence of these types was obviously too infrequent to be useful in any correlation of types of Theme with generic stage. The subcategory of structural Theme ‘other than *and*’ may likewise be realised by more than one formal item, such as *but then, because then*, etc., and these realisations were similarly eventually included in the ‘simple’ category ‘other than *and*’.

The potential for the typical realisation of structural Themes to occur ‘sentence’-initially, i.e. cohesively, and thus for functioning in the structuring of text, even extends to relative pronouns, especially *which*, i.e. to those formal items which are most closely identified with the structural relation between two clauses since they typically function as the realisation of the structural Theme in a ‘bound’ clause. Their text-structuring potential may be particularly convincingly demonstrated with a written example since it was used to paragraph the text in question, i.e. *which* here realises a paragraph boundary:

Example 8-2

“... Luckily Andrew smokes or he’d kill me. Terrible habit.”

Which reminded her. She had a long talk with Andrew about the Nunawading by-election controversy.

(*The Sydney Morning Herald* 5/6/86 – paragraphing in original)

Sentence-initial *which* seems to be a particular favourite in journalistic writing since that so often aims to capture patterns of speech in an attempt at a ‘punchy’ style. Furthermore, as newspaper paragraphs tend to be short – which is visually pleasing on account of the narrow column settings of newspapers – the spoken flavour of the passage is commonly reinforced by the use of *which* paragraph-initially as in this

example. In this example the relative *which* is Subject in the mood structure of the clause, i.e. it functions as the topical Theme in the clause *Which reminded her*. This points up the double role, thematically speaking, which such relatives play in the unmarked case of their functioning as genuinely structural Themes in the dependent clause in a clause complex, i.e. in such cases they are both structural and topical Theme. Since such Themes constitute a special class they will be accounted for separately.

The last type of Theme dealt with under the heading of textual Theme is that of the clause-length Theme. Strictly speaking, it is neither a textual nor a topical Theme although especially the beta clause in a β^{α} or 'rising dependency' sequence probably has more in common with the former than the latter since it functions as a deictic element in the structure of the clause complex in much the same way as the textual Theme is said to function in the structure of the clause (see Halliday 1987b:30). Another reason for considering the 'rising dependency' sequence a textual rather than a topical Theme is that it is essentially the logico-semantic relation which is thematised, i.e. a meaning which is closer to those of the conjunctive and structural (textual) Themes than to that of the experiential (topical) Theme. On the other hand, its close relationship to Circumstances – as shown by the alternative realisations *after he arrived, all went quiet* vs. *after his arrival all went quiet* – is such that it could also be considered a topical Theme. And of course there is a sense in which the thematisation of, say, 'conditionality', text-wide could be considered to constitute a topical Theme potentially functioning as a text's method of development.

Only the marked clause-length Theme has been accounted for quantitatively, i.e. the β^{α} or 'rising dependency sequence' (Halliday 1985b), since only the marked Theme is considered likely to have any potential as a method of development and/or as boundary marker of generic stages. The conjunction typically functioning as a structural (textual) Theme in the β clause will always be a genuine structural Theme, i.e. it will never be functioning cohesively as it may in other cases of a sentence-initial occurrence, since it signals a structural relationship between the (initial) dependent and the (succeeding) dominant clause. (In non-finite β clauses, however, the structural relationship may be marked by a preposition or not at all.) For this reason the structural Themes of β clauses in β^{α} sequences are not included in the subcategories of

structural Themes ‘*and* + other conjunction’ and ‘conjunctions other than *and*’ at clause rank.

8.2.2.2 Topical Themes

Topical Themes are of special interest for their potential to create structure in line with the functional hypothesis discussed in Section 8.2 above that their ‘thematic progression’ may correlate with the structure of a text. But since such topical Themes need to be referentially unique in order to be able to signal by their move from one ‘type’ of topical Theme predominating in text to another, say from participant *a* to participant *b*, a corresponding move from one generic stage to another in the structure of the text, it is impossible to carry out such an investigation quantitatively. All that seems to be able to be studied quantitatively is the frequency of occurrence of topical Theme itself relative to any particular generic stage or in different types of text.

However, since it is referential identity which is the basis for the hypothesis that topical Theme may be correlated with thematic progression – and thus also potentially with a text’s method of development; see again discussion in Section 8.2 – distinctions may be usefully made between different types of realisation of topical Theme which appear to correlate with different functions, and possibly even different stages, in text. For example, while we would expect that it is some clearly identifiable referent, such as either lexicalised *John* or grammaticalised *he*, which will be functioning as a participant in the transitivity structure of clauses in the crisis stages of a narrative-type text – thus typically but not necessarily realising a ‘character’ or protagonist – the highly marked realisation of the same *John*, still protagonist in the text and grammatical participant in the clause, in a PREDICATED THEME (‘cleft’) such as *it was John who came to the rescue* is much more likely to function not as the realisation of a stage but of a stage marker. Similarly, the thematically unmarked realisation of a GENERIC REFERENT, typically realised by (spoken/informal) *you* or (written/formal) *one*, is very likely to correlate with different stages compared with the unmarked realisation of a specific referent, for example with a Coda in a narrative-type text, i.e. with a stage which itself is likely to foreground ‘general validity’, or indeed with a different type of text altogether, such as exposition.

Another type of realisation of a topical Theme which has at times been commented on is the so-called EXTENDED REFERENCE whose referential range may extend over a

number of events up to the entire text. Since this type of reference is commonly found in the concluding stages of a text, its thematisation may function generically – both as a prominent, and different, Theme in the thematic progression of the text and/or as a stage marker of an end stage. A quantitative approach to Theme may throw some light on whether it is one or the other function which is realised by this type of Theme.

There are a whole range of types of realisations of topical Theme which collectively contrast with the simple, identifiable, nameable topical Theme which appears to be the mainstay of especially narrative-type texts; see Table 8-1 below. It is not easy, however, to categorise two such groups in a completely convincing way. The basic distinction adopted here rests on whether the topical Theme has the potential for entering into PARTICIPANT CHAINS or not, in itself building on the concept of chaining in text on the basis of co-referentiality, such chains variously being referred to as ‘line’ connecting participants, analogous to ‘Event-line’ (Gleason 1973:267ff), ‘reference chain’ (Martin in press) and ‘identity chain’ (Hasan 1984a, 1985c). For example, (thematised) referents such as *John – he – the man* commonly and unambiguously enter into a reference chain which is also a participant chain while the references to identical time in a chain such as *on the Sunday – Sunday – then – at that time* may well in some sense be co-referential but they could hardly be said to have entered into a participant chain.

Other types of topical Theme put in the category of NON-PARTICIPANT CHAINING THEMES, such as the above mentioned extended reference Theme as well as the common EXOPHORIC *IT* THEME as in *it used to get very bad with the exercises* – whose referent is somehow ‘around’ but is never specific enough to be named other than glossed by a further general item such as *things* – could technically be considered to form participant chains yet pose serious problems in establishing co-reference between successive items in text unambiguously and are therefore best considered not members of such chains. And many other types of topical Theme, such as the EXISTENTIAL *THERE* THEME in *there’s not many whites around* or the NOMINALISED THEME in *what she don’t know won’t hurt her* simply never enter into chains at all.

On the other hand, the generic referent Theme realised by *you/one* may not only be considered to enter into such participant chains – for example in the construction of an hypothetical situation – but a number of such Themes in a single text can be assumed to refer to a single putative protagonist. However, since its function in text is likely to

be different from those of other participant chaining topical Themes it will be accounted for separately.

By distinguishing between topical Themes with the potential to enter into participant chains and those which, given the above qualifications, do not have that potential we intend to capture a distinction which is hypothesised to be broadly analogous to that between topical Themes and textual Themes, i.e. essentially between Themes expected to (partly) realise generic stages in a dispersed fashion and Themes expected to mark the boundaries of generic stages in a discrete fashion. As in respect of the quantification of textual Themes, all types of topical Theme will be accounted for separately in respect of their position in the clause and the clause complex, i.e. we will take account of whether they occur ‘sentence’-initially or non-initially, a choice that is hypothesised to be as significant for non-participant chaining Themes as for textual Themes. Furthermore, since the choice of a strongly marked topical Theme, especially a Complement Theme, may well also be determined by its function in text, and thus be potentially related to the kind of marking we find in certain of the non-participant chaining Themes, such as Predicated Theme and Thematic Equative, Subject and Complement Themes will be accounted for separately.

Table 8-1: Types of Non-Participant Chaining Themes

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| EXTENDED REFERENCE THEME | |
| <u>Gloss:</u> | refers to a macro-phenomenon; typically a number of (non-nominalised) events |
| <u>Realisation:</u> | <i>it, this, that</i> |
| <u>Example:</u> | event <i>a</i> ^ event <i>b</i> ^ event <i>c</i> , etc. – <i>and that was the beginning of the end</i> |
| <u>Note:</u> | both extended and text reference Theme (see next entry) may be realised as thematic equative, e.g. <i>that's what started it</i> (marked or reversed equative) or <i>what started it was that</i> (unmarked or basic equative); see entry on thematic equative |
| TEXT REFERENCE THEME | |
| <u>Gloss:</u> | refers to a meta-phenomenon; typically (non-nominalised) event(s) – also called ‘fact reference’ (Halliday & Hasan 1976:52–3) |
| <u>Realisation:</u> | <i>it, this, that</i> |
| ADJUNCT THEME | |
| <u>Gloss:</u> | refers to a circumstance of time, place, manner, etc. |
| <u>Example:</u> | <i>for about 3 weeks running the man delivered the dry-cleaning</i> |
| ANTICIPATORY IT THEME | |
| <u>Gloss:</u> | the Subject of a matrix clause, occurring in normal Subject position, whose ‘real’ Subject is an embedded clause |

Example: *it was just inconceivable that she could ever get beaten*

PREDICATED THEME ('CLEFT')

Gloss: a clause element marked off for predication via an *it + to be* structure

Example: *it's the older dog that wins; but it wasn't until afterwards that it sort of hit me*

THEMATIC EQUATIVE ('PSEUDO-CLEFT')

Gloss: a nominalisation functioning as one clause element is linked by *to be* to another clause element in an 'identifying' clause to form a Theme/Rheme structure with two single constituents

Example: *what get's me is that they criticise his good points for being faults*

Note: the nominalisation may be in thematic position (as in the above example) or in rhematic position, e.g. in *this is what we decided to do*, the variants respectively referred to as marked and unmarked equatives (Halliday 1985c:42) or 'basic' and 'reversed' pseudo-clefts (Collins 1987)

NOMINALISED THEME

Gloss: a nominalisation of any clause element functioning as Theme

Example: *what she don't know won't hurt her; whoever caught it used to eat it; just to be pulled out and considered was fabulous*

EXOPHORIC IT THEME

Gloss: refers to an essentially non-identifiable participant that is inferrable from the context; also 'dummy' *it* in meteorological expressions

Example: *it used to get very bad with the exercises (it = 'things'); it was very hot*

EXISTENTIAL THERE THEME

Gloss: place-holding, non-deictic *there* Theme in '*there + to be*' construction

Example: *there's not many whites around; there was nearly murder done in the house*

PRESENTATIVE THERE THEME

Gloss: attention-grabbing *there/here* Theme followed by normal declarative word-order

Example: *there he was, standing in the middle of the ring with a dog on the end of the lead*

8.2.3 Quantificational Methods

The main problem faced in quantifying Theme is size since many types of Theme occur relatively infrequently in individual texts. Among textual Themes this is especially true for the continuative and conjunctive Themes and the clause-size marked betas in rising dependency sequences while among topical Themes it is mostly those which are considered non-participant chaining Themes. Furthermore, since it is important for the investigation of our generic hypotheses to relate the occurrence of types of Theme to generic stages, their frequency is even lower. There seems little alternative but to do what used to be done in linguistics without attracting adverse comment before the advent of Labovian quantitative linguistics led to linguists paying serious attention to

the importance of sampling and the use of sophisticated statistical methods, viz. to aggregate the tokens counted for the same stages across all texts. (This practice may even be found in the influential work on narrative evaluation by Labov (1972b) who aggregates across all texts.)

While aggregation undoubtedly reduces our ability to generalise from the results to the texts of a given speech community – a defect addressed by the statistical technique of log-linear analysis which has become a practical possibility since computers have become widely available – aggregated results, provided of course that they are interpretable, can nevertheless play a useful role in pointing up patterns of linguistic variation. However, since aggregation always carries with it the risk of identifying patterns which are merely an artefact of averaging (or, conversely, of obscuring patterns which do exist), it is important not to make the actual numerical results, however expressed, bear an interpretative weight they may not be able to support. For this reason, our discussion of the analysis of Theme will focus on any trends shown rather than make any claim that some particular frequency of occurrence constitutes a precise measurement of some general validity.

A further problem is created by those stages which are considered ‘fused’, partially or wholly, identified in transcriptions as Abstract/Orientation or Event Description/Comment/Reorientation. Since we have no reliable way of attributing the thematic realisations to one or the other of the stages involved we will exclude the realisations of Theme in fused segments rather than assign them arbitrarily to one or the other stage, for example either to Abstract or to Orientation. Since the numbers involved are not very large no great loss of information is suffered as a consequence. And lastly, although in the analyses in Chapter 6 – and also in the transcriptions of texts in Volume 2 – a distinction was made between Abstract and Synopsis, this will be ignored here. The realisations of Theme in these two stages will be combined on the grounds that the distinction is one of greater delicacy not made elsewhere, and the term Abstract will be used to refer to both Abstract and Synopsis collectively.

8.2.3.1 Results and Interpretation: Textual Themes

We will begin by tabulating the total number of occurrences of textual Themes at clause rank in corpus (125) – excluding the results for the ‘rising dependency’ or $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequence since as a clause-length Theme this is best discussed separately; see Section

8.2.3.2 – in order to convey a sense of the relative frequency with which different types of textual Theme are chosen in spoken English text. Table 8-2 shows the actual choice of textual Themes in both initial and non-initial position as a percentage out of the number of times the choice could have been made, i.e. out of the total number of sentences (or sentence-initial positions) vs. out of the total number of non-initial clauses inside clause complexes (or non-initial clause positions). It is important to recall that the choice of a textual Theme is not only optional but also that the choices among the sub-types of textual Theme, i.e. among continuative, conjunctive or structural Theme, are not mutually exclusive – more than one sub-type and in fact all three may be chosen. On the other hand, the three ‘subcategories’ of structural Theme, viz. the structural Themes (realised by) ‘*and*’, ‘*and* + other conjunction’ and ‘conjunction other than *and*’, as well as the structural Theme which is simultaneously also a topical Theme, realised by one of the relatives, are mutually exclusive choices. The combination of non-exclusive choice with exclusive choice, and both with the optionality of the choice of textual Theme in the first place, naturally causes difficulties in constructing (and reading) tables since columns and rows cannot be added up. Our primary concern is *not* to give a full account of the distribution of different types of textual Theme but instead to show how often a choice of one or the other type of textual Theme was made in either initial or non-initial position out of the total number of times this was possible in order to test our hypothesis that the choice of Theme in sentence-initial position, i.e. initially both in the clause complex and in the single clause which has not entered into a clause complex at all, may be more significant than the choice of Theme in those clauses inside clause complexes which are in non-initial position. Therefore all tabulations and discussions will at all times distinguish between ‘initial’ and ‘non-initial’ position.

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

Table 8-2: Observed frequency of Textual Themes in corpus (125): initial vs. non-initial

| Structural/ Place of choice | | T e x t u a l T h e m e s | | | | | | | | | | Structural Themes | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|------------------------|------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------|--------|-----|-------|
| | | Continuative | | Conjunctive | | S t r u c t u r a l | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 'and only' Topical | | 'and + other conj.' | | 'conj. other than and' | | | | | |
| | | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | | |
| Initial | 1971 | 8.2 | (162) | 7.9 | (156) | 25.4 | (501) | 1.4 | (27) | 14.5 | (285) | 41.2 | (813) | 0.2 | (3) |
| Non-initial | 2939 | 3.6 | (105) | 1.1 | (32) | 32.1 | (942) | 2.1 | (63) | 19.9 | (585) | 54.1 | (1590) | 4.7 | (138) |

Notes:

- 1) Columns and rows do not add up since the choices are not mutually exclusive, i.e. continuative AND/OR conjunctive AND/OR structural but structural 'and only' OR 'and + other conj.' OR 'conj. other than and' OR 'Struct./Topical'
- 2) Initial = 'sentences', i.e. clause complexes plus single, structurally unrelated clauses, also referred to as 'simplexes'
- 3) Non-initial = non-initial clauses inside clause complexes
- 4) % chosen out of possible number of choices
- 5) Structural Themes 'and + other conj.' and 'conj. other than and' in initial position, i.e. those functioning cohesively, are exclusive of those instances which function structurally in $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequences

We will first discuss the choice of Theme in initial position. The by far most frequently chosen textual Theme was structural Theme: 41.2% or 813 of all sentences made a choice among one of its three subcategories which functioned cohesively (having excluded those structural Themes which did function structurally in $\beta^A\alpha$ sequences). Of these, it was not surprisingly the realisation by *and* which was the most frequent as it formed (part of) the sentence-initial textual Theme in 25.4% of all cases. When added to the other subcategory involving a realisation by *and*, the category ‘*and* + other conjunction’, we find that a fully 26.8% of all sentences were begun with a textual Theme which was constituted by *and* or included *and* among its realisation. Since the texts in corpus (125) comprise essentially narrative-type texts – even the observation texts could be considered to fall into this category since although they serve a very different function interpersonally, experientially they ‘narrate’ – these results serve to underline the ubiquitous nature of *and* in narrative.

While not as frequent as *and*, the other paratactic or hypotactic conjunctions functioning as the realisation of structural Theme are far from infrequent. Ignoring the subcategory ‘*and* + other conj.’ with its typical realisations *and because*, *and then*, etc. for the moment, we find that 14.5% or 285 of all sentences were begun with a textual Theme which either included a conjunction such as *then*, *but*, *if*, *because*, etc., or was entirely realised by it. It would therefore appear that the view which holds that narrative-type texts are simply strung together by *and*, while understandable in the light of the ubiquitous occurrence of *and*, certainly ignores the very frequent occurrence of other conjunctions also functioning cohesively.

In fact, a comparison of the frequency of all occurrences of *and* with that of all other conjunctions, i.e. *but*, *because*, etc., at clause rank, whether functioning cohesively or structurally and including the structurally functioning conjunctions in $\beta^A\alpha$ sequences excluded from Table 8-2, shows that *and* occurred 1454 times or in 29.6% of all clauses while all other conjunctions occurred 1027 times or in 20.9% of all 4910 clauses in the corpus. By contrast, Chafe (1986:41), for example, reports that 50% of the ‘extended clauses’ in the single text investigated in his paper – an anecdote told monologically in the midst of a dinner party conversation – began with *and*, and goes on to surmise that ‘This proportion of about 50 percent appears to be typical for clause-initial “and” in spoken English.’ On the basis of a rather larger corpus of texts not dissimilar generically and in terms of their mode of production, it would seem not

only that the actual frequency of *and* tends to be overstated but also its importance in text relative to that of other conjunctions.⁵⁷

The next most frequently occurring textual Themes were continuative and conjunctive Themes, respectively realised by *oh, well, now, etc.*, and *anyway, at that time, as I was saying, etc.* These occurred with about the same frequency sentence-initially, viz. 8.2% and 7.9% respectively. In order of frequency, these two Themes were followed by structural Themes in the category '*and* + other conj.', which combines the two most frequent realisations in *and* + *because*, *and* + *so*, *and* + *then*, etc., occurring initially, i.e. cohesively, with a surprisingly low frequency of 1.4% or only 27 occurrences out of a possible 1971. But the least frequent type of all textual Themes functioning cohesively was the textual Theme which is both structural and topical, i.e. that typically realised by *which*, with only 3 occurrences in the entire corpus.

Before attempting to interpret these results for their discourse marking potential in the special sense of marking generic structure, we turn to the choice of Theme in non-initial position, i.e. in the case of all non-initial clauses inside clause complexes. Firstly, we notice a very substantial increase in the frequency with which all structural Themes, including the conflated structural/topical Theme, were chosen out of the possible number of choices in non-initial position. For example, the choice of '*and* only' increased from 25.4% to 32.1%, of 'conj. other than *and*' from 14.5% to 19.9%, and of structural/topical *which* a staggering twenty-five times from 0.2% to 4.7%. On the other hand, we notice a very substantial decrease in the frequency with which the two non-structural Themes, i.e. continuative and conjunctive Themes, were chosen in non-initial position, the continuative Theme falling by over half from 8.2% to 3.6% and the conjunctive Theme by almost ninety percent from 7.9% to 1.1%.

The explanation for this change in different directions must be sought in the fact that a structural Theme, though not obligatory, is certainly the norm in the linking of two finite clauses in a clause complex – non-finite, minor, and projecting clauses accounting for most of those which are not linked by conjunctions – while both continuative and conjunctive Theme are truly optional. But while for structural Themes the direction in the change of frequency from their occurrence in initial to non-initial

⁵⁷Although the size of the corpus is most informatively expressed in terms of the number of clauses, simplexes and clause complexes since the grammatical choices investigated relate to units at clause rank, for the purpose of comparing it with other corpora whose size is usually given as number of words, it might be of interest to note that it numbers approximately 53000 words, amounting to between two and three hours of recorded speech.

position is therefore totally predictable, this is not entirely the case for continuative and conjunctive Themes – after all, they are optional in both environments.

How is one to assess the potential of textual Themes functioning cohesively at clause rank for the creation of generic structure, guiding one in the further analysis of these Themes relative to the different stages in the texts in the corpus? It would appear obvious, for example, that while a sentence-initial *which* Theme may in some particular text be a very powerful marker of a boundary precisely because it appears to be the most marked of all types of textual Theme, it is not one which can be investigated quantitatively. But while the notion of markedness of grammatical (or lexical) choices is not synonymous with frequency of occurrence – the markedness of sentence-initial *which* Themes, for example, presumably deriving from its unexpected cohesive rather than the expected structural function – in an examination of choices in text it is rather difficult to ignore the latter. (See Halliday 1971c for a discussion of markedness in text.)

In order for some type of textual Theme to have the potential to function as boundary or discourse marker in text by a single, ‘discrete’ type of realisation, it presumably must not be realised so frequently in text generally as to be unable to appear a ‘marked’ choice in some particular text, or at some particular point in its generic structure. However, there are no measures available which would help us decide what it means to be ‘too frequent a choice’. Average frequencies per text are meaningless since they ignore the variable of text length. A better guideline might be the degree of ‘skewness’ of systems whose features are not chosen with equal probability, suggested by Halliday to be in the order of 9:1; see Section 1.1. (Cf. also Givón (1979) for a similar view of the markedness of grammatical systems.) From a perspective of (mathematical) information theory, which lies behind Halliday’s hypothesis that probability of this kind is built into the linguistic system, the two most frequent types of Theme, viz. the categories of structural Theme ‘*and only*’ and ‘*and + other conj.*’, appear to be ‘dysfunctional’ – since always expected and thus having little informational value – while all other types of Theme appear to have the potential to ‘mark’ generic or discourse structure.

On the other hand, generic boundaries may be implied by patterns of choices in different systems, including those realised in Theme – Rheme structure, which characterise an entire stage via the dispersed realisation of identical choices. When

choices persist for an entire stage, delimiting one stage from another by virtue of different patterns of choices characterising successive stages, it is the change in patterns which by default functions to mark the boundary between stages. If such a consistent choice among textual Themes were found in some particular text to cluster in such a way, i.e. to correlate with a generic stage, this might be taken as evidence of a method of development akin to the example of 'relative location' discussed in Section 8.2 above. The problem in a quantitative study of this kind is of course that the two kinds of realising text structure are in conflict: To mark a boundary explicitly, i.e. discretely, the marker needs to be realised rarely while to mark a boundary implicitly, i.e. 'dispersedly', the marker needs to be realised often – in either case the effect achieved is a function of the relative frequency with which some textual Theme is realised.

The problems of interpretation are partly due to not knowing whether the categories of textual Theme are themselves capable of functioning as methods of development, such that 'continuitiveness' or 'conjunctiveness' are possible methods of development in (some generic stage in) text, or whether the meanings captured by these collective categories are too broad to do this. On the other hand, if only specific realisations of textual Theme, such as *well*, *but*, *because*, *if*, etc., were capable of functioning as methods of development via their realising meanings of 'continuitiveness' (*well*), alternation (*but*), causality (*because*), conditionality (*if*), etc., then the only category of textual Theme capable of being interpreted as such would be 'and only', i.e. the category of structural Theme realised by the conjunction *and*. I would suggest that while a simple comparison of relative frequencies of different types of textual Theme on the basis of aggregating all texts, and that means of course of all generic stages, cannot provide answers as to their likely function in text, a correlation of their incidence with different stages may well do so by indicating where in text they tend to occur.

Let us therefore restate the goals of this particular enquiry: Firstly, we are seeking to test the hypothesis that the choice of textual Theme correlates with generic structure such that the relative frequency of the choice of some particular textual Theme discriminates (i) between the different generic stages postulated to be specific to some genre or generic structure, i.e. their middle stages; and (ii) between the generic stages postulated to be valid across a range of text types, i.e. the beginning and end stages such as Abstract, Orientation, Coda, etc., as well as between them and those middle

stages which are specific to some text type and with which they may be juxtaposed in a given generic structure.

Secondly, we are seeking to test the further hypothesis that it is specifically sentence-initial Theme, rather than non-initial Theme, which is significant in the discrete marking of generic structure by some textual Theme at clause rank on the basis that it is a general property of language to code ‘multiply’ and thus create a consistency of meanings at different levels. In other words, we are saying that it is reasonable to predict that boundary ‘marking’ in discourse is likely to coincide with boundaries at the level of lexicogrammar, and thus to find a coincidence of generic stage boundaries with clause complex/simplex or ‘sentence’ boundaries.

The crucial issue in interpreting patterns of textual Theme is that the choice involves a multiple one among several types of Theme, i.e. continuative, conjunctive, and structural, and that therefore even at clause rank a pattern is one of a configuration of Themes. But while at clause rank the choice among the different categories of structural Theme is a mutually exclusive one, in a quantitative investigation all subcategories are likely to be represented among the tokens, thereby increasing the complexity of any patterns. Such configurations of choices are ideally investigated by means of some type of factor analysis, something not done here in respect of Theme for a variety of reasons, not the least being the fact that certain types of Theme may not be chosen in some generic stage in some given text, thus leading to problems with statistical analysis. (But see analysis of clause complex-type relations in Section 8.3 below.)

We will therefore present the patterns identified ‘graphically’, i.e. in an essentially illustrative fashion making extensive use of graphs, using as input the percentaged frequency of choices of the three categories continuative, conjunctive, and structural as well as the subcategories of structural, i.e. ‘*and* only’, ‘*and* + other conjunction’, and ‘conjunction other than *and*’. Since such percentage figures can be misleading by being based on very small numbers, both the number of actual and possible choices will be tabulated following each graph. (Small numbers will also be used as a basis for not considering several text categories any further, viz. the genre exposition with its stages Thesis, Argument and Conclusion, as well as the generic stages Completion and Final Event.) We will proceed by first examining the capacity of patterns of textual Theme to

discriminate between generic stages and then go on to examine the hypothesis of the significance of initial position in clause complex/simplex or 'sentence'.

The first pattern of thematic choices to be presented contrasts the two stages Abstract and Coda, i.e. two of the stages postulated to be valid across a whole range of text types and certainly across the text types found to be strongly associated with a context of narrating and almost exclusively comprising corpus (125). Figure 8-1 graphs the two patterns as relative frequencies, with the number of choices for each type of Theme, both actual and possible, added:

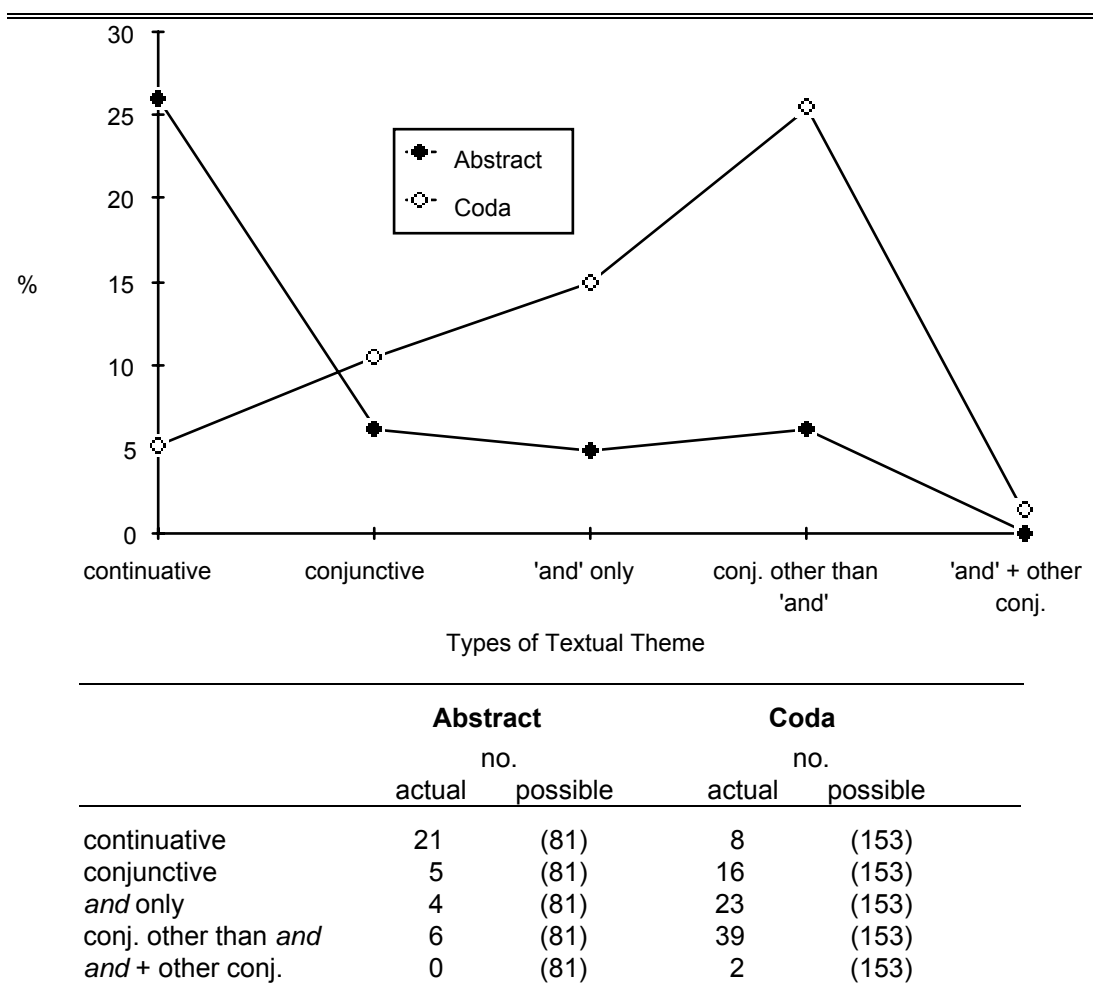


Fig. 8-1: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes: ABSTRACT vs. CODA (initial)

Since the functions of these two stages in any given generic structure are, in some sense, respectively to introduce and to close the text we would of course predict that some of their realisations might be maximally different. While the 'peak' of the Abstract lies in its prominent – and predominant – choice of continuative, the peak of

the Coda is to be found in the choice of those conjunctions which are commonly used in text to introduce a 'wrapping up', i.e. especially *so*, *but* and also *because*.

Turning to the middle stages of generic structures, i.e. to those said to be unique to different generic structures, we find that the two middle stages of the two generic structures exemplum and observation similarly may be discriminated on the grounds of their patterns of textual Theme. The more convincing case quantitatively is that of the exemplum since the number of both possible and actual choices is much greater than in observation; see Figures 8-2 (exemplum) and 8-3 (observation) below:

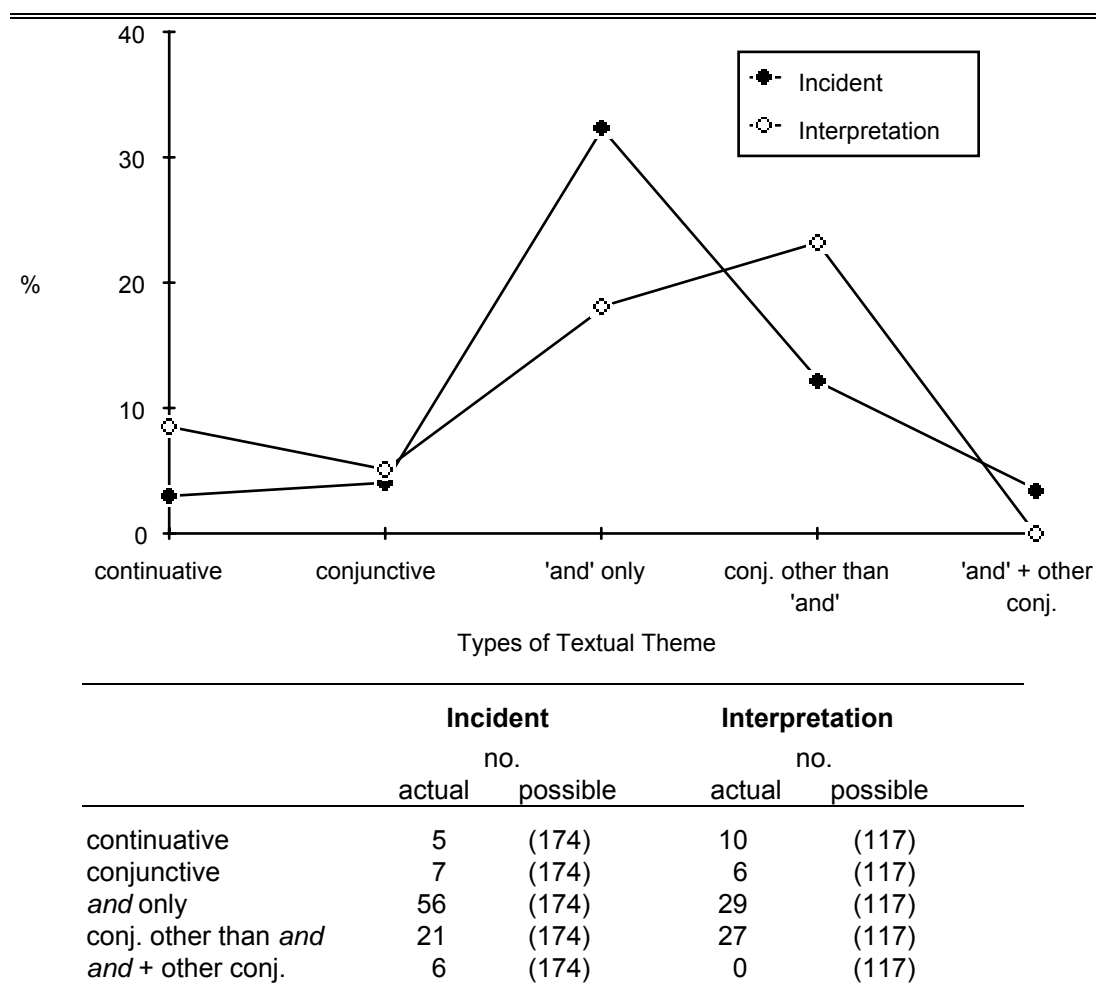


Fig. 8-2: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre EXEMPLUM: Incident vs. Interpretation (initial)

Once again we find that the different functions of stages – giving an account of some temporally sequenced events in Incident vs. elaborating their wider significance in Interpretation – are reflected in the most prominent choices made in Theme: Incident foregrounds the sequencing in the choice of *and* while Interpretation foregrounds the

same set of conjunctions which we noted to be prominently associated with Coda, viz. those with the potential for expressing cause, result, condition, counterexpectation, etc.

The same difference is brought out even more sharply in the genre observation since both Event Description and Comment equally foreground *and* but while Event Description makes little use of conjunctions other than *and*, Comment chooses these more frequently than any other type of textual Theme. Graphically represented in Figure 8-3 below, the two stages move together in respect of their choice of the types of continuative, conjunctive and *and* but then move apart in sharply different directions in respect of other conjunctions such as *but*, *so*, *then*, etc., both those realised on their own and those combined with *and*.

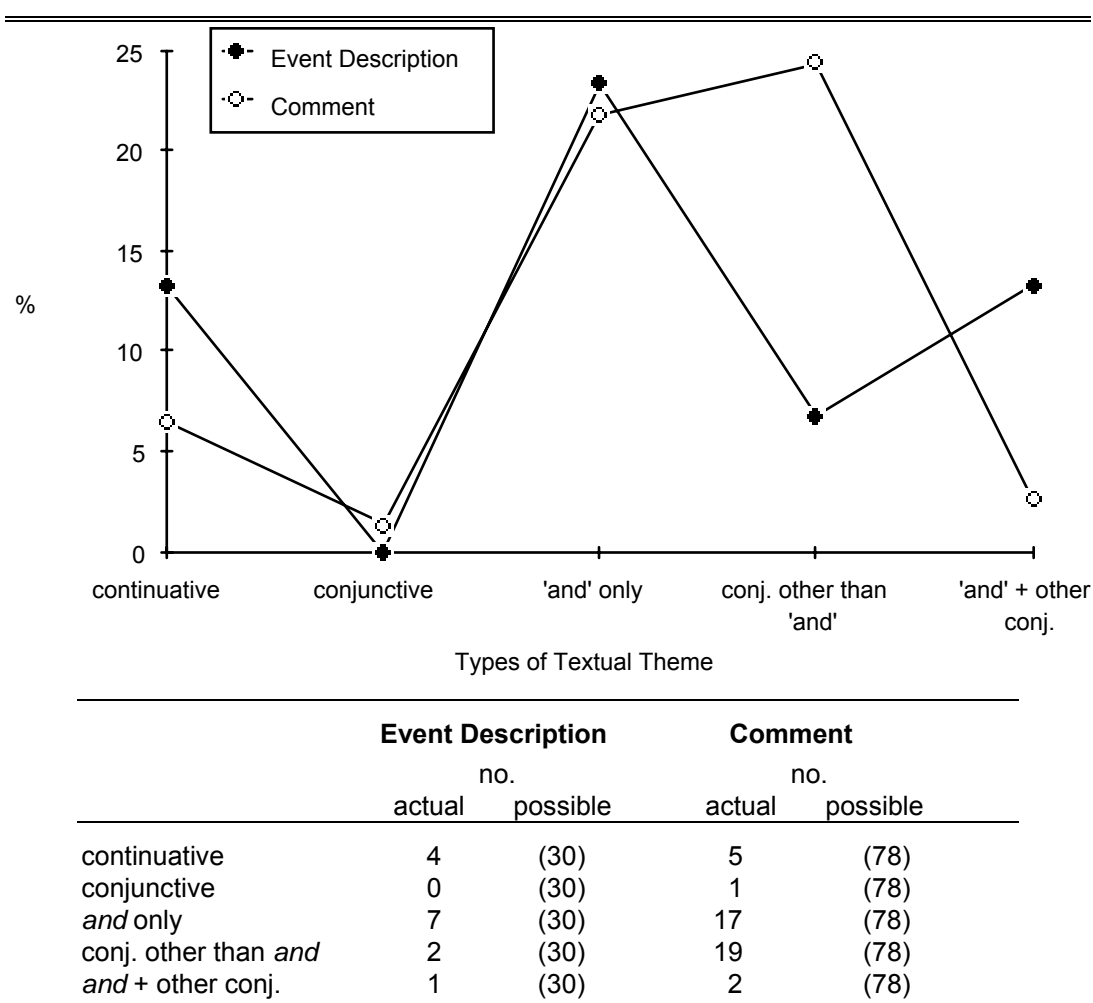


Fig. 8-3: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre OBSERVATION: Event Description vs. Comment (initial)

However, if the genres exemplum and observation – as well as the beginning and end stages Abstract and Coda – appear to support our hypothesis that the choice of

textual Theme discriminates among different stages, the most strongly narrative genres recount, narrative and anecdote do not. This is best illustrated by the genre narrative with its three stages Complication, Evaluation and Resolution, especially since the number of choices involved is quite large, both actual and potential; see Figure 8-4 below:

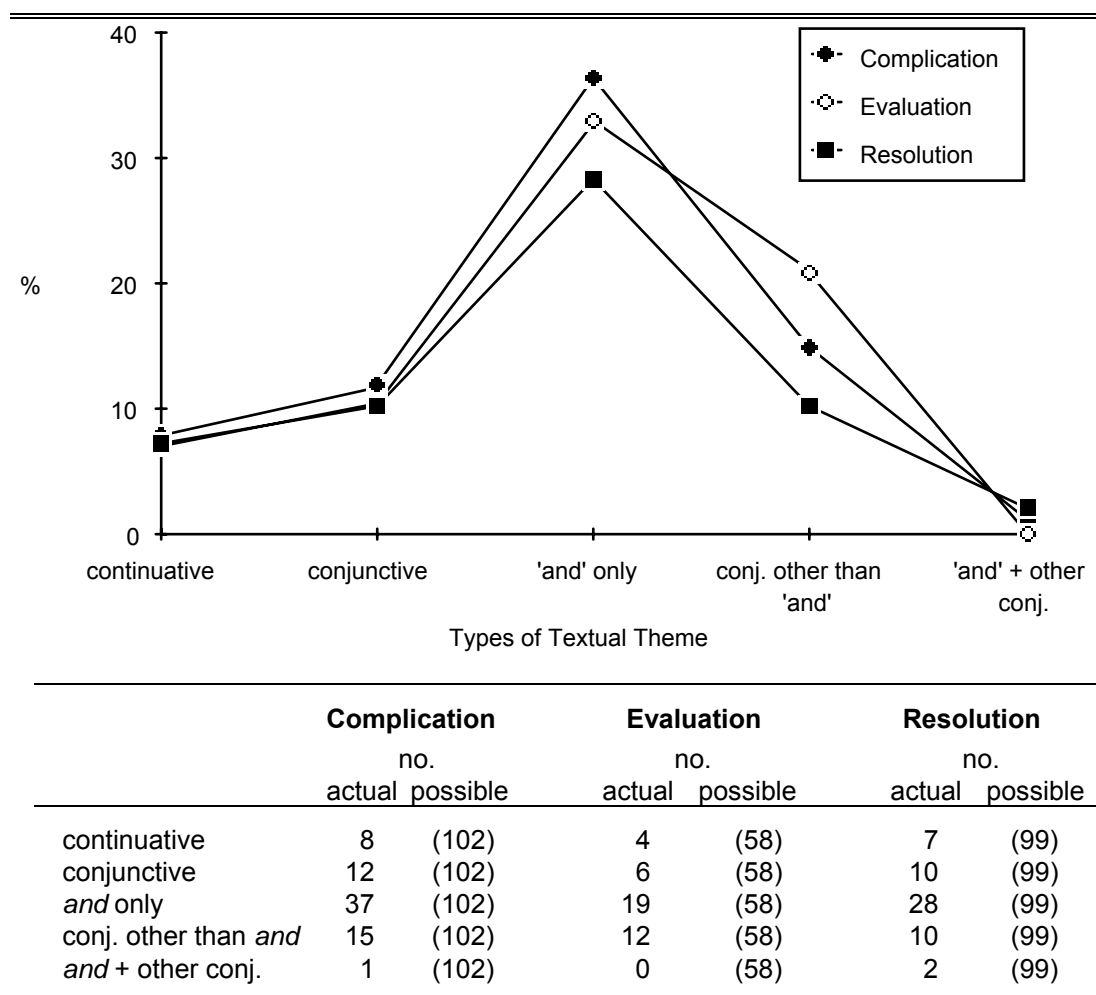


Fig. 8-4: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre NARRATIVE: Complication vs. Evaluation vs. Resolution (initial)

The virtual identity of the relative frequency of the different textual Themes in each of the three generic stages is shown very clearly in Figure 8-4. While not as uniform, a similarly identical pattern is found in the genre anecdote with its two stages Crisis and Reaction (not displayed).

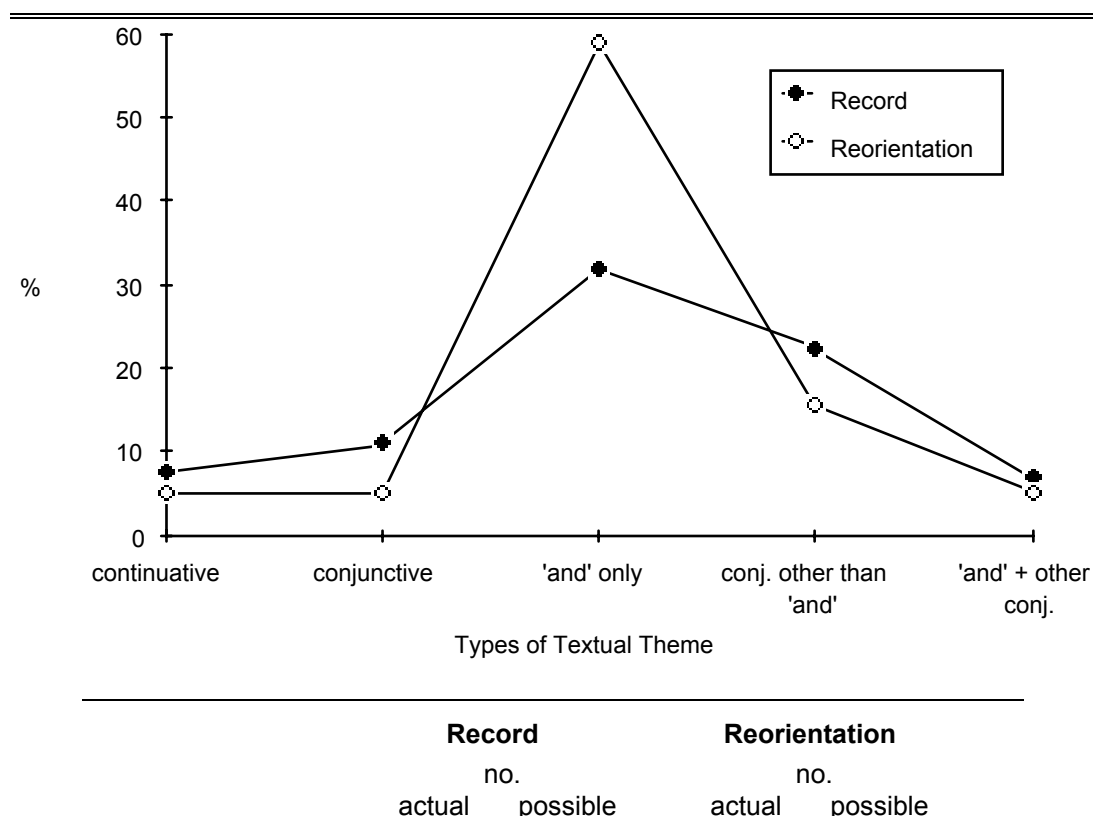
Quite unequivocally then, the hypothesis that thematic patterns correlate with generic stages, and thus discriminate between them, is not borne out by the results for the most strongly narrative-type texts. However, the fact that we found some evidence in support of the hypothesis in those text types which juxtapose an experientially

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

focused stage which is minimally concerned with an account of temporally sequenced events with a strongly interpersonally focused stage concerned with a comment on, or an interpretation of, the experiential stage leads us to suspect that the repetition of the thematic patterns in narrative and anecdote – and to some extent also in recount (see below) – is evidence of the, in metafunctional terms, singularly experiential orientation of those text types.

(An alternative interpretative response to the identity of thematic patterns would be to reject the notion that such narrative genres are constituted of generic stages altogether, i.e. to reject the view that they have a functional organisation at the level of text – in other words, to reject the identification of stages in specifically narrative texts as spurious. However, since it has never been claimed that generic stages are realised solely by thematic patterns, there is also no need to reject the notion of generic structure simply because we find that the specific hypothesis that thematic patterns correlate with generic stages, and thus discriminate between them, is not borne out by a particular set of text types.)

While the closely related genre recount displays a pattern not very different from narrative and anecdote, the trend of the structural Theme realised by *and* is very much more marked in the stage Reorientation as Figure 8-5 below shows:



TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|----|------|
| continuative | 26 | (346) | 2 | (39) |
| conjunctive | 38 | (346) | 2 | (39) |
| <i>and</i> only | 110 | (346) | 20 | (39) |
| conj. other than <i>and</i> | 77 | (346) | 6 | (39) |
| <i>and</i> + other conj. | 24 | (346) | 2 | (39) |

Fig. 8-5: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in genre
RECOUNT: Record vs. Reorientation (initial)

The explanation for this very high frequency of *and* is to be found in the particular function of this stage which, as we argued in Chapter 6, is neither the clear equivalent of a Resolution stage in narrative nor of the end stage Coda so common in narrative-type texts. What is unique to Reorientation compared to Resolution and Coda is the reiteration of the ‘endlessness’ of successive – if not recursed – events, achieved by a very deliberate foregrounding of the meaning ‘addition’. In this case we would certainly appear to be justified in interpreting the high relative frequency of the category of structural Theme ‘*and* only’ as potentially functioning akin to a method of development.

This difference between the quintessentially narrative stages of Record (in recount) and Complication, Evaluation, Resolution (in narrative) on the one hand and the hybrid stage Reorientation on the other may be brought out graphically by mapping the stages of narrative onto those of recount and, simultaneously, displaying the end stage Coda in order to show how Reorientation and Coda are also unlike each other; see Figure 8-6 below. While Complication, Evaluation, Resolution and Record virtually ‘move’ in unison, Reorientation and Coda each follow a different trend. The high frequency of *and* in Reorientation compared with the other narrative stages is just as evident as the low frequency of *and* in Coda – if Reorientation is about addition, Coda certainly is not and other narrative stages only so to a noticeably lesser degree.

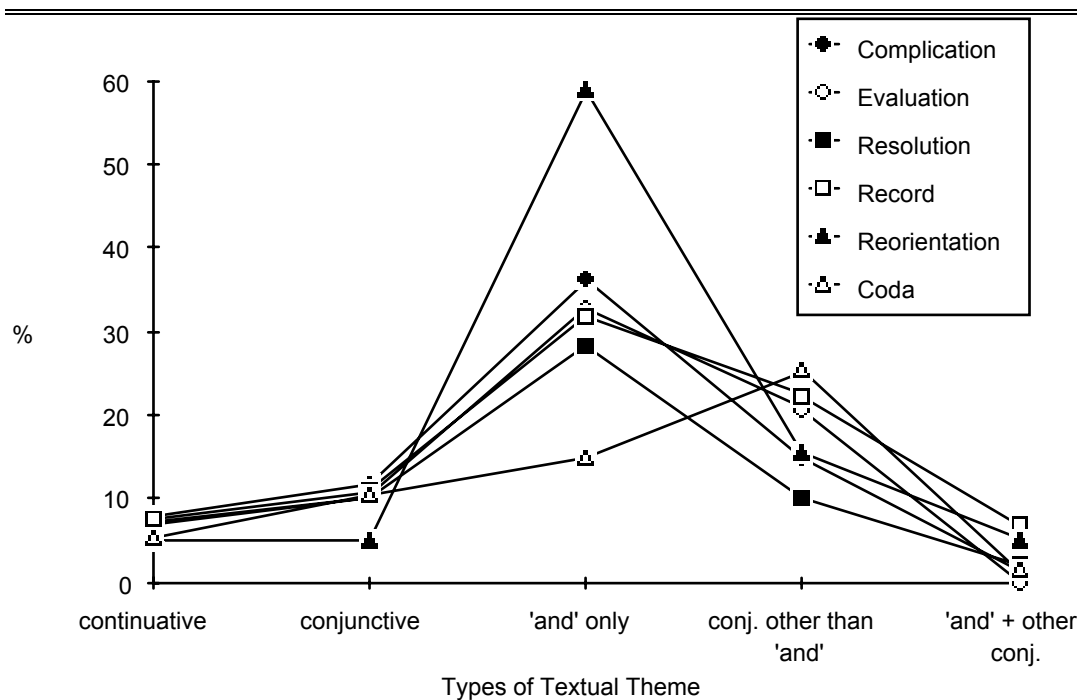


Fig. 8-6: Relative frequency of Textual Themes in REORIENTATION vs. CODA vs. COMPLICATION, EVALUATION, and RESOLUTION (initial)

The second issue to be explored on the basis of the results for textual Themes concerns the hypothesis that it is specifically sentence-initial Theme, rather than non-initial Theme, which is significant in the potential marking of generic structure by some textual Theme. We would predict that the thematic patterns created by a choice in sentence-initial position are interpretable – as we indeed found them to be – but that the patterns created by a choice in non-initial position may not be. However, only two stages display the expected lack of consistency of initial and non-initial patterns, viz. Abstract and Event Description. The results for both are based on comparatively small numbers, Event Description in particular having only 30 possible choices initially and 42 non-initially. We will therefore only present the results for Abstract; see Figure 8-7 below:

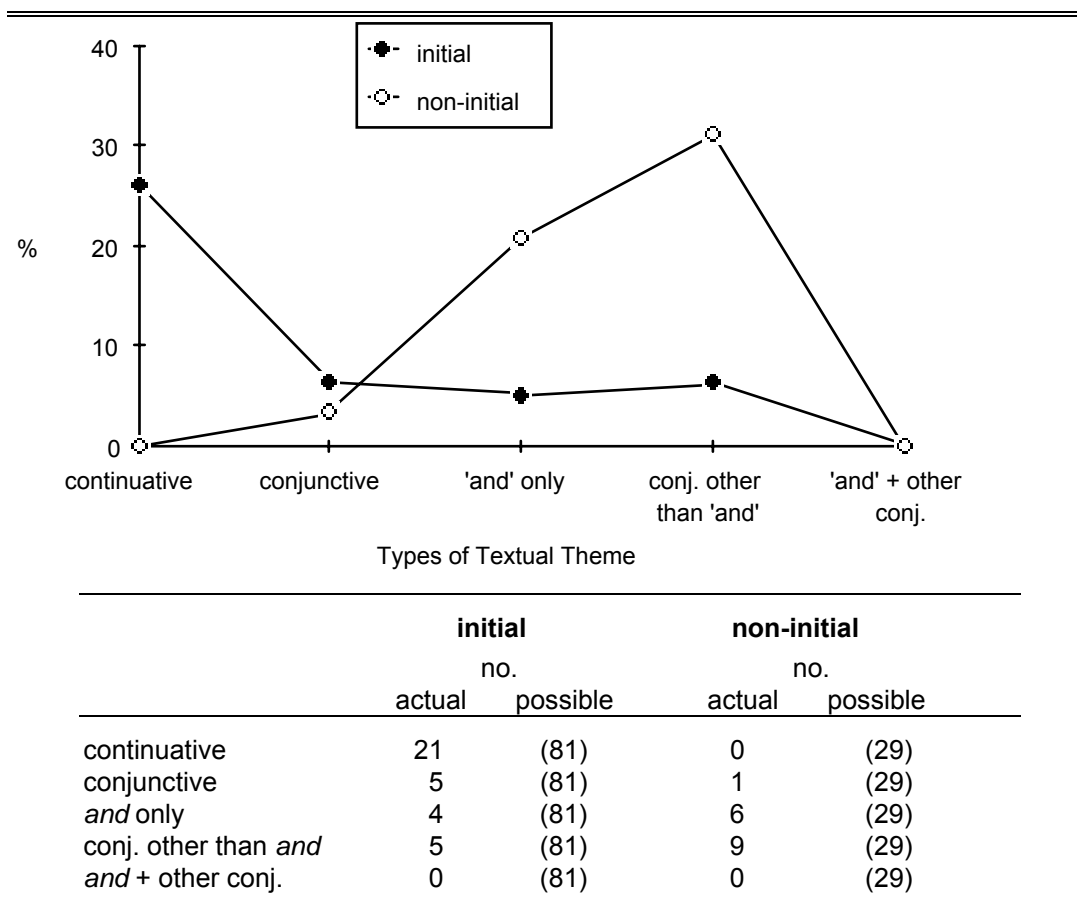


Fig. 8-7: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in
ABSTRACT: initial vs. non-initial

The pattern – or rather the absence of a pattern – in respect of non-initial choice of textual Theme is most likely due to the small number of choices, both possible and actual, i.e. the results are most probably unreliable. The common pattern, which is repeated over and over again for each generic stage examined, is that illustrated in respect of Interpretation; see Figure 8-8 below:

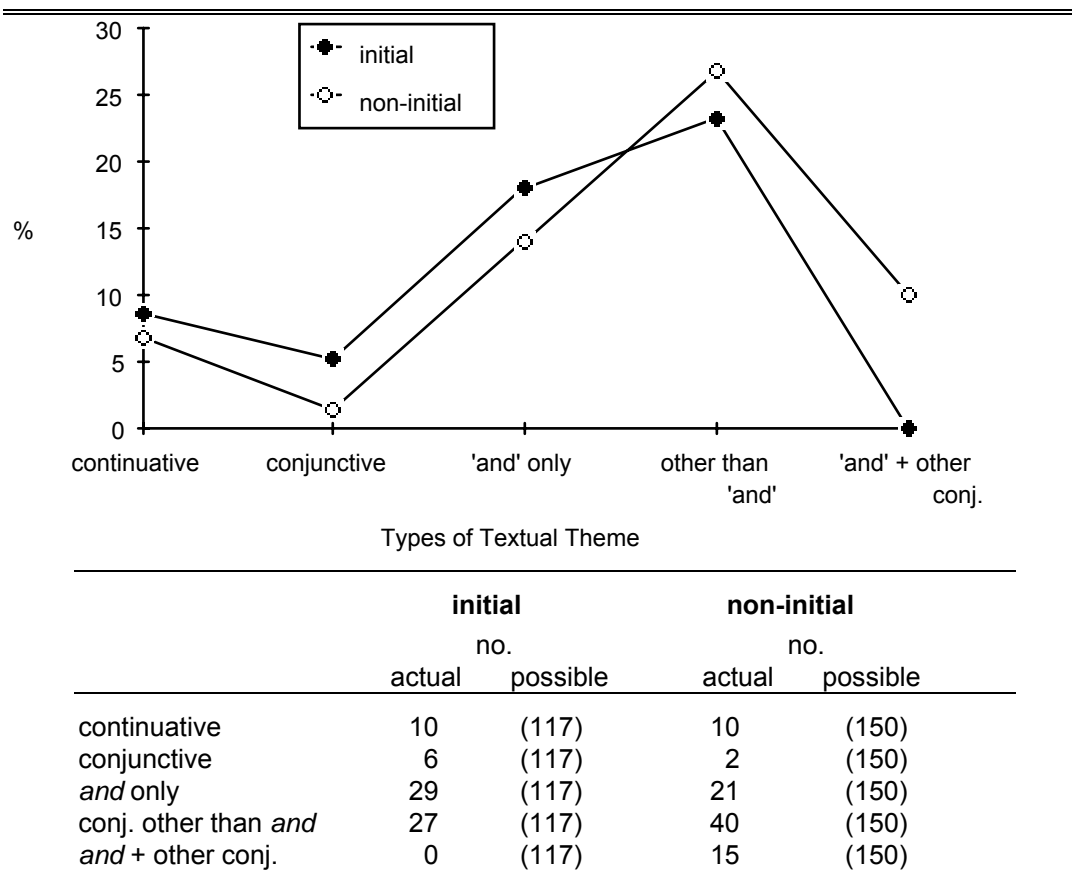


Fig. 8-8: Relative and observed frequencies of Textual Themes in INTERPRETATION: initial vs. non-initial

Our hypothesis that sentence-initial choice of textual Theme is more significant in the creation of text structure than non-initial choice, whether by marking generic boundaries discretely or by creating patterns that hold for an entire stage, and in this way identifying and delimiting one stage from another, via the dispersed realisation of identical choices is thus not borne out by quantitative evidence. This is of course not to say that the hypothesis is necessarily to be rejected since the discrete marking of generic boundaries is not achieved in some vacuum – it is the particular place in a text, the context for the choice of some potential discourse marker, which makes it mark the boundary and thus have global significance in the text while its occurrence at other places in the text may have only local significance.

What the quantitative evidence does seem to show is a principle at work which holds that once a grammatical choice is made in text it is likely to be made again and again unless and until there is good reason to change it, such persistence of choice

being a likely reflection of discourse structure in the most general sense.⁵⁸ The finding that the patterns of (textual) thematic choice, which are interpretable relative to the stages in their respective generic structures, are the same for initial and non-initial choice suggests then that the very general meanings captured in the categories of textual Themes may well characterise a generic stage not altogether unlike the way in which topical Themes have been suggested to be potentially realising a text's method of development since these meanings are consistent: That is, they are chosen consistently differently in different stages, and they are consistent within each such stage.

8.2.3.2 Results and Interpretation: β^{α} Themes

The total number of occurrences of the clause-length Theme constituted by the marked beta clause in the 'rising dependency' or β^{α} sequence is given in Table 8-3 below:

Table 8-3: β^{α} Sequence in corpus (125): initial vs. non-initial

| Place of choice | β^{α} sequence | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| | no. | % | no. |
| Initial | 1329 | 5.6 | (75) |
| Non-initial | 2939 | 2.6 | (75) |

Since the choice of a rising dependency sequence is obviously only available in clause complexes, the so-called simplexes or simple sentences have been excluded from the calculation of its frequency. It is not altogether obvious whether its occurrence in non-initial position should be expressed relative to the number of clause complexes or the number of non-initial clauses inside clause complexes; while the percentage figure given in Table 8-3 is calculated out of the number of non-initial clauses, the figure calculated out of the number of clause complexes would obviously be the same as that for initial position since, by sheer coincidence, the number of choices of β^{α} sequences is the same for initial and non-initial position.

The frequency of 5.6% of initial β^{α} sequences for the entire corpus is fairly low, and that of non-initial sequences as a percentage of the total number of non-initial

⁵⁸Weiner & Labov (1983: 52) suggest – in the context of a study which does not take text structure into account – two explanations for the occurrence of 'parallel strings or structures': It is either due to a purely syntactic constraint or it may be 'characteristic of semantically significant choices: there is a cognitively determined tendency to keep talking about the same thing.' While the former explanation suggests the kind of syntagmatic conditioning of grammatical choices

clauses less than half that with 2.6%. Turning to generic stages we find that their frequency in initial position varies from a high of 11.8% in Comment to 0% in seven generic stages. The results are graphed in Figure 8-9 below for those generic stages where the frequency of β^{α} sequences is at least 5% initially. In addition, initial choice of β^{α} is compared with the frequencies for non-initial position, expressed as percentage to the two different bases mentioned above:

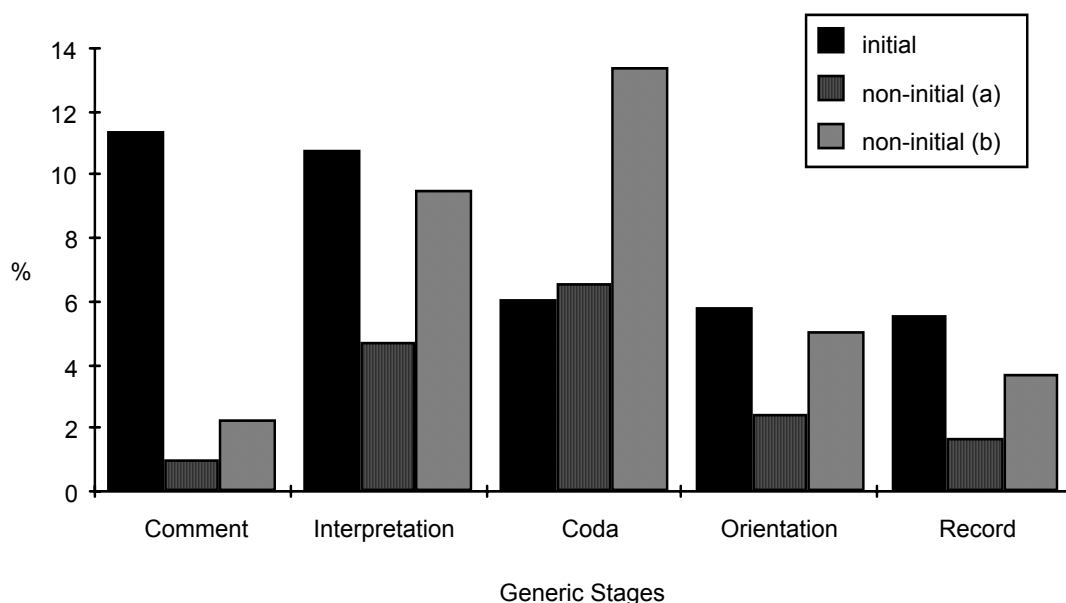


Fig. 8-9: Relative frequency of β^{α} Sequence in selected generic stages: initial vs. non-initial

Note:

non-initial (a): frequency as percentage of non-initial clauses in clause complexes
non-initial (b): frequency as percentage of clause complexes

The pattern of frequencies is totally uninterpretable, both in respect of initial as well as non-initial position, the latter being further complicated by the fact that we are uncertain as to how to express them. Furthermore, the actual number of choices is very low: a rising dependency sequence occurred only five times out of a possible forty-four in Comment, i.e. in the stage with the highest relative frequency in initial position, the small numbers almost certainly contributing to the absence of any interpretable pattern.

And yet I would maintain that of all textual Themes it is likely to be the hypotactically related clause with the marked clause sequence of β^{α} which has the

(in text) which needs to be investigated if their paradigmatic conditioning is to be accounted for fully, the latter is capable of being interpreted in text-structural

greatest potential for realising a method of development simply because the marked sequence tends to focus attention on a particular semantic relation by combining with a logical relation, for example on a temporal or causal-conditional one. No such focusing device is found among other textual Themes – they stand or fall by their own capacity for markedness. And so while the particular realisation of the structural Theme marking the dependency may not be relevant at all – it may be by conjunction, preposition or Ø – some one type of semantic relation is ‘marked out’ for attention at clause rank and thus achieves the potential for functioning as a single method of development in a particular text. Examples of this are given in Halliday (1985b) and Fries (1983), but with only one notable exception none are to be found in the texts in this corpus.

A likely explanation for this suggests itself on account of the different genres involved: The texts found by Halliday and Fries to have a method of development realised by rising dependency sequence were essentially expository-type texts, respectively an informal discussion between school children and their teacher and published expository prose, while the texts in this corpus are, broadly speaking, concerned with narrating. The meanings realised in the texts discussed by Fries and Halliday were, respectively, addition, specifically adversative, and causal-conditional. While it might be unlikely for narrative texts to have cause, condition or adversative addition as an important meaning running through the text, it would of course not be unusual to have texts with ‘temporality’ as their method of development (as in some of Linde & Labov’s (1975) descriptions of apartments; see Fries 1983:125ff for discussion), a method of development clearly appropriate to a narrative. However, the corpus texts show that temporality in narrative is much more likely to be realised by conjunctive textual Themes or topical Adjunct Themes than by rising dependency sequences.

I would contend that the real reason for the relative significance of the rising dependency sequence in exposition, and its consequent lack of significance in narrative, is in fact not due to the particular semantic relations realised but rather to the logical relation of hypotaxis which, when marked thematically via rising dependency, brings into focus the fact that in an expository text ‘argument ... (is) the dominant motif’ (Halliday 1985b:37). And while this foregrounding of argumentation may be

terms despite its somewhat odd cognitive explanation.

achieved by bringing to thematic prominence the clause on which the success of the dominant clause depends, viz. the dependent or β clause, the comparative absence of argumentation as a motif in narrative would account for the comparative absence of the rising dependency sequence.

The one example of a narrative-type text in this corpus which thematises ‘argument’ via rising dependency sequences provides strong support for the view that this kind of markedness is associated with expository texts. In response to Q 8 (‘what happened in funny incident?’) the interviewee produces an anecdote whose Orientation is realised by a – structurally embedded – exposition. The (partial) presentation in example 8-3 below is designed to highlight the succession of rising dependency sequences in mainly initial position. (For details of the clause complex analysis, and the notation and numbering conventions used, see Section 4.2, Section 8.3 this chapter, and Notational Conventions.)

Example 8-3 (see also Vol. 2 – Q 08/I 30)

GP: Can you think of any incident over the years in some sense or another that you would describe as a funny incident?

I: Not really. They’re not really ...

ANECDOTE

Abstract

||| (1.1) They all got their own little personalities |||

Orientation:

EXPOSITION

ORIENTATION

||| (2.1) $^{1\alpha}$ Like the little one we just started to show, that was her second show ||

|| (2.2) $^{1x\beta}$ when she won puppy in-show ||

|| (2.3) $=2\beta$ that was the second time in the ring |||

THESIS

||| (3.1) $^{1x\beta}$ And if she’s in the mood ||

|| (3.2) $^{1\alpha}$ she’ll show ||

|| (3.3) $^{+2x\beta}$ if she’s not ||

|| (3.4) $^{2\alpha}$ you’re governed by her |||

||| (4.1) $^{x\beta}$ You know, if you get her out of the box ||

|| (4.2) $^{\beta 1}$ then you can say ||

|| (4.3) $^{\alpha“2}$ what sort of a day are we going to have today?

|||

ARGUMENT

- ||| (5.1) $\times\beta^1$ So you lift the dog out of the box ||
- || (5.2) β^{+2} and you give her a brush-down and a bit of a
cuddle ||
- || (5.3) β^{+3} and you put the lead on her ||
- || (5.4) β^{+4} and away she goes like a little train ||
- || (5.5) α^1 you're going to say ||
- || (5.6) α^{+21} ripper! ||
- || (5.7) $\alpha^{2=2}$ we're going to have a good day |||
- ||| (6.1) $\times\beta^1$ If however you get her out of the box ||
- || (6.2) β^{+2} and put the lead on ||
- || (6.3) β^{+3} and she shakes ||
- || (6.4) β^{+4} and sits down ||
- || (6.5) β^{+5} and looks around ||
- || (6.6) $\alpha\alpha$ you know ||
- || (6.7) $\alpha'\beta$ we're having a bad day, you know |||

Crisis

- ||| (7.1) A bad day we had on Sunday ... (text continues)

In the text partially reproduced as 8-3 above, the speaker states a general proposition in the Abstract, argues for it in the Orientation and then supports it with a recount of some particular event. There are six instances of rising dependency sequence in the text, four of which are in initial position, and all four initially occurring plus one of the two non-initial ones are found in the Orientation. Furthermore, the semantic relation in all five hypotactic structures is one of 'condition', thereby supporting the interpretation of one single 'method of development' characterising this particular element of generic structure.

The fact that the rising dependency sequence occurs only in the Orientation in this text provides quantitative support for the contention that a given meaning needs to be realised frequently in text in order for it to achieve the status of a method of development in a given text: While four out of five clause complexes in the Orientation are marked by $\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$ sequences, i.e. 80%, the frequency for the whole text reduces to four out of eleven or 36% which, while still high by comparison with both the aggregated figures for the corpus as a whole and those for selected generic stages, is considerably lower than for the 'expository' Orientation. It is not surprising that

‘argument’ emerges as the main motif of this element of structure while no such motif ever becomes foregrounded for the anecdote as a whole.⁵⁹

8.2.3.3 Results and Interpretation: Topical Themes

The total number of occurrences of topical Themes, subcategorised as (potentially) participant chaining Themes (PC Themes) vs. (typically) non-participant chaining Themes (Non-PC Themes), is given in Table 8-4 below:

Table 8-4: Observed frequency of Topical Theme in corpus (125): initial vs. non-initial

| Place of choice | no. | Participant Chaining | | Non-Participant | | Ø | |
|--------------------|------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| | | Themes % | no. | Chaining Themes % | no. | Theme % | no. |
| Initial | 1971 | 77.4 | (1525) | 18.4 | (363) | 4.2 | (83) |
| Non-initial | 2939 | 80.3 | (2359) | 10.1 | (297) | 9.6 | (283) |

Predictably the choice of Themes with the potential to enter into participant chains, i.e. PC Themes, is much higher than that of those Themes which lack that potential, i.e. Non-PC Themes; see Table 8-1 in Section 8.2.2.2 above for a summary description of Non-PC Themes. Equally, the fact that the proportion of Themes realised is greater in initial position than in non-initial is entirely predictable. However, the much greater frequency of Non-PC Themes in initial position with 18.4% of all possible choices – almost double that for non-initial position – is of interest. The choice of a Theme which is in the context of largely narrative-type texts a marked one on account of its inability to enter into one of the participant chains typical for narrative may indeed imply some function in the structure of text.

In order to assess the meaning of the different frequencies with which choices are made we will briefly compare these for the same generic stages investigated in respect of textual Theme, i.e. the same stages excluded there on account of their small number of possible choices will be excluded here. The fact that the choice of the two categories of topical Theme is a mutually exclusive one makes it not only easier to detect any patterns, it also makes it possible to compare all generic stages at once. However, since

⁵⁹Thompson (1984) argues that the rising or ‘initial’ purpose clause of the canonical form (*in order*) *to be on time we took an early bus* (i) is a feature of the written language; (ii) serves a ‘broad discourse’ role (rather than the ‘local’ role served by the ‘final’ purpose clause); and (iii) sets up a ‘chain of expectations’ (Thompson 1984: 163). Whereas Thompson rules out the initial purpose clause as a method of development on account of the length of the texts in her corpus (‘book-length’), she provides quantitative evidence that the marked $\beta \wedge \alpha$ sequence is a feature of expository but not of narrative texts.

the choice is not a binary one, a choice of zero Theme also being a possibility, we need to look at PC Themes and Non-PC Themes separately.

Firstly, the choice of PC Theme in initial position is graphed in Figure 8-10 below as relative frequencies for different generic stages, with the number of choices for each generic stage, both actual and possible, added:

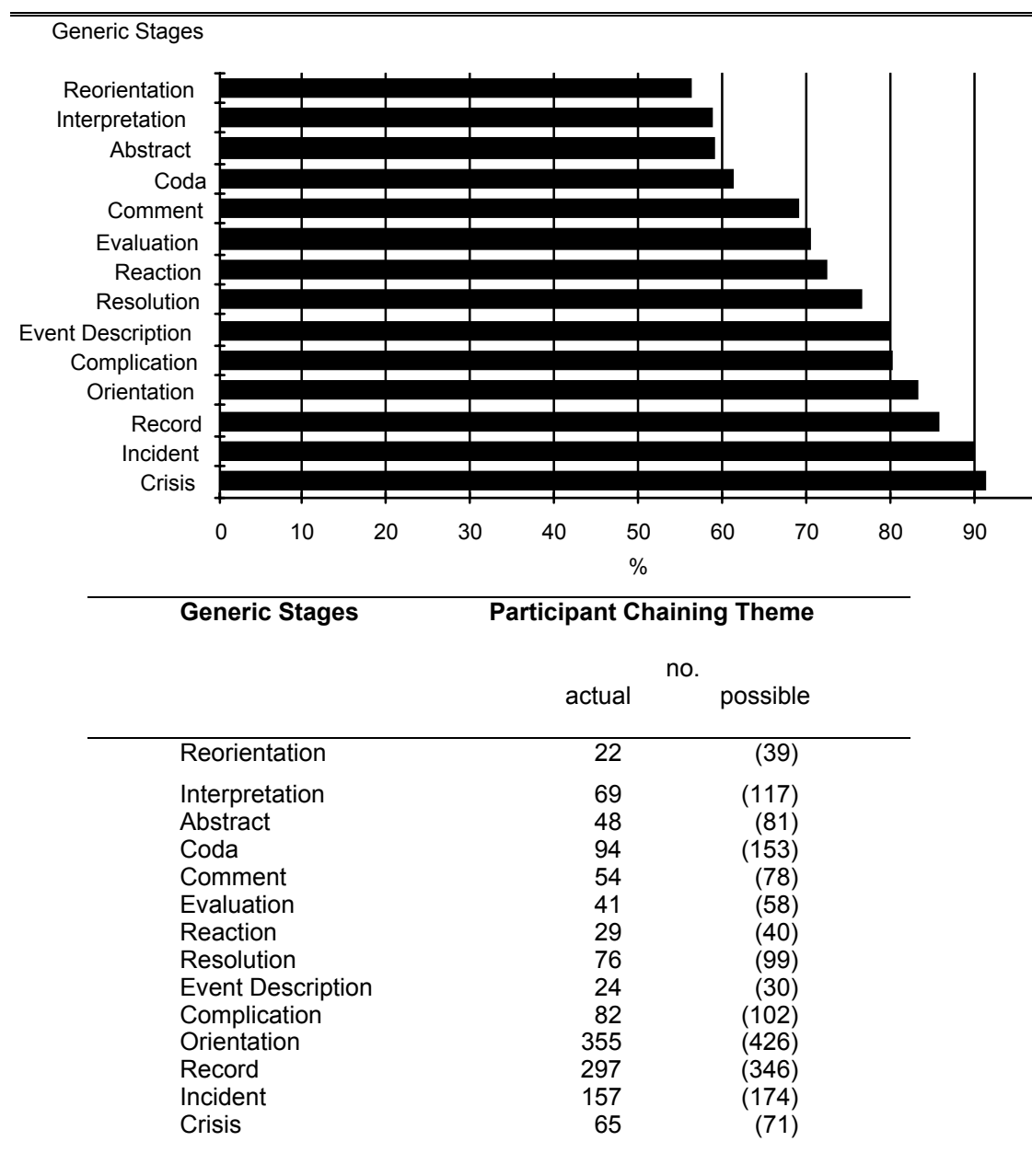


Fig. 8-10: Relative and observed frequencies of Participant Chaining Themes (initial)

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

The trend graphed in Figure 8-10 shows a steady increase in the frequency of PC Themes being associated with basically two different types of generic stage: Those seven generic stages which chose PC Themes the least all fall into either beginning/end stages, viz. Abstract and Coda, or into a 'group' of stages which may be characterised as 'evaluative' in some sense, viz. Interpretation, Comment, Evaluation and Reaction. On the other hand, the seven stages which chose PC Themes the most are all experientially oriented within their respective generic structures. Reorientation, the stage in which PC Themes are the least frequent, is clearly shown to be unlike the experientially oriented stages in narrative-type text at least in respect of this particular type of lexicogrammatical realisation. Qualitatively, i.e. on grammatical grounds, it appears to be an 'end' stage while on quantitative grounds, i.e. on the grounds of its very frequent occurrence in recounts, often followed by a true end stage, the Coda, it appears to be a 'middle' stage; see also discussion in Section 6.2.1.

A similar trend can be observed in the choice of Non-PC Themes, graphed in Figure 8-11 below as relative frequencies for different generic stages, with the number of choices for each generic stage, both actual and possible, added:

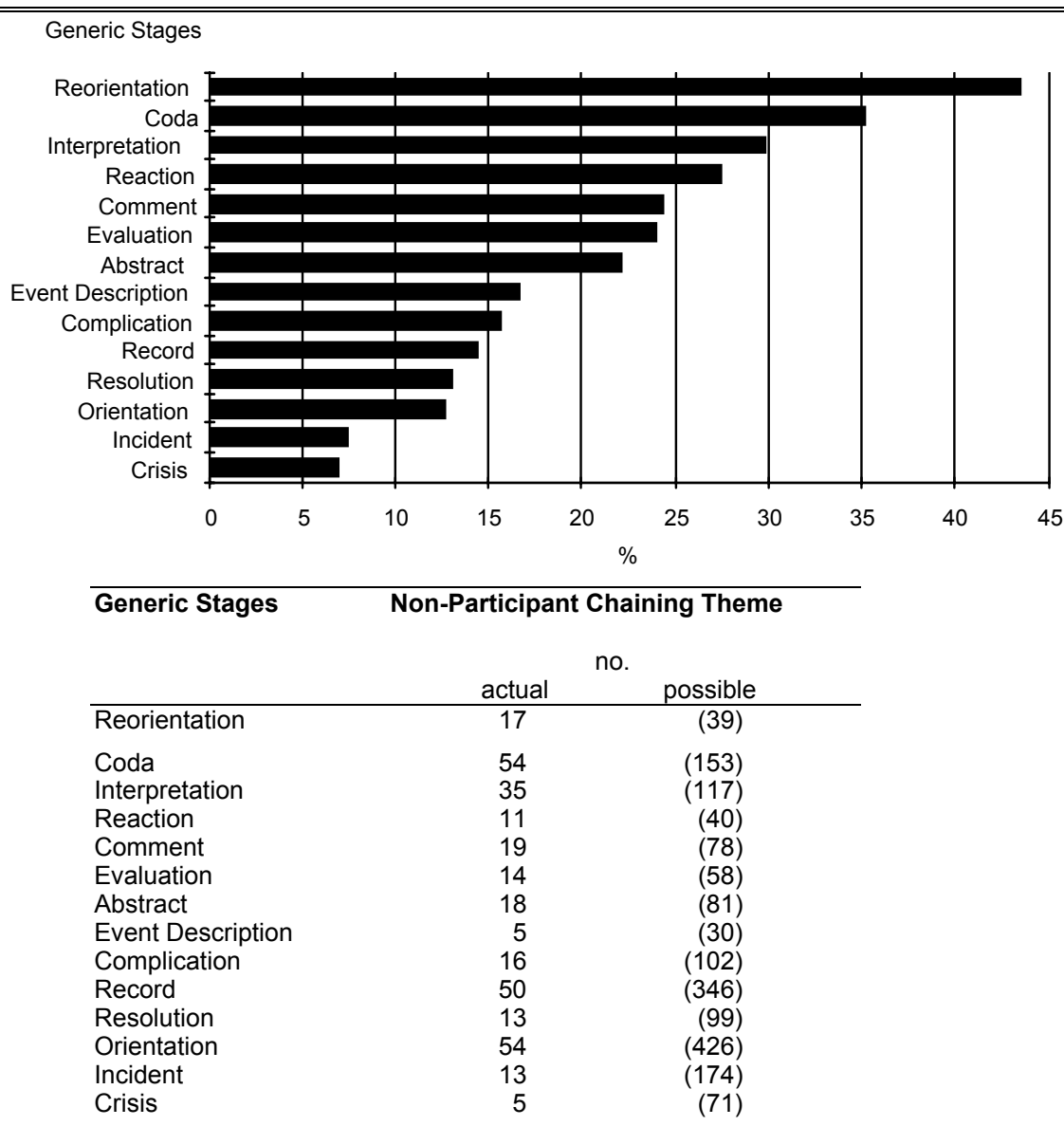


Fig. 8-11: Relative and observed frequencies of Non-Participant Chaining Themes (initial)

The trend graphed in Figure 8-11 for Non-PC Themes is basically a mirror image of that shown in Figure 8-10 for PC Themes. Reading the graph from the top down, Reorientation is shown to favour Non-PC Theme the most while Crisis favours it the least. The steady increase in the choice of PC Themes observed in Figure 8-10 has its equivalent in the steady decrease in the frequency of Non-PC Themes except that it is much more pronounced. Furthermore, we find exactly the same ‘grouping’ of generic stages, viz. beginning/end and evaluative/commentary-like stages favouring Non-PC Themes and the stages concerned with the representation of experience disfavours

them. Although the ordering within the top and bottom groups is different, as a group each comprises exactly the same seven generic stages.

The results bear out the basic understanding of narrative-type texts being focused on *dramatis personæ*, on protagonists realised in text as grammatical participants. More specifically, they show the potential for such a focus on protagonist to be a text-structuring principle by virtue of the fact that some stages in a given generic structure are more strongly concerned with protagonists than others (although in a quantitative study it is obviously not possible to track particular protagonists and identify them with particular stages). Furthermore, since the choice between a potentially co-referential topical Theme and one which lacks the potential for referential chaining is not a binary one – one result therefore not implying the other – the association, say, between the choice of PC Themes and generic stages with similarly experiential functional roles is to some extent independently confirmed by the corresponding lack of the choice of Non-PC Themes.

These findings are all the more interesting since they show the choice of Theme to be associated with generic stages – but it is topical Theme rather than textual Theme which reflects the organisation of text since we had found that in the most narrative-like genres textual Theme did not discriminate between generic stages. And it is also in the environment of topical Theme that the hypothesis concerning the relatively greater importance of initial position is borne out since non-initially the generic stages were found not to cluster nearly as clearly in terms of their experiential vs. non-experiential orientation.

The last question to be addressed concerns the choice of Non-PC Themes since these, unlike PC Themes, can be accounted for as different ‘types’. Restricting our discussion to those in initial position, we found that a total of 363 Non-PC Themes had been chosen out of a possible 1971 (see Table 8-4). Most of these occur with such a low frequency as to suggest that although they may well function text-structurally in some particular text, they are not usefully investigated quantitatively. (And one type, viz. text reference, did not occur even once while extended reference was the most common; see below.) For example, predicated Theme, i.e. the much discussed cleft construction, occurs only four times initially and four times non-initially. All forms of the thematic equative, i.e. of the pseudo-cleft of formal grammars, totalling those with their nominalisation in thematic position (marked equative or basic pseudo-cleft) and

those where it is in rhematic position (unmarked equative or reversed pseudo-cleft), occurred 25 times initially and 10 times non-initially.⁶⁰

Although the strong association of predicated Theme with writing, particularly with formal writing (see Collins 1987 for discussion), suggests that its occurrence in the spoken texts of this corpus is highly marked on quantitative grounds, Themes considered marked on grammatical grounds are equally infrequent. For example, the category of (topical) Complement Theme, i.e. the most marked Theme in declarative (see Section 8.2.1), is represented with only 28 tokens, 12 initially and 16 non-initially, while the considerably less marked Adjunct Theme is represented with a grand total of 146 tokens.

Two categories of Non-PC Theme occurred more than fifty times each initially: extended reference Theme (153) and Adjunct Theme (92). Generic referent Theme, which falls uneasily between the categories of PC Theme and Non-PC Theme, occurred exactly fifty times. Only extended reference Theme appeared to be correlated in any interesting, i.e. interpretable, way with generic stages and we will therefore limit ourselves to a discussion of just this one type. The relative frequency of extended reference is shown below in Figure 8-12 for those stages in which it was most frequent:

⁶⁰The ratio of predicated Theme to thematic equative, i.e. of cleft to pseudo-cleft, is thus with 1:4.4 somewhat more skewed than the 1:3 reported for monologic speech ('spontaneous oration on radio') by Collins (1987: 340, Table 28) on the basis of the London-Lund Corpus. It is in fact more skewed than those reported by Collins for private dialogic texts (343ff). If anything, this would support our contention that the language of the texts in this study, collected by means of sociolinguistic interviews, is indeed ordinary spoken English.

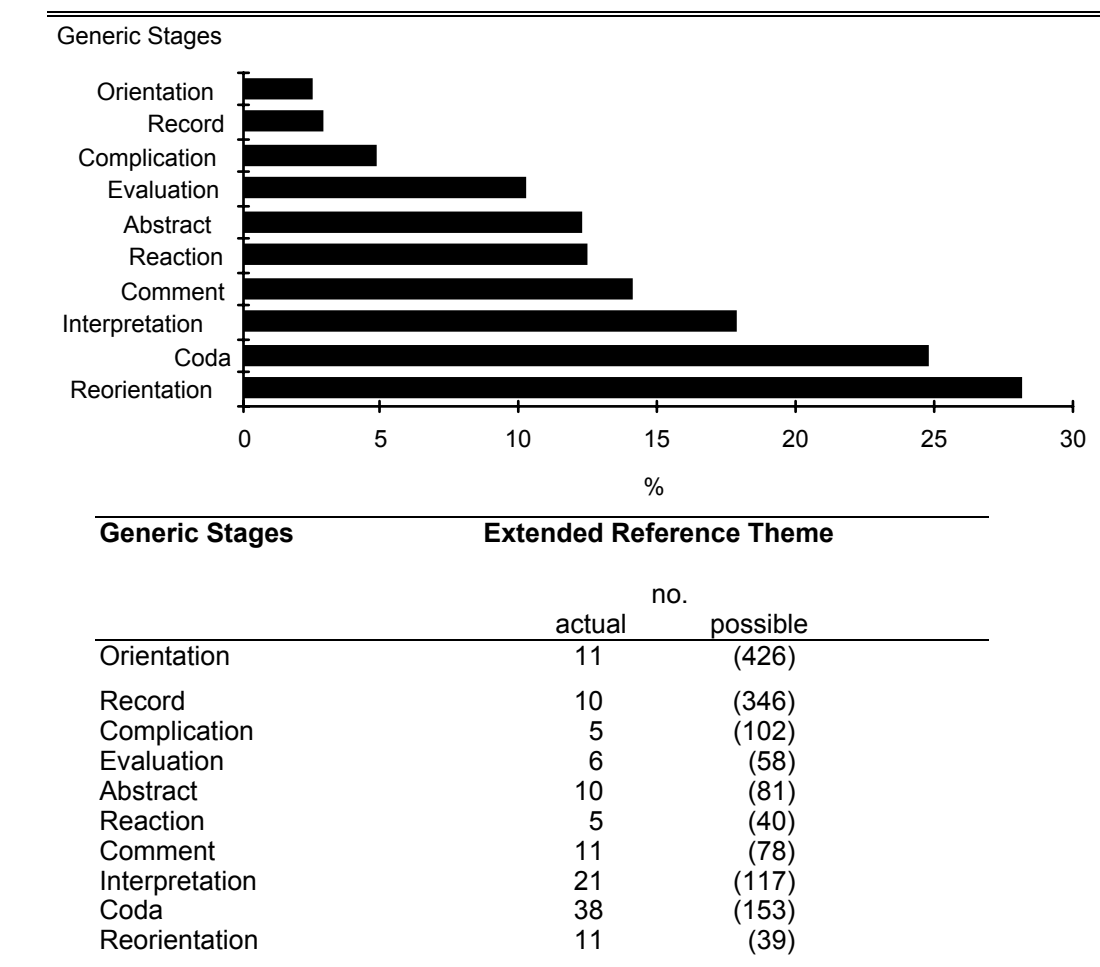


Fig. 8-12: Relative and observed frequencies of Extended Reference Theme in selected generic stages (initial)

We note that the classic end stage Coda, which has at times been associated with extended reference Theme, for example in Martin (1984b) and Krenn (1985), does indeed choose it very frequently. More interesting, however, is that the frequency of extended reference Theme is greatest in Reorientation, thus providing further grammatical evidence for the status of Reorientation as end stage. The next three stages all fall into the group of evaluative/commentary-like stages strongly associated with Non-PC Themes generally as observed above while the two experientially-focused stages with some frequency of extended reference Theme cannot really be said to be associated with its choice in any particularly noticeable way.

Although it is not possible to be certain about this, it would appear highly likely that the retrospective marking of these stages is achieved not via a single realisation of an extended reference Theme but by its repeated use in the same stage. The reason for this is that it does have a referent in the text – although one can never be quite certain

of its exact identity – and therefore is repeatedly made to function as a participant in the clause. In this respect it is unlike the ‘referent’ in a predicated Theme, for example. It seems not too fanciful therefore to conclude that the topical Themes which are in a sense grammaticalised by being encoded in complex structures, such as nominalisations or anticipatory *it* constructions (‘post-posed subject clauses’), are likely to function as stage or boundary markers by virtue of realising such boundaries discretely while the topical Themes which are most congruently realising characters or protagonists in text via a straightforward lexical realisation are more likely to realise stages in toto by constituting the Theme of an entire stage, i.e. they realise text structure in a dispersed fashion.

8.3 Quantificational Aspects of the Analysis of the Clause Complex

The analysis of the clause complex follows Halliday (1985c) and is as set out in Section 4.2. Briefly recapitulating, the clause complex is set up as the highest ranking lexicogrammatical unit, accounting for the functional organisation of the sentence, i.e. of a sentence larger than the ‘simple’ sentence consisting of a single clause. The analysis proceeds along two dimensions simultaneously, one capturing the *interdependency* of clauses through the categories of PARATAXIS and HYPOTAXIS, the other the *logico-semantic* relations between clauses through the categories of EXPANSION and PROJECTION. The categories in the system of logico-semantics are further subcategorised at the next level of delicacy such that a choice of expansion leads to one of elaboration, extension or enhancement, and the choice of projection to one of locution or idea. Any two clauses forming (part of) a clause complex are thus always doubly related, for example by paratactic elaboration, hypotactic enhancement, and so on; see especially Figure 4-2 in Section 4.2.

Since the focus of this chapter is on the quantification of lexicogrammatical realisations of text, representing a move in delicacy of the text focus of the study as a whole, we will limit ourselves here to a few observations relevant to the quantification of clause complex-type relations in text; see again Huddleston et al. (1968) for discussions of the clause complex which bear on problems of its quantification generally, and Henrici (1968) for discussion of the quantification of grammatical variables from a statistical perspective.

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

Firstly, the delimitation of the clause complex, i.e. the unambiguous and consistent identification of its boundaries, is perhaps the most troublesome issue confronting the analyst. There will be many instances in text where clauses that would appear to be structurally related are simply juxtaposed without any marker of a structural relationship, i.e. the sort of pair of finite and thus in principle independent clauses typically shown by means of a semicolon or a dash to be a single (complex) sentence in writing, as for example in *That was her second show; that was her second time in the ring*. In these cases we are always dealing with a relationship of parataxis and typically, though not exclusively, with a logico-semantic relationship of elaboration. (Although a relationship of dependency and thus of hypotaxis between clauses may be indicated by non-finiteness alone, dependency between finite clauses would be marked by a subordinate conjunction.)

Conversely, many clauses which begin with a conjunction that would normally mark a structural relation of that clause to another clause in a clause complex are unrelated, or at least not related by means of that particular conjunction. The most common conjunctions functioning in this way, i.e. functioning ‘cohesively’ rather than structurally within the terms of SFG, are *and*, *but*, *so*, *because* and *then* – and probably in this order of frequency – and these hardly need exemplifying.⁶¹ It is this small set of conjunctions, with the exception of *because* all paratactic, which are at the basis of much argument in the analysis of spoken data about the presence or absence of a structural relationship. However, the basic contention that many occurrences of otherwise structurally functioning ‘linkers’ may be functioning cohesively in particular instances – occasional coding difficulties notwithstanding – is in fact strongly supported by the highly marked cohesive use of relative pronouns, typically *which*, i.e. by those members of a class of DEICTICS which are most strongly identified with initial position in a ‘bound’ clause in a clause complex; see also example 8-2 in Section 8.2.2.1.

The analytical problem in any coding of text in both the above cases is whether or not a tactic relation should be recognised. In most cases rhythm and intonation will decide the issue quite unambiguously, i.e. in the case of clauses which are simply

⁶¹Chafe (1982: 38–9) reports such a rank-frequency on the basis of a word count of a corpus of ‘9,911 words of informal spoken language’, viz. ‘dinnertable conversations’. He discusses these and similar phenomena as introducing ‘idea units’, units rather informally (and somewhat inexplicitly) defined but probably more or less corresponding to single clauses, similar in practice to the concept of the ‘extended clause’ discussed in Chafe (1986). The clause complex as defined by Halliday is in fact closer to Chafe’s notion of the ‘sentence’ in spoken language, left undefined but identified in his analysis on the basis of ‘sentence-final falling pitch’ (Chafe 1986: 46).

juxtaposed without any formal marker of structure it will be the maintenance of the rhythm and particular patterns of intonation, especially tone concord (see Halliday 1985c:205ff), which will signal the presence of a structural relationship while in the case of a clause which is introduced with a structural marker it will be the break in the rhythm with the previous clause and the absence of an intonation pattern relating the juxtaposed clauses which will signal the absence of any structural relationship. (See Martinec 1986:106–121 for an excellent discussion of criteria for determining clause complex boundaries.)

A further problem which is partly one of delimitation, more properly perhaps one of the recognition of a clause complex, concerns those clauses which are semantically related yet not tactically – or rather not by the easily and unambiguously recognised relation of hypotaxis. Halliday (1985c:216–7) discusses examples of expansion but the issue extends to projection as well. Although it is often possible to recognise a relationship of, say, enhancement between two clauses where in experiential terms one represents the outcome or result of another, no such structural relationship has been posited between such clauses unless the logico-semantic relationship has been formally marked. (But cf. Martin (1983b) for an approach which recognises ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ conjunctive relations in text, i.e. semantic relations closely related in some respects to the logico-semantic relations modelled in the analysis of the clause complex, in his analysis of the discourse semantics system of conjunction.)

Similarly, in the case of projection, when a speaker ‘quotes’ speech or thought in a succession of independent clauses without actually projecting each clause, something commonly done in the (verbatim) quoting of someone’s speech, no structural relationship exists between the second and third clause, the third and fourth clause, etc. In example 8-3 below, for instance, we find a succession of such quoted clauses:

Example 8-3

We rolled over in bed and said, “No, to hell with it! Staying home!” We lay there for another ten or fifteen minutes and said, “Damn it! We’ve entered. Let’s go!”

Strictly speaking, in the first sentence only the clause *No, to hell with it!* is projected by the verbal process of saying in the first clause while *Staying home!* is not. Consequently, the two clauses in which the speaker is quoting himself, are structurally

not related to one another nor is the second of these clauses related to the quoting or projecting clause *and [we] said*.

In this study, however, it was decided to code those clauses which were, non-technically, quoting although technically they could not be considered to be projected as being members of a clause complex provided they could be considered to be simultaneously ‘related’ – albeit non-structurally – by both expansion and projection. The reason is simply that to ignore such relations would result in a misrepresentation of the text, in effect claiming it to be realised by (a succession of) simple sentences or simplexes when such a pattern may in fact be the typical realisation of different contextual meanings altogether; see also remarks in Section 8.3.2.1.

Applied to the clauses in 8-3 above, this means that we would code *No, to hell with it! Staying home!* as being related to one another by an expanding relation of elaboration and both to *and [we] said* by the projecting relation of locution as shown in example 8-3a:

Example 8-3a

||| (1.1) ¹ We rolled over in bed || (1.2) ⁺² and said ||
 (1.3) ⁺³¹ no, to hell with it! || (1.4) ³⁼² staying home! |||

In other words, the first four clauses are coded as forming a single clause complex.

The remaining five clauses in example 8-3, however, result in being recoded such that while *We’ve entered. Let’s go!* are shown to be related by an expanding relation of enhancement and *Damn it!* shown to be related by the projecting relation of locution to *(We lay there for another ten or fifteen minutes) and [we] said*, no relation is posited between *Damn it!* on the one hand and *We’ve entered. Let’s go!* on the other since they themselves are not related by any logico-semantic relation. As a result, *We’ve entered. Let’s go!* are of course also not considered structurally related to the projecting *and [we] said* as shown in example 8-3b:

Example 8-3b

||| (2.1) ¹ We lay there for another ten or fifteen minutes || (2.2) ⁺² and said ||
 (2.3) ⁺³ damn it! |||
 ||| (3.1) ¹ We’ve entered || (3.2) ^{x2} let’s go! |||

In other words, these five clauses are coded as forming two clause complexes.

A second source of concern in a quantitative analysis of clause complex-type relations is the phenomenon of embedding or rankshift. Although the analysis of the clause complex followed here generally results in a greater number of ranking clauses being recognised than is usual in approaches working with a traditional concept of subordination – hypotactic projections, for example, are typically considered instances of embedding (see Martin 1988 for a discussion of hypotaxis and embedding in a functional framework) – the concept of a ‘ranking’ clause also results in a contrary tendency since it is not infrequently the case that an embedded clause resembles itself a ‘clause complex’, albeit a somewhat incomplete one of non-ranking clauses, as in example 8-4 below:

Example 8-4

|| 1_(1.1) ¹ You know, to travel from here to Bathurst || (1.2) ^{+2 α} stand
probably seven hours on my feet || (1.3) ^{2 $\times\beta$} judging dogs || (1.4) ^{+3 α} and
to earn a total of ten dollars || (1.5) ^{=3 β} which has got to pay travelling
expenses, dry-cleaning and leftover change for myself 1to buy
something on the way home after the show²² is not 1 (2.1) ¹ what I call ||
(2.2) ² making a living out of it 2||

We may thus find that a structure coded as one (ranking) clause, such as the identifying relational clause in 8-4 – a Thematic Equative in terms of the analysis of Theme in SFG – is on the one hand a structure of great grammatical ‘intricacy’ due to its clause-complex type nominalisations on either side of the copula, i.e. it has considerable length as well as the structural ‘depth’ achieved by means of hypotaxis, but is on the other hand a structure with high lexical density, i.e. it has a high proportion of lexical items per ranking clause, there only being one ranking clause (see especially Halliday 1985d). While the different kinds of such complexity involved – such structures being simultaneously grammatically intricate and lexically dense – can of course be accounted for in a non-quantitative analysis of a single text (cf. Halliday 1987b), in a quantitative analysis of many texts such subtleties tend to be lost.

And finally, interpersonal clauses such as *I think*, and textual clauses such as *and as I said* have not been accounted for in terms of clause complex-type relations, *I think* being considered a modalisation and *and as I said* a textual Theme, specifically a continuative Theme; see also discussion in Section 8.2.1. There are many aspects of a clause complex analysis of spoken data which deserve detailed discussion but these

must be considered to lie outside the scope of this study. In the meantime, the clause complex analysis included in the presentation of the texts in Volume 2, on which this quantificational study is based, must speak for itself.

8.3.1 Quantificational Methods

The statistical investigation of the choice of clause complex-type relations has been limited in this study to the two principal systems of LOGICO-SEMANTICS with the features EXPANSION and PROJECTION on the one hand and of TAXIS with the features PARATAXIS and HYPOTAXIS on the other.⁶² The reason for limiting ourselves to just these two basic systems, i.e. for not pursuing the more delicate distinctions of elaboration, extension and enhancement in the system of expansion, and of locution and idea in the system of projection, and in turn their cross-classifications with parataxis and hypotaxis in order to arrive at a most delicate account of the clause complex-type relations to be found in the texts in this corpus, is that we had to ensure that every type of choice was made with an *expected* frequency of at least 1.0 in each text included in the analysis; see also Section 7.4.

Although the number of texts to be accounted for could have been reduced by those texts in which a particular choice was not made, or made with an expected frequency of less than 1.0, this would have led to an undesirable reduction in the number of texts per cell arrived at by cross-classification of the conditioning factors accounted for generally throughout this study, i.e. elicitation question, genre, speaker's sex, age, and social group.

Any attempt to account for the grammatical variation between texts requires *both* a very much larger corpus of texts and texts in which the manifold choices are made more frequently. While the size of a corpus of texts presents a practical problem, the incidence of the choices to be investigated is a problem that is inherent in the nature of the texts studied, i.e. both the length of, say, narrative texts, and the frequency with which particular grammatical choices are made in narrative texts are a property of such texts and not subject to methodological ingenuity.

⁶²The study of clause complex relations by Nesbitt & Plum (1988), which does extend to all grammatically possible choices, and on the basis of largely the same corpus, is very differently focused since its primary concern is to investigate the relationship between the modelling of choices in grammar vs. their actual occurrence in text in order to throw some light on the development of grammatical distinctions over time in what Halliday (1985c) has referred to as the process of 'semogenesis', i.e. essentially as a result of the dialectic interaction between system and process (or text) postulated by Hjelmslev; see also discussion in chapter 2.1.1. See Halliday (1987a) for an exploration of issues related to semogenesis.

The data was analysed using logistic modelling, the type of statistical analysis familiar to linguists from the VARBRUL analyses (see Sankoff & Labov 1979). Models of the data are progressively built up which contain contextual conditioning factors hypothesised to account for the variation in the data. The fit between these models and the data itself is tested for significance until an optimum model is arrived at, i.e. one which only contains those factors which adequately account for the data. (See Bishop et al. (1975), Fienberg (1977/1980) for details on the statistical theory and on model fitting; and Gilbert (1981) for an accessible introduction to log-linear modelling.)

The statistical package used in this analysis, GLIM (see Baker & Nelder 1978), is able to fit a variety of generalised linear models to both categorical and numerical data. Logistic models were used in order to account for the variability between individual texts in respect of dichotomous choices, such as expansion vs. projection, etc. In the case of clause complex-type relations this means testing whether an adequate model need contain terms for the various conditioning factors accounted for generally throughout this study, factors which themselves are ‘factor groups’ in the sense of VARBRUL with a number of different categories or ‘factors’. The following factor groups and factors are represented in the texts in corpus (125):

Elicitation question

- Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?')
- Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?')
- Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?')
- Q 11 ('tell favourite story')

Genre

recount
narrative
anecdote
exemplum
observation
exposition

Sex

male
female

Social group

- 1 (≈ LWC)
- 2 (≈ UWC)
- 3 (≈ LMC)
- 4 (≈ UMC)

Age is the one category which up to this point has not been attempted to be correlated with any other category, say, genre in Section 7.4, since we found it to be socially meaningless to group speakers in terms of their age on account of its continuous distribution in the sample (see discussion in Section 7.2.1). In the statistical analysis of clause complex-type relations, however, age was able to be fitted as a numeric variable, i.e. it did not need to be fitted as a factor corresponding to male vs.

female, possibly as ‘young adult’ vs. ‘older adult’, and thus it was able to be investigated for its significance in explaining the variation in the data.

8.3.2 Results and Interpretation

8.3.2.1 Projection vs. Expansion

We investigated the choice of projection but since this is a choice in a binary system constituted of projection and expansion, the results obtained are the mirror image of those that would have been obtained had we investigated the choice of expansion. The model giving us the best fit of the variable choice of projection in the corpus of 125 texts was found to be

$$\log_e\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \text{mean} + \text{elicitation question} + \text{genre}$$

This means that the choice in the system of logico-semantic relations at a primary level of delicacy, where the choice is between projection and expansion, depends on those conditioning factors which are most directly related to the production of text, viz. the elicitation question which gave rise to the text itself and the choice of genre made in the response according to the analysis of genre in Chapter 6. None of the social factors was found to be statistically significant nor was the interaction between question and genre. (Since the choice is in a binary system it is of course immaterial which of two terms are investigated.)

The parameter estimates obtained are listed in decreasing order of magnitude, i.e. for the ‘factors’ in each ‘factor group’, in Table 8-5 below, together with the actual number of choices of projection out of the total number of choices in the system of logico-semantic relations, i.e. for projection plus expansion:

Table 8-5: Choice of Projection

| Parameters | Projection no. | Logico-semantic relations (total) | Estimates |
|---|-------------------|---|-------------|
| mean | | | - 1.604 |
| <u>Elicitation question</u> | | | |
| Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') | 146 | (888) | 0.2301 |
| Q 11 ('tell favourite story') | 100 | (412) | 0.1529 |
| Q 1 ('how did you get into dogs?') | 128 | (749) | 0 |
| Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?') | 98 | (790) | - 0.2816 |
| <u>Genre</u> | | | |
| narrative | 137 | (706) | 0.1638 |
| recount | 153 | (856) | 0.04146 |
| anecdote | 54 | (364) | 0 |
| exposition | 10 | (52) | - 0.0007977 |
| exemplum | 94 | (725) | - 0.4212 |
| observation | 24 | (236) | - 0.6159 |

The values of the parameter estimates indicate the frequencies with which the choice being investigated is made: the higher the value of the parameter estimate, the more frequently the choice is made. The relative values of the parameter estimates for elicitation question indicate that Q 10 leads to a more frequent choice of projection than Q 11; and Q 11 to a more frequent choice of projection than Q 1, and so on. Similarly, the relative values of the parameter estimates for genre indicate that narrative leads to a more frequent choice of projection than recount; and recount to a more frequent choice of projection than anecdote; and so on. It is only the differences between the estimates that are relevant, not the individual estimates in isolation. The results also indicate that the choice of projection is always less frequent than the choice of expansion as $\log_e\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)$ is always negative no matter which elicitation question or genre the speaker chooses.

The lack of interaction terms in the model means that the ordering of genres shown in Table 8-5 applies within each elicitation question and, conversely, that the ordering of elicitation questions applies within each genre. However, the ordering does not necessarily apply to the data collapsed over all questions or over all genres. In other words, while without log-linear analysis – and computers – it would be impossible to interpret the variation between individual texts in respect of the choices in the primary system of logico-semantics and taxis since a simple examination of individual texts, whether they be in the form of an ordinary transcription or of a quantitative statement

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

of the choices, would show seemingly patternless variation, a simple aggregation of such choices on the basis of one or other of the conditioning factors would be misleading.

GLIM also fits estimated values for each cell and calculates standardised residual values. An examination of the standardised residuals shows that, on the assumption of a value of within $|2|$ as constituting an acceptable fit, only 8 residuals have a magnitude greater than 2, i.e. the above best model chosen to account for the variation between the choice of projection and expansion may be assumed to fit 94.6% of the total number of 125 texts. The eight texts with residuals greater than 2 were examined to see if there were grounds for removing any from the data set as ‘outliers’ before refitting the model. They were found to have little in common in terms of their conditioning factors, thus ruling out the possibility that the model does not fit well texts produced, say, in response to a certain elicitation question or by speakers with certain social characteristics. On the other hand, the two texts with the highest residuals are both narratives which are characterised by telling their story, i.e. by representing experience, essentially in the form of a dialogue; see Q 08/I 12 and Q 11/I 36 in Volume 2. It therefore appears likely that the model’s not fitting these two texts is explained by a dialogic mode unusual for narrative generally.

The results obtained suggest, firstly – and perhaps most importantly – that the elicitation question alone is not sufficient to predict a text’s realisation at the level of lexicogrammar since otherwise a term for the factor ‘genre’ would not have been needed to build a model which fitted the data. While a question must certainly be held to permit us to make predictions as to the answer – discourse could not take place without there being a relationship of mutual predictability between the two, a *probabilistic* relationship which must in fact be part of the system – such predictions on the basis of a given elicitation question must take into account genre and register and can thus only be reliable at the ‘planes’ of genre and register and not of the linguistic system itself.

The generic analyses in Chapter 6 concluded that with the exception of Q 1 (‘how did you get into dogs?’) – which was almost unanimously responded to with a genre recount – the elicitation questions resulted in a variety of narrative-type genres on the one hand and a genre observation on the other. In other words, for the most part the elicitation question was not a sufficient predictor of genre at a quite delicate level of

generic analysis. This outcome is predicted by the genre model underlying this study since the generic response to a question is considered a function of both the register choices accessed in the question and of a system of culture which constrains their combination in certain generic structures. We might therefore speculate that the variable elicitation question may in some sense equal a choice in, and is a predictor of, register. The finding of the quantitative analysis of lexicogrammatical realisations of text then, viz. that the variables elicitation question and genre jointly account for the variation between projection and expansion in individual texts, accords with our model of text in context.

Secondly, focusing on the category genre, the finding that of all genres it is narrative which favours projection the most and it is observation which does so the least is perfectly interpretable in the light of the discussions of these genres in Chapter 6. The interpretation of genres on a 'continuum' of multiple orientations towards the representation of 'real world' experience, contextualisation and purpose (see Figure 6-6 in Section 6.2.2) makes it possible to predict that narrative-type texts in general will favour projection by comparison with observation texts. Similarly, the difference between narrative and exemplum is predictable since the more a genre is oriented towards both accounting for events and seeking to entertain a hearer with such accounts, the more it is likely to favour projection as a mode of realisation.

Thirdly, focusing on the category elicitation question, the finding that Q 8 ('what happened in funny incident?') favours projection the least is probably best explained negatively: Especially when compared with Q 10 ('what happened in surprising success?') and Q 11 ('tell favourite story') – i.e. those questions favouring projection the most – Q 8 neither emphasises a recounting of events which involve a great deal of interaction between people, as is done in Q 10, nor any narrating as such, i.e. a linguistic activity with a predisposition towards representing experience in the form of the projection of locutions and ideas, as is done in Q 11. Instead, Q 8 'concretises' experience by way of recasting the perfectly tellable and entertaining, viz. something *funny*, into an *incident* which for the telling of its micro-events draws upon those meanings which foreground the expansion of (clausal) representations of experience, i.e. on the meanings of elaboration, extension and enhancement. By way of metaphor we might say that an incident is to 'real (including imaginary) world' experience what an observation is to a cultural system through which to view that world.

We conclude that both the finding that elicitation question and genre jointly account for the variation in the choice between expansion and projection and the actual ordering of the relative favouring of a choice of projection by the categories or ‘variants’ of both these variables, i.e. by the factors in a factor group in the terms of VARBRUL analysis, constitutes evidence in support of the contextual hypotheses pertaining to genre and register advanced in this study, in both a theoretical and an analytical sense.

8.3.2.2 Parataxis vs. Hypotaxis

We investigated the choice of parataxis but, exactly as in the case of projection, since this is a choice in a binary system constituted of parataxis and hypotaxis, the results obtained are the mirror image of those that would have been obtained had we investigated the choice of hypotaxis. The model giving us the best fit of the variable choice of parataxis in the corpus of 125 texts was found to be

$$\log_e\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \text{mean} + \text{sex} + \text{social group} + \text{genre}$$

This means that the choice in the system of taxis, where the choice is between parataxis and hypotaxis, depends on the choice of the social factors sex and social group as well as on the choice of genre. Neither age nor elicitation question was found to be statistically significant nor was the interaction between sex, social group and genre. (Again, it is immaterial which of the two terms are investigated.)

The parameter estimates obtained are listed in decreasing order of magnitude, i.e. for the ‘factors’ in each ‘factor group’, in Table 8-6 below, together with the actual number of choices of parataxis out of the total number of choices in the system of taxis, i.e. for parataxis plus hypotaxis. The relative values of the parameter estimates for sex indicate that men choose parataxis more frequently than women. Similarly, the relative values of the parameter estimates for social group indicate that members of social group 1 (\approx LWC) choose parataxis more frequently than members of social group 2 (\approx UWC); and members of social group 2 (\approx UWC) more frequently than members of social group 4 (\approx UMC), and so on. And lastly, the relative values of the parameter estimates for genre indicate that narrative leads to a more frequent choice of parataxis than recount; and recount to a more frequent choice of parataxis than anecdote; and so on. The results also indicate that the choice of parataxis is more frequent than the

choice of hypotaxis as $\log_e\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)$ is always positive no matter which sex the speaker is, to which social group the speaker belongs, or which genre the speaker chooses.

Table 8-6: Choice of Parataxis

| Parameters | Parataxis | Tactic relations | Estimates |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| | no. | (total) | |
| mean | | | 0.9970 |
| <u>Sex</u> | | | |
| males | 1049 | (1417) | 0.2950 |
| females | 1020 | (1522) | 0 |
| <u>Social group</u> | | | |
| 1 (\approx LWC) | 456 | (591) | 0 |
| 2 (\approx UWC) | 703 | (1008) | - 0.2371 |
| 4 (\approx UMC) | 264 | (385) | - 0.2959 |
| 3 (\approx LMC) | 646 | (955) | - 0.3815 |
| <u>Genre</u> | | | |
| recount | 610 | (856) | 0.1857 |
| narrative | 518 | (706) | 0.1028 |
| anecdote | 262 | (364) | 0 |
| exemplum | 507 | (725) | - 0.01599 |
| exposition | 31 | (52) | - 0.4019 |
| observation | 141 | (236) | - 0.4355 |

The lack of interaction terms in the model for parataxis means that the ordering of the categories of each conditioning factor shown in Table 8-6 applies within each of the categories of the other two conditioning factors; see also Section 8.3.2.1. As already remarked above, however, the ordering does not necessarily apply to the data collapsed over both sexes, all social groups or over all genres.

An examination of the standardised residual values calculated by the program shows that, as in the case of the analysis of logico-semantic relations, only 8 residuals have a magnitude greater than 2, i.e. the above best model chosen to account for the variation between the choice of parataxis and hypotaxis may be assumed to fit 94.6% of the total number of 125 texts. Once again, the eight texts with residuals greater than 2 – which were not the same eight as in the case of the model for logico-semantic relations – were examined to see if there were grounds for removing any from the data set as ‘outliers’ but they did not appear in any way unusual.

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

These results lead us to make the following general observations regarding the conditioning factors found to be significant in respect of the choice between parataxis and hypotaxis on the one hand vs. those between expansion and projection on the other: Firstly, of the two most obviously ‘contextual’ factors, i.e. genre and elicitation question, only genre is significant in the choice of taxis. In other words, whereas in respect of the choice of logico-semantic relations, i.e. of expansion vs. projection, the elicitation question was found to be a significant factor in accounting for the variation in the data, in respect of the choice of taxis it was found not to be significant.

This would appear to support our interpretation of the elicitation question as in some sense constituting a choice in register, i.e. a choice among systems concerned with a representation of experience-cum-knowledge rather than with its representation in text. Taxis seems more clearly associated with the textual representation of experience and logico-semantics more clearly with an organisation of experience which may in some sense be ‘given’ or whose textual representation is to some extent iconic with a perception of reality.

Secondly, the finding that social conditioning factors are found to be significant in respect of the choice of taxis but not at all in respect of the choice in the system of logico-semantics constitutes support for the interpretation of an association of taxis with the textual representation of experience and of logico-semantics with the organisation of experience; but see below.

Turning to an interpretation of the findings specifically in respect of the choice of parataxis (rather than hypotaxis), we should first note that of the three social conditioning factors, viz. sex, age and social group, age alone is not significant. In one sense this finding is gratifying since a contrary may have called for an interpretation in terms of a hypothesis of language development in the individual – something which would make no sense in this study, however, since the age range of the speakers is not only continuous but they are also all adults. Findings such as these are clearly as important as findings of strong associations between conditioning factors and linguistic variables since interpretable findings of both kinds constitute support for the analyses of the texts on which they are based, which in turn also means the theoretical basis of those analyses. On the other hand, a finding that age was significant could equally be attempted to be interpreted in terms of language change in progress, especially considering that the other two social factors investigated were found to be significant.

However, we have no evidence whether or not the differences in respect of social factors suggest any change in progress.

Secondly, the finding that parataxis is favoured by males (rather than by females) and by members of social group 1 (\approx LWC) (rather than by those belonging to social groups 3 and 4 (\approx L/UMC) in particular) provides yet further evidence that the choice of taxis may indeed be associated with some of the range of factors which have been explored in past studies. One research direction has been to explore developmental and social factors, and these studies have generally found that parataxis is favoured by working class children; see for example Templin (1957), Bernstein (1962), Lawton (1964), Loban (1966). A different research direction has been to explore the mode difference between speech and writing, and these studies have generally concluded that speech favours parataxis and writing hypotaxis, for example Harrell (1957), Kroll (1977), O'Donnell (1974), Rader (1982), Biber (1985, 1986).

However, developmental factors cannot account for the choice of taxis in this study since all speakers are adults of at least 26 years of age. Similarly, since the data is entirely spoken mode must be ruled out in the simple model of mode generally adopted in such studies, i.e. in models in which only a basic contrast is made between spoken and written language. Mode could usefully be explored further by reference to the non-material model of mode discussed in Section 2.2 and Section 3.3.3, i.e. by reference to distinctions between 'distances' of time and space, since the relationship between more delicate mode distinctions and genre is likely to shed light on the significance of the inclusion of a term for genre (as well as sex and social group) in the logistic model found to account best for the variation in the choice of taxis.

A straightforward interpretation of the choice of taxis being associated with educational achievement, i.e. of parataxis with lower educational achievement and hypotaxis with higher, a conclusion attributed to Loban (1976) by Kroll (1977:81), is also suggested by this study on account of the association of social group 1 (\approx LWC) with parataxis. However, this must be ruled out since the third conditioning factor found to be associated with the choice of parataxis, viz. being male, includes male speakers from all social groups – no interaction of social factors was found to be statistically significant, and thus also none of male and social group 1.

How then are the findings that males and members of social group 1 favour the choice of parataxis to be interpreted? While most discussions of taxis, usually couched

Chapter 8:
Contextual Conditioning of Lexicogrammatical Realisations of Generic Structure

in terms of coordination and subordination, readily interpret the former as simple and the latter as complex, a discussion of the far from simple issue of linguistic simplicity is outside the scope of this study, and will thus not be pursued here. However, an equation of alleged simplicity with a lack of prestige and, conversely, of alleged complexity with prestige cannot be ruled out, opposing ‘plain and simple’ parataxis with ‘fancy and complex’ hypotaxis. Since in this study we found an association of parataxis with being male and, independently, with being a member of the lowest group in a social hierarchy, an interpretation of parataxis as not ‘prestigious’ would in general terms accord with the findings of numerous sociolinguistic studies which have demonstrated an association of linguistic features perceived to be ‘prestigious’ with being ‘not male’ and ‘not lower working class’.

(While the particular ranking of the parameter estimates for the four social groups shown in Table 8-6 is highly suggestive of the phenomenon of middle class ‘hypercorrection’ since the unmarked ordering of social groups from 1 to 4 is upset by the reversal of groups 3 and 4, i.e. those corresponding in some sense to lower and upper middle class respectively, the specific differences between social groups have not been tested and may well not be significant. We have therefore only assumed that social group 1 favours parataxis relative to the other three groups.)

On the other hand, an explanation of the social conditioning of taxis along the lines of it being a prestige feature may simply be the current equivalent of an earlier social bias now found unacceptable. After all, while Jespersen’s (1923) claimed association of hypotaxis with men and of parataxis with women, which was not based on any empirical evidence as far as I know, was probably sexist in the way in which that is understood today, the current tendency to interpret linguistic behaviour associated with women as prestigious may not be all that different.

Misgivings about such interpretations which come ready-made are due to the fact that linguists have only recently begun to investigate seriously abstract grammatical features in respect of any possible social conditioning, and interpretations which rely on analogies with interpretations of the social conditioning of phonological features are fraught with the danger of misinterpretation. The fact that there is social conditioning of highly abstract grammatical features, contrary to the opinions expressed in Weiner & Labov (1983), Sankoff & Labov (1979) and Sankoff (1986), for example of recursion in the choice of tense in English as shown by Plum & Cowling (1987), may

well call for an interpretation which considers such conditioning not only evidence of semantic variation but in some sense a natural expression of what it means to be male or female, lower working class or lower middle class, etc. The ‘ineffability of grammatical categories’ Halliday (1984) speaks of might well have its counterpart in text or process in that the *frequency* with which grammatical choices are made in text is ‘ineffable’ with respect to the social meanings realised.

Thirdly, the finding that parataxis is favoured by the more narrative-type genres and disfavoured by those which are least narrative in the context of narrating, i.e. that parataxis is strongly associated with narrating ‘proper’, is not altogether surprising since the temporal sequencing of the events typically related in narrative together with the predominantly experiential orientation of narrative lends itself to ‘the linking of elements of equal status’ (Halliday 1985c:198) which is the basic meaning of parataxis. (This meaning should not be confused with those of the logico-semantic relations of expansion, such as those marked by ‘in fact’ (elaboration), ‘and’ (extension), ‘(and) then’ (enhancement), etc., which are grammatically independent choices although statistically associated with the choice of taxis, as shown by Nesbitt & Plum (1988); see fn.11 this chapter. For example, while extension is virtually always also paratactic, elaboration is strongly associated with parataxis and enhancement with hypotaxis.)

Conversely, the disfavouring of parataxis by the least narrative texts, i.e. by both exposition and observation, relative to narrative-type texts may be explained firstly in terms not so much of the absence of any strong ‘real world’ structure of the experience to be represented in text as of the need to ‘marshall’ selected aspects of such experience for the purpose of supporting an ‘argument’, be that a seemingly objective exposition or an unashamedly subjective opinion. In other words, the imposition of the speaker’s personal view onto the representation of experience is (at least partially) accomplished by a move towards favouring the choice of hypotaxis as a realisation of the very different status experiential and interpersonal meanings have in text relative to one another, i.e. a choice whose basic meaning is ‘the binding of elements of unequal status’ (Halliday 1985c:198). It is this different and in some sense unequal function of experiential and interpersonal meanings in text which leads to the often very complex dependency structures of such texts, i.e. to such texts having great structural ‘depth’ compared with those texts characterised by the sequence of equal elements.

8.4 Theme and Clause Complex Choices Related

There is no simple way in which the choices in these two systems investigated, and the patterns and associations found, can be related to one another. Some aspects of the choice of textual Theme, especially the choice of a structural Theme in non-initial position, i.e. where it truly functions structurally, would of course seem to implicate the choice of certain clause complex relations. On the other hand, the level of delicacy at which the different types of Theme have been quantified only permits limited conclusions to be drawn – while it is certainly possible to conclude that a high frequency of *and* implies a predominant choice of paratactic ‘addition’ in some given stage it is not possible to draw specific conclusions in respect of those Themes accounted for collectively. At this stage it seems preferable to allow the discussions of specific realisations of Theme in respect of generic structures and generic stages to speak for themselves without attempting to relate them to the more dispersed patterns investigated in respect of clause complex relations. Both choices tell us something about the realisation of generic structure, but what they tell is only part of a mosaic which needs many more pieces fitted to it to before it becomes recognisable as an analytic image of what we know as speakers and as members of the speech community in which the texts are produced and understood without attracting any attention whatsoever, where their realisation of socially important choices is meaningful precisely because they are made unconsciously.

Coda

Looking back over the investigation reported here, from when it was first planned to when it had finally been written up, there is one question I would like to ask and that is whether we have learned anything new by my taking the essentially folk-linguistic notion of types of text as a fact which wants to be accounted for in any theory of discourse, whether its data be spoken or written, and attempt to do so in the most theoretically-informed way I knew of. After all, one of the most sincerely complimentary things I have heard said about William Labov was said by Michael Halliday when he observed that Labov had achieved something in his New York study which was rare in the study of language, viz. to discover something we did not previously know.

Perhaps there are many facts which loomed large in my report as ‘new facts’ which are small beer in the scheme of things called linguistics but a few are perhaps worth restating. Surely the most important fact is that in a study deliberately designed to permit us to predict linguistic behaviour at various levels, we succeeded in identifying, describing and accounting for significant patterned variability. It seems important to have shown with some certainty that variation at the level of text in the sense of text type, i.e. variation which is not limited to the tokens of textual types, is as much a fact of language behaviour in social context as variation at the levels of phonology or grammar. The analysis of a particular narrative ‘continuum’ – continuum being a regrettable substitute for the desired systemicisation of genre dictated by the need to arrive at this first and final Coda – is in its precise details (including its nomenclature) less important than the demonstration that speakers make closely related but culturally (or socially) importantly different choices. While the textual variation as such may not come as a surprise – after all we do know that there are different types of text abroad in the community – the fact that this kind of variability should be found in what is established to be for all practical purposes the ‘same context’ is of some interest indeed.

At the heart of this finding of generic variability is the understanding that while the fundamental hypothesis underlying the very possibility of coherent discourse, viz. that questions and answers are to some extent mutually predictable, is confirmed by the results obtained, i.e. we do indeed largely obtain narrative-like texts in response to

‘narrative’ questions and expository-like texts in response to ‘expository’ questions, the level of generality at which this is true is such as to obscure most of the interesting aspects of text in the sense of types of text. This is so for both the levels of a model of ‘text in context’ relative to which text must be situated, viz. its determining context on the one hand and its realisation in language on the other.

Another ‘fact’ – not really new but certainly worth confirming if not exactly rediscovering – is that social factors are clearly shown to be significant in the making of abstract grammatical choices. While not everyone will be prepared to make ‘speaker type’ a meaning on a par with other contextual meanings which are realised in text, it seems to me that the really important advance would be to gain a general acceptance of the demonstrated need to make such social factors part of a model of text in order to fully account for its contextual conditioning. Taken together with the further demonstration that the concepts of (elicitation) question and genre are to varying degrees correlated with linguistic realisation at the level of lexicogrammar certainly supports the case for a probabilistic model of language in context – once again, not something really new since amply and convincingly argued for by many Labovian studies of phonological variation (although not always put in this way).

A fact of a very different kind – not a linguistic fact, as it were – is the rediscovery that the *study* of text makes such an important contribution to the *understanding* of text that ‘methodology’ must become an important part of the empirical study of text. By taking the question of methodology seriously, refusing to limit it to a description of the mechanics of interviewing, it came to constitute a recurring theme throughout this study, in fact a substantial part of the study, and in the process contributed to a much greater understanding of the very phenomenon of ‘text in discourse’ the more rigorous study of which improved and explicit methods had simply been intended to aid. Perhaps I was more naive than a researcher should be permitted to be but by questioning every step taken both in the gathering of the corpus and in its analysis much can be learned which is of interest to a theory of discourse. As examples of this we might just cite the discussions concerning the producer of text, i.e. the ‘whose text is it anyway?’ question, or those discussions concerning a text’s beginnings and endings, i.e. the ‘what is a text?’ question in contradistinction to the ‘what is text?’ question.

It would seem absolutely essential to ensure that an empirical investigation of text be informed by a theory of text if it is to do more than simply amass a corpus of texts whose contextual comparability is seriously in doubt in respect of a great many aspects. The large corpora available today all suffer from a lack of their texts' contextual comparability and it is not surprising that this should be so. After all, in order to study text rigorously it is crucial to bring together a large quantity of texts with a narrow focus, i.e. texts whose contexts of production are essentially alike (or sufficiently well controlled in order to account for their contextual differences). Since the two requirements appear to be fundamentally in conflict – a conflict more apparent than real as shown in this study by its successful development of the sociolinguistic interview – they can only be met by a study which makes contextual comparability one of its goals. It is certainly my contention that the sociolinguistic interview is not only a highly valuable but in fact an indispensable research tool in the investigation of spoken discourse.

An issue which is only partly methodological concerns the feasibility of operationalising a concept of text in the context of spoken discourse. The answer given here is emphatically affirmative – in the terms used here, it is most certainly not only possible but also theoretically sound to consider text 'synoptically', i.e. as some underlying system's structural output which is sufficiently well-formed to be described as a functionally motivated structure without doing violence to text as a phenomenon which is obviously produced in real-time, i.e. by effectively ignoring its demonstrably co-present 'dynamic' aspects. While this is not a new fact in any sense whatsoever, it is a fact about language which appears to have been lost sight of as part of the current fashion of demolishing the very notion of structure, and thus of any system lying behind it. It should not need repeating but finding that people play with some system is only proof that there is one in the first place – you cannot play with it unless you know it, and know it well.

If the above remarks are addressed to students of discourse regardless of their theoretical persuasion, there are a few issues worth mentioning which are specifically relevant to those working within systemic-functional linguistics. In the first instance, it seems to me that the direction of generic determination is shown by this study to be very likely to be that hypothesised in Martin's genre model, i.e. that it is some system of culture which determines choices in register and these in turn choices in language. It is certainly the only way to account for the fact that finding substantial generic

variation when eliciting texts in the same context seems to be the normal state of affairs. The qualification made above, however, points to the most serious gap in this and any related model of genre and/or register, viz. the lack of a truly operationalisable model of register. By this is meant a model of register which is truly predictive of the linguistic choices said to be associated with a choice in register, in other words a generative model, both productively and receptively.

In the second instance I wish to argue for more attempts by systemicists interested in text to embrace its study as a study of (textual) variation, i.e. as one which can only benefit from employing, adapting and developing the quantificational methods and tools so widely used in the study of largely phonological variation within what is loosely called variation theory. An excellent example of the current and continuing dichotomy of approaches is provided by two studies much referred to here, viz. the study of the genre of service encounters by Ventola (1987) and the study of primary school descriptions by Horvath (1985). While Ventola's study is systemic in the best tradition but not quantitative despite its being based on a small corpus of texts Horvath's study is quantitative in the best tradition but not systemic despite its adoption of a coding of grammatical units taken from SFG. In other words, my criticism is that neither goes far enough. Having shown that it is possible to bring the two together with obvious benefits for a model of text, my argument is that it should be done as a matter of course.

But I wish to argue more strongly for students of text or discourse to become empirical and quantitative since while it is possible to rely on one's intuitions to write a grammar of the sentence, and decide by recourse to one's intuitions whether or not a sentence is grammatical – however much even intuitions may be subject to contextual factors never imagined when linguistics first came to be intuition-based – it is simply not possible to rely on one's intuitions alone when it comes to writing a 'grammar' of text or decide the 'grammaticality' of a text. While variation at the level of text is certainly far from free it is such that issues of text-ness can only be decided on the basis of empirically-gained knowledge about the factors which condition it.

If this study may be claimed to have taken a small step towards bringing about a synthesis of approaches to linguistic variation which come from seemingly opposite ends, i.e. from grammatical theory on the one hand and the empirical investigation of language in its social context on the other, then it may also have demonstrated that the

TEXT AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
Volume One: Text

study of text or discourse may well be the context in which an artificial division between linguistics and sociolinguistics neither need persist nor can do so without jeopardising the enterprise of making the study of discourse part of linguistics.

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

- Q 1:** What kind of dogs do you breed?
(If more than one: Which breed is your major interest?)
How long have you been breeding (name of breed)?
Do you remember how you first got into breeding (name of breed)?
What happened?
- Q 2:** I understand there's a kind of official guide as to what a dog of a particular breed should look like. But obviously, there must be room for different interpretations.
Do you have a kind of mental picture of your ideal (name of breed), the one you aim to breed?
Would you describe your ideal (name of breed) for me?
- Q 3:** I understand that when a dog is about to produce her puppies she lets you know in some way that she's going to start having them, either by tell-tale signs you recognise as a breeder or by demanding your attention in some way. What do your dogs do that alerts you in that situation?
- Q 4:** When was the last time one of your dogs produced a litter without any complications?
(If not already known: What was the dog's name?)
Were you present when she had the pups?
Would you tell me what happened during's (name) delivery in (refer to time of litter cited by month, etc.), from when you first knew she was in labour until the last puppy was born?
- Q 5:** Do you have a mental picture of what you consider to be the ideal person to own or buy one of your puppies?
(If breeder does not sell pups as pets: to own or buy a (name of breed)?
Would you describe for me that ideal you have in mind?
- Q 6:** Have you ever had an emergency involving one of your dogs? Perhaps during a delivery? Or with small puppies? Or because of an accident?
What happened?
- Q 7:** What is the busiest time of day for you, considering the dogs, family, work, etc.?
Was it like that this morning/afternoon etc?
Would you tell me what you did from the time you started until you were finished/you got up until you left the house/etc., from beginning to end?
- Q 8:** I'm sure there's also a lighter side to breeding dogs.
Can you think of a funny incident involving your dogs? Or people in breeding or showing dogs?
What happened?
- Q 9:** You know, watching people showing a dog is somewhat bewildering for an outsider.
Would you explain to me what you have to do with your dog when you are showing him, when you are in the showing area?
- Q 10:** Have you ever had an exciting success in a show that came as a total surprise to you?
What happened?

- Q 11:** Do you have a favourite story about your dogs, or your involvement in dogs?
Would you tell me?
- Q 12:** Breeders have often told me that they consider showing — not breeding — a sport. This is a notion not really understood or accepted by people not involved in your interest. To most people sport is playing cricket or football. What do you think of the idea that showing is a sport?
- Q 13:** What do you think of children being involved in showing?
- Q 14:** Every big city seems to have what is often called a “dog problem”. Just think of the large number of unwanted dogs that are destroyed every year, including pedigree dogs. Or think of dogs fouling the footpath, or annoying the neighbours.
I wonder what your views on this are?

Appendix B: Interviewees

| # | Name* | Sex | Age | Social Group** |
|----|-------------|--------|-----|----------------|
| 1 | Sue B. | female | 28 | 1 |
| 2 | Maureen U. | female | 51 | 3 |
| 3 | Jenny Q. | female | 30 | 3 |
| 4 | Bruce D. | male | 47 | 2 |
| 5 | Doris M. | female | 52 | 2 |
| 6 | Jean N. | female | 48 | 4 |
| 7 | Robert N. | male | 50 | 4 |
| 8 | Murray L. | male | 61 | 4 |
| 9 | Ted K. | male | 42 | 3 |
| 10 | Jim M. | male | 33 | 1 |
| 11 | Pam U. | female | 45 | 2 |
| 12 | Lorraine E. | female | 34 | 3 |
| 13 | Renee N. | female | 27 | 2 |
| 14 | Vanessa H. | female | 26 | 3 |
| 15 | Carol F. | female | 30 | 1 |
| 16 | Evelyn V. | female | 30 | 3 |
| 17 | Bob I. | male | 40 | 3 |
| 18 | Karen C. | female | 34 | 3 |
| 19 | Wayne H. | male | 37 | 3 |
| 20 | Nola V. | female | 40 | 4 |
| 21 | Betty D. | female | 41 | 2 |
| 22 | Jill E. | female | 36 | 2 |
| 23 | Joy L. | female | 46 | 3 |
| 24 | Rosemary O. | female | 51 | 3 |
| 25 | Doug T. | male | 39 | 3 |
| 26 | Alison T. | female | 50 | 4 |
| 27 | Barbara K. | female | 41 | 4 |
| 28 | Gordon C. | male | 44 | 4 |
| 29 | Ron F. | male | 43 | 3 |
| 30 | Gary D. | male | 50 | 2 |
| 31 | Brian H. | male | 30 | 2 |
| 32 | Roy T. | male | 30 | 1 |
| 33 | Morrie L. | male | 30 | 2 |
| 34 | Hal F. | male | 35 | 3 |
| 35 | Sam X. | male | 27 | 2 |
| 36 | Bob E. | male | 40 | 3 |
| 37 | Carolyn N. | female | 32 | 3 |
| 38 | Glenda D. | female | 51 | 2 |
| 39 | Debbie V. | female | 28 | 3 |
| 40 | Robbie D. | male | 37 | 1 |
| 41 | Terri U. | female | 29 | 2 |
| 42 | Rick Q. | male | 33 | 3 |
| 43 | Raymond I. | male | 38 | 3 |
| 44 | Jack H. | male | 54 | 2 |
| 45 | Mark N. | male | 26 | 1 |
| 46 | Murray P. | male | 31 | 2 |
| 47 | David A. | male | 39 | 2 |
| 48 | Merryl T. | female | 34 | 3 |
| 49 | Lois N. | female | 32 | 1 |
| 50 | Ben B. | male | 28 | 2 |

* Names are pseudonymous

** Social groups are ranked 1 (low) – 4 (high)

Appendix C: Examples of divergent codings for social groups

| speaker's occupation (+ if different prior GP to marriage) | spouse's occupation | educational achievement/ left age ...* | own home | standard of housing | neighbour- hood/ suburb | father's occupation | children's education | children's occupation | codings** | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----|--|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Con | ANU | | |
| switchboard op. | repair man | no accredit. 15 | yes | low | lower end | manual labourer | — | — | 2 | 2 | | 1 |
| + shop assistant | s.e. builder | no accredit. 15 | yes | medium | lower end | indust. chemist | unknown | doctor, | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| sales mgr. manuf. | — | SC 15 | yes | medium | expensive | orch. musician | unknown | unknown | 3 | 3 | | 4 |
| welder | shop assistant | no accredit. 14 | yes | low | lower end | manual labourer | — | — | 2 | 2 | | 1 |
| s.e. kennel op. | policeman | SC 15 | yes | high | outer sub./rural | tradesman | — | — | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| printing plate maker | unknown | HSC+ tertiary 17 | yes | high | outer sub./rural | hotel owner | — | — | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| + shop assistant | clerk/ | SC 15 | yes | high | outer sub./rural | unknown | unknown | technicians | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| + shop assistant | self-employed | HSC 17 | yes | high | expensive | unknown | university | pilot, teacher, | 3 | 3 | | 4 |
| + stenographer | coy. director | SC 17 | yes | high | expensive | businessman | state primary | — | 3 | 3 | | 4 |
| army officer | — | no accredit. 17 | no | medium | (services accom) | factory manager | state high | clerical | 3 | 3 | | 4 |
| clerical assistant | owner-driver | SC 16 | yes | high | expensive | unknown | state high | — | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| s.e. electrician | housewife | SC 16 | yes | high | outer sub./rural | unknown | — | — | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| security guard | typist | SC 15 | yes | medium | mid range | unknown | unknown | unknown | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| draughtsman | clerk | SC 17 | yes | medium | mid range | unknown | state high | — | 3 | 3 | | 2 |

tradesma
business

* The codes for educational achievement represent a kind of standardisation necessary because of the changes in the school system over time as well as differences between the various Australian states:

SC = School Certificate is roughly equal to some interviewees' NSW Intermediate Certificate (3-4 years of high school)

HSC = Higher School Certificate is roughly equal to some interviewees' NSW Leaving Certificate (5-6 years of high school)

** Social groups are ranked 1 (low) – 4 (high) ; Con = Congalton

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