THIRD PERSON INTERPRETATION

AND

THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS

OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Insofar as we understand at all, we understand differently.

Hans-Georg Gadamer

ABSTRACT

This thesis is addressed to analysts of talk in social scenes. Its principal aim is to develop a framework for systematically investigating third person interpretations of what communicates and what is communicated in the data products of everyday verbal exchange. The programme of research that is designed to meet this aim is based on analytic and descriptive techniques adopted from a wide range of disciplines concerned with the study of verbal communication, and particularly those associated with the work of John Gumperz (1982a; 1982b). By focussing on the nature of third person descriptions of what goes on and who is involved in various tape recorded products of talk, the research seeks to explore the nature of members' interpretive resources for recovering and warranting communicative norms that are not normally verbalised as talk is in progress.

The investigative method developed for this purpose provides professional observers with an empirical means of citing evidence in support of their own analytic claims about what participants are doing in talk. It also provides an enabling device for generating and testing hypotheses about the communicative salience of different sociolinguistic factors, much as Gumperz (1982a) suggests.

On the basis of the work presented, it is argued that whatever the disciplinary motivation of the analyst or the sociolinguistic contexts in which talk occurs third person interpretive methods offer a powerful descriptive tool. The research potential of this tool is evaluated in terms of its utility for not only investigating the interpretive resources of different individuals within a specific culture, but also for developing culturally sensitive theories of communicative language use in general.

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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH AIMS AND ORIENTATION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis is principally concerned with the study of interpersonal communication as manifest in the language used by speakers and hearers in everyday verbal exchange. In particular, it explores the methodological and theoretical contribution of an interpretive sociolinguistic approach to analysing such exchanges based on systematic investigation of ordinary members' descriptions about what is communicated and what communicates when language is used in this way.

The research approach developed for this purpose makes use of analytic and descriptive techniques derived from a variety of disciplines that have studied communicative activity in naturally occurring talk, and particularly those pioneered by John Gumperz (1981; 1982a; 1982b;1984; 1992), wherein participant and non-participant observation of speech events is used to facilitate a closer understanding of how linguistic and social knowledge interact in discourse interpretation. In order to account for what has gone on from the participants' point of view, Gumperz develops a general theory of 'conversational inferencing', that is, "the situated or context bound process of interpretation, by means of which participants in an exchange assess others' intentions, and on which they base their responses" (Gumperz, 1982a: 153).

Gumperz's achievement is to demonstrate that something of this knowledge is recoverable *post hoc*, and can afford significant insights into communicative processes that are not normally verbalised by participants in the course of conversational exchange. To the extent that these processes are shared, that is, related to the values, norms and concerns of others, they become what Sacks (1984) terms 'observables'. In other words, participants in various different kinds of talk may be supposed to know what is going on communicatively and this knowledge, in turn, may be presumed to influence and be displayed in how they participate in what has gone on.

While Gumperz and others have demonstrated that "one can deal with discourse from the point of view of the participants caught, as it were, in the act; that is to say, one can treat discourse as a process" (Widdowson, 1979: 72), it is also possible to "deal with instances of discourse from the point of view of the third person analyst: that is to say, one can treat discourse in detachment from its instantiation, after the event, as a product" (Widdowson, 1979: 71).

It is this *third person* perspective that is of central concern in this thesis, where the research presented is an attempt to devise an analytical instrument for empirically investigating the interpretive capacities of ordinary members to deal with, make statements about, and categorise communicative events (or more strictly their products), previously unseen.

1.1 The Problem

Analysis of this perspective requires a methodology that is significantly different from other linguistic and sociolinguistic traditions which seek to investigate everyday language use, since the latter have tended to focus on structural accomplishments and/or the quantification of relations among specified linguistic and speaker variables. Because these traditions bear an indirect relationship to

what speakers actually know, Gumperz suggests that we need an approach that deals directly with issues arising from the ability of speakers to interact.

The methodology which he develops for this purpose is based on participant descriptions of actual verbal encounters. The descriptions in question are then used to generate hypotheses about the kinds of assumption participants must have made in order to provide the descriptions in the first place. Consequently, when participants proffer descriptions of verbal exchange, Gumperz suggests that they tend to do so by "mentioning some item of content, or by referring to what people were getting at or what they were trying to do" (1982a: 157).

This claim is never documented or substantiated in anything other than an *ad hoc* way, however, nor is it tested across and within individual speakers with other interactional experience, namely, those who are untrained observers with either participant or non-participant status. Given the difficulties involved, Gumperz is hardly to be taken to task for failing to develop and extend the analytic framework he presents along these particular lines of inquiry. Hence, the opportunity to develop this framework is taken up here, on the basis that interpretive capacity (the ability to employ processes of inference resulting from social presuppositions and discourse conventions) is not exclusive to focussed and ratified addressees.

It is clear from the burgeoning research that has become available to date that the study of verbal communication can be understood at many different levels of analysis. Consequently, while this thesis makes use of analytic and descriptive techniques from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, it does so with a specific aim in mind. The aim is to advance the study of third person interpretation as a complementary, but largely unexplored, mode of analysis for the would-be-investigator of verbal communication, especially with regard to the warranting of

interactional behaviour. It is taken as axiomatic that this behaviour is 'goal-oriented'.

I suggest that research of the kind presented in this thesis is not only an important first step in generating and testing hypotheses about verbal communication in something of the ways that Gumperz and others have suggested, but also that when properly documented can become an important tool for warranting claims about participant goals. By attending closely to what ordinary members have to say about such goals, analysts can avoid the charge of warping facts to suit their theories. Where the analysis of everyday verbal exchange is concerned, it is surely better that theories are derived to suit the facts. The problem for would-be-analysts, however, is one of "correct interpretation," because analysts cannot have recourse to *all* the knowledge that participants share (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 350–351). It is the challenge of addressing this problem that is confronted here.

1.2 The Agenda

A number of general bases for warranting inferences about communicative goals are identified by Craig (1986). From the present perspective, the most important of these are the use of speaker 'self-reports'. I propose that self-reports should be of service to analysts of talk on the basis that at best they provide a kind of 'litmus test of interpretation' to use Tannen's (1984) phrase, or more cautiously stated, can indicate something interesting about speakers' goal-orientation as Craig (1986) suggests.

The research context for pursuing this work is established in Chapter 2, where the major concepts and distinctions that scholars have used to characterise verbal communication are introduced. A review of the wide range of disciplines that have contributed to how the communicative process may be viewed is also

presented in this chapter. Further to this review, the need for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to the study of verbal communication is suggested. However, while a single overall framework of concepts and analytic procedures of the kind mooted by Gumperz (1982a) seems desirable, the extent to which it can be realised in practice remains challenging and elusive, and indeed lies well beyond the bounds of the present research.

The case for exploring the interpretive capacities of third persons is made in Chapter 3. This chapter also addresses the question of how these capacities can be investigated in the light of collected *post hoc* reports about participant communicative behaviour. Since the importance of methodology for findings has been stressed by sociolinguists such as Lesley Milroy (see especially Milroy, 1987), various procedural issues are aired in order to prepare the ground for the particular approach that is taken; these include the difficulties of recording and transcribing (fragments of) naturally occurring speech activities. However, what is of particular interest in the present work is the question of how different analytic modes affect or impinge upon interpretive practice.

In order to explore this question, a continuum is established that seeks to define the nature of deictic relations linking different kinds of 'interpreter' with communicative activities that take place not only within, but also outside the participation framework. At its periphery, this continuum identifies two types of third person judge ('participants' and 'non-participants') who can be used as informants in the *post hoc* interpretation of tape-recorded fragments of talk. These judges may be expert analysts or lay members. Fairclough (1989) argues that the interpretive capacities of third persons are derived from a combination of 'what is in the text', and 'what is in the individual'. My interest is principally, but not exclusively, in the kind of members' resources that lay individuals bring to *post hoc*

interpretation. It is these resources that I seek to investigate in the empirical work which is presented in the chapters which follow.

Chapter 4 establishes an analytic framework for the investigation of lay, third person perspectives. This framework has three major components:

(i) the creation of situations and texts to provide speech activities for judges to listen to;

(ii) the selection of the judges themselves;

(iii) a means of eliciting judges' interpretive accounts of selected activity fragments.

Though her work is undertaken from a largely psychological perspective, the most systematic attempt of which I am aware to investigate verbal communication using such a framework is Kreckel (1981). Making use of family interactions recorded during a BBC documentary, Kreckel seeks to determine how participant family members and outside observers interpret the 'message content' of the exchanges that she uses as stimulus data. The descriptive comments elicited from judges in controlled experimental work is used as evidence that third persons have metapragmatic abilities.

My own investigative mode is based on a variation of this approach. The method that I employed is essentially what has become known as the 'playback approach' where tape-recordings are subject to *post hoc* interpretation by different kinds of observer (cf. Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Gumperz 1982a; Tannen, 1984). Issues affecting the selection of stimulus material to be used in playback, and also how one might provide appropriate judges are also discussed towards the end of the chapter.

In Chapter 5, the playback approach is used in three different studies of *post hoc* interpretation. The first study functions as a pilot exercise in which two

participant and sixteen non-participant observers listened to a five minute fragment of verbal exchange. Unlike related research, judges were not given specific interpretive tasks, but rather asked for any general comments that they might like to provide about the extract. The results of this work yielded 2786 words of comment.

The second study is based on work with eight outside observers who were asked to listen to a range of different fragments of talk, taken from different speech events; as opposed to the single episode that was used for the pilot study. Six fragments were used in all. My idea here was to try and determine whether similar kinds of comment would be elicited with respect to different types of stimulus material. I also limited the real-time length of each fragment in order to restrict the amount of information that judges would have to process, and also to determine what effect that this would have, if any, on what judges would have to say. Despite delimiting the fragments in this way, the study yielded 4309 words of comment.

Finally in the third study, one pair of participant judges and seven self-selected pairs of non-participant judges were used to listen to yet another range of six fragments. The fragments were selected from the published corpus of Crystal and Davy (1975) because of (a) their superior auditory quality compared to my own stimulus material, (b) the relative unlikelihood that non-participant judges would be able to recognise the participants, and (c) the fact that they are accompanied by an analytic commentary which I could use for purposes of comparison. Judges participated in the study in pairs in order to diminish the effects of observer presence, and also as a means of eliciting comments in something of a more natural way (Burleson, 1986). A total of 7587 words of commentary were collected using this method.

The interpretive repertoires elicited in each of the three studies are subject to detailed analysis in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. The comments themselves are used as basis not only for demonstrating the capacity of ordinary members to act as 'inference-making machines' (Sacks, 1984), but also as a means of examining the interpretive resources and/or tacit assumptions upon which such capacity appears to be depend. Interest in the research findings thus centres upon the discussion of communicative issues rather than vernacular behaviour. The repertoires demonstrate the ability of naive native informants to report on what is accomplished by context-dependent speech in much the same way as Kreckel (1981) suggests.

A coding instrument is devised to account for the different kinds of interpretive repertoires that were collected in Chapter 6. The 'response data', as I refer to it, is analysed by a three stage process that involves:

(i) describing the vocabularies that judges used;

(ii) codifying the information that is provided in the process;

(iii) modelling the interpretive resources that this information implies.

Subsequent analysis identifies three major domains of response. These domains are based on a modified version of Hymes's (1972; 1974) ethnographic schema for analysing communicative events, and include descriptions that characterise the stimulus fragments in terms of what I refer to as:

(i) textual responses;

(ii) contextual responses; and

(iii) supratextual responses.

Textual responses are discussed in detail in Chapter 7. These responses provide information about the encoding of surface linguistic forms. A small but significant descriptive repertoire was identified from these responses. It is

suggested that this repertoire reveals judges' ability to observe and utilise aural linguistic cues in order to describe what utterances have been produced, in what way, and at what time, by the participants in question. I was able to compare the vocabularies used by judges for this purpose with that of professional analysts. The most important cue, or at least the one that judges seemed to refer to the most, was 'prosody'.

Gumperz (1982a: 170) suggests that by examining the interplay of surface features with evaluations of what has gone on in talk, we can gather strong evidence for the signalling of communicative goals. This evidence was sought in Chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter 8 considers the nature of contextual responses. These responses provide information about 'situational' characteristics of the stimulus fragments, including 'the scene' and 'participants'. It is argued that this type of response provides evidence not only of judges' ability to recover situation from text, but also to attribute information of various kinds to participants, even where interlocutors were neither recognised nor known. Street and Capella (1985) argue that perceptual and evaluative constructs of the kind that judges provided about contextual matters are likely to influence participant goals, but this link is not explored here. Descriptions of goal-oriented behaviour in its own right are tackled in Chapter 9.

The most productive domain was in the area of supratextual responses. Supratextual responses are those which describe or refer to what is going in the fragments in terms of communicative endeavour. Judges' evaluations are categorised into two major types:

(i) evaluations of the type of activity or genre that is said to have taken place as a result of the communicative products that have been created by participants;

(ii) evaluations of the type of praxis that is said to be going as a result of the process of what it is participants are said to accomplish, or try to accomplish as communicators.

The vocabularies involved in these evaluations provide evidence that third persons must have highly developed models of the kinds of thing that speakers can say, that is, they possess metalinguistic and metapragmatic abilities. Further examination of these abilities reveals that judges can assign their own interpretive categories to the description of what is achieved in some fragment of discourse. What is remarkable about the categories is that they were elicited without attempting to direct judges' listening behaviour to an identifiable focus of attention. It is shown that while judges make use of the same or similar types of category in their descriptive interpretations, these do not necessarily involve the same tokens.

The issue of interpretive multiplexity is considered in Chapter 10 where different types of interpretation are compared, across and between different judges, in order to explore their social and linguistic bases. The stimulus data used for this purpose is taken from Crystal and Davy (1975). An important motivation for using this data is the fact that it is accompanied by an interpretive commentary that focuses on particular linguistic cues, and especially prosodic effects. Discussion is based on comparisons of the interpretation of these effects by Crystal and Davy and by lay judges.

Chapter 11 provides a synopsis of general findings and conclusions. By way of prospective, the utility of third person interpretations is evaluated in terms of its

possible applications for investigating communicative asynchronies in listening behaviour, especially in cross-cultural discourse.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNICATION IN EVERYDAY VERBAL EXCHANGE

2.0 The Research Context

The study of interpersonal communication belongs to the study of language use, and as such includes the activities of which speaking and listening are part. When these activities are used interactively, that is, across and between and between persons, it is widely recognised that they involve the creation of a phenomenon that constitutes one of the most human things that human beings do; they talk to one another. Bach and Harnish, for instance, note:

> There is nothing people do more often, in more ways, than talk to one another. For most people nothing is easier. Sometimes we have to struggle to find the right words or to get them out, sometimes we must pause to discern or decipher what someone else says, but on the whole we speak fluently and understand others effortlessly. (Bach and Harnish, 1977: xiii)

Presumably, it is this pervasiveness of talk in everyday life that makes it such an important subject of study for scholars from wide-ranging disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds. But despite its ubiquity, some of the very same qualities that make talk an important topic for research also make it a difficult, if not perplexing, topic for analysis (cf. Stubbs (1983), especially Chapters 1, 2, and 11; Schiffrin, 1988).

A major problem for analysts is in delimiting the object of inquiry. The phenomenon of 'talk' can be, and is often, referred to as 'conversation', 'discourse', 'spoken interaction', or 'verbal exchange' by scholars. Indeed, such terms are often

used interchangeably which can be confusing since they are not always clearly defined. Labov and Fanshel propose that:

> One might attempt to distinguish among these terms, using one or the other to include more or less of the use of language in social life: greetings, lectures, service exchanges, broadcasts and so forth. Yet all three terms refer to the everyday situation in which two or more people address each other for a period of time, communicating something about themselves and their experience in the process. (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 1)

A fundamental distinction which addresses this problem is made by Levinson (1983: 318), who seeks to characterise the term 'conversation' in a more technical way. Thus he distinguishes between the unit 'a conversation', on the one hand and 'conversational activity' on the other. The former is characterisable in terms of 'overall organisations' that enable analysts to distinguish between different kinds or units of talk. While the latter is characterisable in terms of 'local organisations' that are intrinsic to the structure of interactional sequences, and in particular the turn-taking system.

In an attempt to avoid ambiguity, the term 'talk' and its cognates are subsequently used here in a neutral sense to refer to conversational activity, on the grounds that this activity includes the use(s) of language in natural or spontaneously occurring social contexts (see McGregor (1984) and Wilson (1989) for a discussion of the problems of defining the term 'conversation' in its technical senses). When talk is created in such contexts by two or more individuals, it is taken as axiomatic that they are *communicating*. Thus, talk is understood here as 'speech activity' in the sense adopted by Gumperz who states that "a speech activity is a set of social relationships enacted about a set of schemata in relation to some communicative goal" (Gumperz, 1982a: 166).

The study of communication in everyday language use, and particularly in respect of these relations, appears to have intensified over the last two decades or

so, to that the extent that a distinctive and increasingly rich literature has appeared claiming disciplinary status in its own right. At the heart of this interest are two fundamental questions. As posed by Sperber and Wilson (1986: 1), these are: "first, what is communicated, and second, how is communication is achieved" when language is used in verbal exchange?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introductory discussion of these questions by reviewing essential contributions from linguistics and other disciplines which have had impact on how the communicative process is viewed. Analysis of this process has been the subject of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary interest that is both diffuse and vast. Some of these perspectives are represented in the papers collected by van Dijk (1985), though his four volume, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, is perhaps not as comprehensive as the title suggests. Volume 1, *Disciplines of Discourse*, is arguably the most useful from a survey point of view, and covers work from at least ten different disciplinary perspectives. Something of these perspectives are cited here not only to provide a sense of the major contexts in which studies of verbal communication have emerged, but also as a description of the kinds of research agenda where the present work is largely not to be found. The orientations are predominantly from:

(1) Anthropology/Ethnography—and involve studies of language use as displayed in the daily life of particular speech communities; the forms of speech events; the rules of appropriate selection of speakers, the interrelations of speaker, addressee, topic, channel and setting (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Hymes, 1972, 1974; Bauman and Sherzer, 1975; Saville-Troike, 1982; Duranti, 1988);

(2) Artificial intelligence—which seeks to develop computer models of discourse; story-understanding programs; and models of memory in language understanding, based on the idea that cognition is computation

(Winograd, 1972; Schank and Abelson, 1977; Power, 1979; Schank and Burstein, 1985; Grosz, 1986; Winograd and Flores, 1987);

(3) Linguistics—and which focus on the structural properties of verbal communication; textual coherence; sequential organisation in speech production and comprehension; narrative analysis with the aim of delimiting units such as episodes or events; the functions of language use; analysis of markers in conversational discourse (van Dijk, 1972, 1977; Coulthard, 1977; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Edmonson, 1981; Halliday, 1978; Brown and Yule, 1983; Stubbs, 1983; Taylor and Cameron, 1987; Bublitz, 1988; Schiffrin, 1987, 1988);

(4) Philosophy/Pragmatics—with their concerns about speech acts, meaning, truth, and reference (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979, 1983, 1992; Grice, 1975, 1989; Lyons, 1977; Bach and Harnish, 1979; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Blakemore, 1988, 1992);

(5) Psychology—and which are either experimental and work on aspects of verbal behaviour such as speech dysfluencies, turn-taking, and back-channel cues; or work from the assumption that communication is something that can be mentally represented in terms of human knowledge structures (Goldman-Eisler, 1967, 1978; Duncan, 1972, 1974; Freedle, 1977; Clark, 1978; Clark and Carlson, 1982; Clark, 1985, 1992; Bower and Cirilo, 1985; Sperber and Wilson, 1986);

(6) Social psychology—concerned with speech style and social evaluation; psychological and interactional dimensions of communicative development; interpersonal accommodation; attribution theory; communicative accommodation theory (Giles and Powesland, 1975; Giles and St Clair, 1979, 1985; Fraser and Scherer, 1982; Hewson, 1982; 1984; Robinson, 1985; Scherer and Giles, 1979; Giles and Robinson, 1990;

Coupland and Giles, 1988; Giles and Coupland 1991; Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991);

(7) Sociology—and which focus on structures of social action such as turn-taking, openings and closings, repairs; the dynamics of social relationships; dramatalogical models that take into account the social theories held by actors and investigators (Garfinkel, 1967; Sudnow, 1972; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Goffman, 1974, 1981; Corsaro, 1981; Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Button and Lee, 1987);

(8) Speech communication—which emanates mainly from work undertaken in the U.S.A. in the 1960's, and tends to study verbal and non-verbal interaction in a very general or (practical) skills-oriented way (Adler, Rosenfeld and Towne, 1989; Galvin, Prescott and Huseman, 1992; Mohan, McGregor and Strano, 1992);

(9) Communication science—involving theoretical and empirical work that is characterised by various conceptual, epistemological, and metatheoretical assumptions about the nature of communicative phenomena, particularly message effects (Berger and Chafee, 1987; Bradac, 1989; Hopper, 1989).

Research has also evolved across and within a number of the traditions listed above, and it is this interdisciplinary perspective that provides the academic context for the present work. The need for an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to the study of communication has been increasingly recognised by scholars from different backgrounds, including Labov and Fanshel (1977); Gumperz (1982a; 1982b); Coupland and Giles (1988), Giles and Coupland (1991); Roger and Bull (1989); Sperber and Wilson (1987); and Schiffrin (1994). Despite the burgeoning literature in response to this need, however, no agreed or unified theory of verbal communication has yet emerged. As Gumperz notes: "We are still far from a general theory of verbal communication which integrates what we

know about grammar, culture and interactive conventions into a single overall framework of concepts and analytic procedures" (Gumperz, 1982a: 4).

Whether such a theory is possible or even desirable remains to be seen. But what has emerged in the interim is a series of different, though often overlapping, issues relating to the kind of interactional process that verbal communication involves. As a result of this intersection of interests, and in the words of Schiffrin, "readers…may find themselves unexpectedly confronted by terms, concepts, and perspectives borrowed from a home turf which is different from their own" (Schiffrin, 1987: 2). The admixture of approaches can be daunting since it reflects a vast array of theoretical commitments and methodological assumptions arising from differently conceived analytic ends. Burke (1986: 217) summarises the situation in apposite terms:

> Explaining human communication in all its complexity is a formidable theoretical task. The sheer complexity of the phenomenon has the potential to overwhelm or immobilize scholars.

From the bounty of research currently available, what is patently clear is that the study of verbal communication can be understood at many different levels of analysis. Notwithstanding the difficulties that investigators in this area face, Burke offers sound advice in terms of devising a tenable research strategy:

> Because one cannot explain everything at once, a sensible course of action, in the face of such complexity, is to focus on a limited problem and forge ahead with any methods that will allow one to develop explanations of such smaller problems or individual processes. (Burke, 1986: 217–218)

While this thesis makes use of analytic and descriptive techniques that stem from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, it does so with the specific aim of developing what has become a quietly insistent (though rather slow to emerge) theme in the study of verbal communication. The theme is that there has been relative neglect of participant perspectives in the study of everyday speech

activities; where such perspectives arise from the ability of human beings to interact (Kreckel, 1981; Grimshaw, 1982; Gumperz, 1982a; 1982b; Tannen, 1984). In order to study this ability, Gumperz suggests that a radically different approach to analysis is required. The "speaker-oriented approach to conversation", as he describes it, "focuses directly on the strategies that govern the actor's use of lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic and other knowledge in the production and interpretation of messages in context" (Gumperz, 1982a: 35).

Systematic investigation of these strategies is called for here in order to develop Gumperz's work, and hence provide an evidential base for warranting the analytic claim that is the heart of this thesis, namely, that 'participant goals' are a primary organising feature for the actors concerned. Since these goals tend not be verbalised as talk is in progress, the researcher must develop an analytic instrument for recovering the kinds of linguistic and social knowledge that participants rely on in interpreting what went on. The instrument proposed is based on experimentally derived (*post hoc*) interpretations of verbal communication, where these involve third person accounts of who is involved and what is going on in selected passages of discourse.

The question of how to account for the co-occurrence (or otherwise) of participant judgements in the interpretation of discourse is challenging enough as Gumperz has demonstrated. A further challenge for the present work is to analyse the process and results of third person interpretation as an end in itself. Rather than being viewed as an alternative to other modes of analysis, I suggest that third person interpretation can usefully complement other traditions that have studied verbal exchange, and indeed provides an integral tool for the would-be-investigator. Kreckel (1981) is unequivocal about such an approach, and maintains that one of the main objectives of *any* study of face-to-face interaction ought to be the conceptualisation of the interaction by outside observers and the participants

themselves. I labour the point because, like Stubbs, I think it is evident from the proliferation of investigative methods and models that "no single level of analysis will ever be able to say all there is about a conversation" (Stubbs, 1983: 175).

This short overview is not designed to cover all approaches to the study of verbal communication, nor all the research undertaken by the orientations or traditions that have been listed. Its purpose, rather, is to try to provide a sense of the intersecting contexts in which the present work is located. In order to facilitate discussion of these contexts, I want to explore three conceptual areas that are central to the research aims and orientation stated in at the outset. The areas involve:

(1) the concept of communication itself;

(2) the nature of communication as an interactional process; and

(3) the concept of communicative goals.

Discussion of each of these areas occupies the remainder of this chapter, and serves to introduce my attempts to demonstrate how third person interpretive capacity can enhance our understanding of everyday communicative practice as goal-directed activity. The methodological and theoretical issues that arise from trying to operationalise a programme of research for this purpose will be addressed in Chapter 3.

2.1 Interpersonal Communication

Although largely taken for granted by ordinary language users, the concept of human communication has been the subject of much scholarly conjecture and discussion. Among the questions that scholars have attempted to address are the issues of what communication is, how humans beings communicate with one another, and what is communicated between them in the process. Lyons, for

example, notes that the words 'communicate' and 'communication' are used in a wide range of contexts in their everyday, pre-theoretical sense: "We talk as readily of the communication of feelings, moods and attitudes as we do of factual information" (Lyons, 1977: 32). Indeed, it seems that ordinary speaker-hearers simply assume that the purpose of language is to serve as a communicative mechanism or vehicle. Kreckel (1981), for example, argues:

> That communication via speech is possible and regularly occurs is regarded by most 'lay members' of a society as a truism. They take it for granted that they are able to understand what they are listening to and get across what they want to. (Kreckel, 1981: 3)

Kreckel's observation seems to be supported by the large stock of metaphors (see Reddy, 1979) that are used in an everyday sense to express the notion that in the process of using language something is being *communicated.*

The relationship between everyday language use and communication is, of course, widely assumed by professional scholars. Compare, for example, the following linguistic perspectives. Lyons (1977a: 638) states that: "There is much in the structure of languages that can be explained on the assumption that they have been developed for communication in face-to-face interaction". Bach and Harnish (1979: 3) suggest: "Generally, the reason people say what they say when they say it is to communicate something to those they are addressing". And Schiffrin (1987) argues that language is not only communicative, but is also designed for communication. She writes: "I assume that communication occurs when a sender either gives, or gives off, information" (Schiffrin, 1987: 5–6). In this sense, Schiffrin also argues that the language of everyday verbal exchange is *always* communicative, "either because it is directed toward a recipient (immediate or eventual), because it is intended to be so directed, and/or because it is attended by a recipient" (Schiffrin, 1987: 6).

The idea that 'language is communicative' is taken as axiomatic in the present work, but necessitates conceptual exploration because definitions of communication vary in accordance with different research agendas and disciplinary concerns. For example, communication has been defined in different literatures as:

(1) the ordered transfer of messages (Cairns and Cairns, 1976);

(2) the sharing of information, ideas or attitudes between or among people (Lyons, 1977a);

(3) the reciprocal creation of meaning (Bach and Harnish, 1979); and

(4) social behaviour that helps people relate to each other (Gumperz, 1982a).

Canale (1983: 3–4), on the other hand, suggests that 'communication' has the following characteristics:

(a) is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;

(b) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;

(c) takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances;

(d) is carried out under limiting psychological conditions and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;

(e) always has a purpose (for example to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise);

(f) involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived language;

(g) is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

While not wishing to challenge the efficacy of such characteristics in principle, they clearly do not help to explain how communication is achieved in practice. Difficulty arises when attempts are made to define interpersonal communication

in any singular way, because the concept is so amorphous and diverse. Subsequently, it may be neither possible nor desirable to try to do so. The issue of how communication works, however, is intuitively more productive, since attempts to define the concept can usefully focus on the process rather than the product of what is achieved.

2.2 The Communicative Process

The process of communicating has been described under the rubric of two basic paradigms (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 1986; Akmajian et al., 1990; Rost, 1990):

(1) an information-processing paradigm—in which communication is seen as a potentially perfect encoding-decoding process involving the attempts of interlocutors to transmit and reconstruct messages; and

(2) an inferential paradigm—which holds that communication is a fundamentally collaborative process involving the attempts of interlocutors to produce and interpret disparate kinds of evidence.

Both paradigms, and their theoretical ramifications, are discussed more fully below.

2.2.1 Communication as Information-Processing

Perhaps the most common and popular conception of verbal communication has been to view speaker-listener exchange as a process involving the encoding and decoding of information that conveys some kind of message. While Bach and Harnish (1979), Sperber and Wilson (1986), and Akmajian et al. (1990) all provide summary accounts of the information processing approach, it is worth reiterating here if only in brief.

Information-processing theory is rooted in the rationalist tradition of communication, as espoused for example by Locke (1691). A much-cited model of the theory in its modern form is that proposed by Shannon and Weaver (1949). The central idea of this model is that the linguistic exchange of information is provided for by language which serves as a 'conduit for ideas', where what is being communicated are thoughts of various different kinds. Cairns and Cairns state for instance:

> A has in mind some sort of message (or idea), and he wishes B to form in his head the same message. This message is transformed ultimately into a series of neural impulses that are sent to the muscles responsible for the actual production of speech, which follows immediately…The listener, B, must decode A's message by converting the sounds into a semantic representation. (Cairns and Cairns, 1976: 17–18)

A more technical exposition of this idea is presented by Katz as quoted in Akmajian et al. (1990: 300–301):

> The speaker, for reasons that are linguistically irrelevant, chooses some message he wants to convey to his listeners: some thought he wants them to receive or command he wants to give them or some question he wants to ask. This message is encoded in the form of a phonetic representation of an utterance by means of the system of linguistic rules with which the speaker is equipped. This encoding then becomes a signal to the speaker's articulatory organs, and he vocalizes an utterance of the appropriate phonetic shape. This, in turn, is picked up by the hearer's auditory organs. The speech sounds that stimulate these organs are then converted into a neural signal from which a phonetic representation equivalent to the one into which the speaker encoded his message is obtained. This representation is decoded into a representation of the same message that the speaker originally chose to convey by the hearer's equivalent system of linguistic rules. Hence, because the hearer employs the same system of rules to decode that the speaker employs to encode, an instance of successful linguistic communication occurs.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), this conception of verbal communication has tended to influence the nature of theories about how communication is achieved since the time of Aristotle. Consequently, they refer to such theories under the rubric of a single model which they call the 'code model' of

communication. "According to the code model, communication is achieved by encoding and decoding messages" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 2).

The code model accounts for certain common sense features of talk-exchanges, and predicts that communication is successful when hearers decode the same messages as speakers. On the other hand, it also predicts that communication breaks down if the decoded message is different from the encoded message. A 'code', as Sperber and Wilson use the term,

> is a system which pairs messages with signals, enabling two information-processing devices (organisms or machines) to communicate. A message is a representation internal to the communicating devices. A signal is a modification of the external environment which can be produced by one device, and recognised by the other. (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 3–4)

If we apply this model to verbal communication the coding devices possess linguistic abilities, where these are central thought processes. Thus linguistic communication is achieved by encoding thoughts in sounds. The encoder becomes the *speaker* and the decoder the *hearer*.

What the code model provides is an explanation of how communication is possible at all—it requires a sender 'speaker' and a receiver 'hearer'. It also provides a working hypothesis for answering three fundamental questions about the nature of communicative interchange as Rost (1990: 3) suggests. These questions and the answers that they assume are:

(1) What is the content of verbal communication?

(*Answer*: information.)

(2) Where does this content (i.e. information) reside?

(*Answer*: in the words the speaker uses.)

(3) How is understanding of the content achieved?

(*Answer*: by the listener comprehending the words the speaker uses.)

The answers provided here are rather simplistic, especially in terms of the role listeners play in creating understandings, and the code model has been attacked accordingly (see, for example, the criticisms levied by Bach and Harnish, 1979; Sperber and Wilson, 1986; Akmajian et al., 1990; Rost, 1990). The model assumes, for instance, that communication is an isomorphic match of messages and/or meanings However, isomorphism implies a highly idealised form of communication. In particular, it fails to recognise the complexity of interactional processes, and the principles of contextual appropriateness, that are inherent in successful communication. Naturally occurring language is often ambiguous and senders and receivers have to do communicative work beyond what is actually said to achieve their interactional ends. The difficulty for the code model in this regard perhaps stems from the etymology of the concept of 'communication' itself, which as (Kreckel, 1981: 20) points out comes from two different roots. The roots are:

(1) *communicare*—a one-way process of transmitting information; and

(2) *communion*—a two-way process of sharing information.

If we apply the senses of these roots to essentially code-based definitions of communication, such as that offered by Lyons (1977), then something of their inadequacy is demonstrable. Lyons defines communication as: "The intentional transmission of information by means of some established signalling-system" (Lyons, 1977: 32). The problem with this definition is neatly summarised by Kreckel who points out that "not everything that is available or transmitted.is taken up, and not everything that is taken up is shared" (Kreckel, 1981: 20). In other words, successful communication has to depend on the contingent satisfaction of enforceable conditions on particular occasions of use. The code model seems to ignore the kinds of interactional responses that interlocutors must jointly produce if they are to make communicative sense of what others say, if

only for the purpose of deciding what it is that might be said next. Clearly, verbal communication involves something more than just 'information-processing', and for this reason a rather different paradigm is needed to account for the complexities of conversational exchange.

2.2.2 Communication as an Inferential Process

The alternative paradigm that has emerged to meet this need is based on work that has been largely developed in philosophy and cognitive science. It has culminated, most recently, in the development of relevance theory as expounded in the writings of Sperber and Wilson (1982; 1986), and in essence, holds that 'communication' is a collaborative process which is based on two complementary concepts. These are:

(a) *ostension* – the signal that a speaker has something to communicate;

(b) *inference* – the contextualisation of those signals by an addressee.

Communication occurs because interlocutors actively seek to make connections that are cognitively 'relevant'. This process is described by Sperber and Wilson as follows: "The communicator produces a stimulus which it makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a certain set of assumptions" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 63). In other words, 'ostensive-inferential communication' is achieved "by producing and interpreting evidence" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 2). In referring to information processed in the course of communication, the term 'manifestness' is preferred to 'knowledge', since Sperber and Wilson argue that people 'construct' rather than 'receive' knowledge. The notion of 'manifestness' also provides for the fact that differing assumptions are manifest to varying degrees, hence allowing for the phenomenon of multiple, or at least ambivalent, interpretation.

In the relevance model, then, communication is viewed as a special kind of 'intention' to be recognised by recipients (cf. Bach and Harnish (1979: xvii), who note "linguistic communication essentially involves the speaker's having a special sort of intention (an intention that the hearer make a certain sort of inference) and the hearer's actually making that inference"). What participants do is systematically related to their intents by:

(a) making use of their ability to weigh up particular ends, and

(b) choosing the one that satisfies the most desired goal.

As Blakemore explains, the basic idea seems to be that in processing information, "people generally aim to bring about the greatest improvement to their overall representation of the world for the least cost in processing. That is, they try to balance costs and rewards" (Blakemore, 1988: 238). Hence in seeking to make sense of talk, hearers aim to integrate new information with old by establishing what is considered to be *relevant:* "Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 158).

The search for relevance is something that is considered to constrain all communication, and as such serves to restrict the number of inferences that can be drawn from an utterance. It is taken to apply without exception and thus put forward as a model that overcomes many of the shortcomings associated with present theories of utterance interpretation. In particular, it is offered as a more satisfactory account than Gricean theory, in which the idea of communication is viewed as a set of norms that have their basis in human rationality. Grice writes:

> Our talk exchanges…are characteristically, to some degree at least, co-operative efforts; and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction…We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe, namely: Make your

> conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice, 1989: 26)

The Gricean concept of communication is really quite straightforward. It suggests that in communicating speakers aim to meet certain general standards. Addressees (hearers), then, interpret what is said to them with these standards in mind.

The Cooperative-Principle, as Grice (1975) refers to this procedure, is too well known to require detailed explication at this juncture. Briefly, its concern is to explore the role of particular conversational contributions in the form of a set of interactional maxims underlying the co-operative use of language. Four basic maxims are proposed. These are the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, which specify what interlocutors have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational and co-operative way; they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information. The maxims, as with Grice's work in general, have been the subject of extensive discussion (cf. Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Sperber and Wilson, 1986; Blakemore, 1992). They provide a device to explain the way speakers may communicate more than they what they actually say. When a maxim is broken deliberately (or 'flouted' in Grice's terms), what is said carries an *implicature* that requires special inferential work on the part of the addressee. Grice calls this work 'conversational implicature', which he distinguishes from 'conventional implicature', on the basis that the latter is associated with the meanings of particular words by linguistic convention. The notion of 'implicature' is perhaps Grice's most important contribution to the development of an inferential approach for the study of interpersonal communication, because he demonstrates that there has to be more to the communicative process than the decoding of messages. It is a process that involves cooperative effort; effort that is required to bridge the gap between what is *said* and what is *meant*.

However, Grice's work falls short of providing a universal theory which is the starting point in the search for implicatures. It has also been criticised for its failure to explain how the process of implicature progresses in situated discourse, and indeed what criteria are used by participants for assessing that a maxim has been flouted. It is something of these limitations that Sperber and Wilson (1986) have sought to respond to.

By focussing on the maxim of Relation, Sperber and Wilson have shown the insights of Grice's work have far wider ramifications than most Gricean accounts suggest. They argue that the key to an explanation of human communication lies in the notion of *relevance*. This is a notion that is grounded in a general theory of human cognition, where it is important to stress that relevance is a property of propositions rather than utterances. Relevance is the relation between propositions as they stored in memory; the aim being to characterise a property of mental processes. Consequently, many of the issues Sperber and Wilson raise are concerned with matters of cognitive psychology. Herein lies both the strength and weakness of their approach. Its strength lies in its potential for explaining how communication is achieved in general, and in this regard it has won recognition as an elegant and powerful analytic tool (see, for example, Blakemore, 1988; 1992). Its weakness, on the other hand, is its apparent disregard of discourse structure and the influence of social factors that play such an important role in the communicative process, as scholars, over the last twenty years or so, have demonstrated. Gumperz, for instance, states:

> Communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals. Mere talk to produce sentences, no matter how well formed or elegant the outcome, does not by itself constitute communication. Only when a move has elicited a response can we say communication is taking place. (Gumperz, 1982a: 1)

Gumperz goes on to argue that in order to create and sustain interactional involvement, interlocutors require knowledge and abilities that go beyond

grammatical competence. Study of this involvement must therefore take into account linguistic and sociocultural knowledge that is used in the ongoing process of interpretation in talk. The degree to which these (sociolinguistic) factors can be accounted for within the framework offered by Sperber and Wilson has not yet been explored, although I am of the opinion that the theory has the potential to accommodate them. The potential emanates from the view that is taken of verbal communication as a process of 'understanding'.

In the course of producing ostensive acts, interlocutors provide two layers of information as Rost explains:

> First, there is the information which has been pointed out; second, there is the information that the first layer of information has been pointed out. For example, if you and I are sitting together in a room and I know that you know that you like snow and I know that it is just beginning to snow outside and I open the curtains so that you can see the snow falling for yourself, I have performed an ostensive act of communication by the opening the curtain. (Rost, 1990: 3)

Understanding this act of ostension involves understanding not only this first layer of information (i.e. that it is snowing now) but also the second (i.e that I wanted you to see it at that moment). It is finding the link or relevance between these two layers of information, by *inferencing*, that enables interlocutors to make sense of communicative acts. What is vital, however, as Rost goes on to point out is that:

> the relevant link that you find to make sense of the communicative act need not be the only relevant link you could find, nor need it be the link that I had hoped you would find. You can achieve an acceptable understanding without knowing exactly what I intended. (Rost, 1990: 4)

This statement applies to both verbal and non-verbal communication. Thus unlike the information processing model of communication, which tends to focus on the importance of what speakers have said, the onus of responsibility for interpretation is recognised by the relevance model to be listener or hearer

specific. Speaker-based production models of communication are not necessarily applicable to how addressees actually interpret the production of a particular form. As Jakobson and Waugh, 1979: 95), put it: "We speak in order to be heard and need to be heard in order to be understood".

Listeners must have highly developed models of the kinds of things that speakers can say. However, interpretive or recipiency-based approaches to the study of verbal communication have only recently begun to emerge; despite Hymes remarks of over 25 years ago to the effect that neglect of the 'hearer-reader' was ending (see, for example, Kreckel, 1981; McGregor, 1986b; McGregor and White, 1986; Coupland and Giles, 1988; Coupland, Henwood, Coupland and Giles, 1990; McGregor and White, 1990; Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991; Giles and Coupland, 1991; Rost, 1990). Parker-Rhodes neatly summarises why this neglect has arisen. He notes: "Ours is a speakers' civilization and our linguistics has accordingly concerned itself almost solely with the speaker's problems...The skilful speaker wins praise; the skilful listener, despite the mystery of his achievement is ignored" (Parker-Rhodes, 1978: xiii). While the ramifications of a listener-oriented approach are yet to be fully explored, an obvious implication of using relevance theory is that it establishes the centrality of the listeners role in verbal communication. By implication this role constrains the inferences that can be drawn from a speaker's act. Relevance theory also has the advantage of allowing for communicative ambiguity and breakdown (cf. the information-processing model). Since there is no procedure for ensuring mutually acceptable and unambiguous understanding between interlocutors, successful ostensive-inferential communication cannot be guaranteed. Consequently, interlocutors have to do communicative work to achieve their interactional ends.

This thesis seeks to provide an analytic tool for the empirical investigation of such ends in naturally occurring discourse, by focussing on the inferential

concerns of ordinary participant and non-participant members. But what are these concerns, and how can they be recovered and warranted from the communicative process that has been described in this section? It is these questions that I will address next.

2.3 Communication and Participant Goals

Having established, on the basis of relevance theory, that verbal communication is most usefully conceived as an inferential process, I want to move on to consider the implications of using this theory as a basis for exploring the nature of speech activities, with particular reference to the study of *participant goals*. What is being called for here is not a theory of goals as such, but rather a theory of how goals can be recovered from situated interpretation in something of the way in which John Gumperz suggests. Although methodologically challenging, the human ability to understand what has been communicated in various products of connected discourse is investigable because in any discourse setting, participants have varying listener roles as I have argued elsewhere (see, McGregor (1986b), and Section 3.2.1 for further details). My immediate interest, then, lies in the role of ordinary listeners in a special analytic sense, where this involves their capacity to understand instances of spoken interaction in the third person, and especially with respect to evaluating how language is used by actual participants. The relevance model suggests that participants listen to talk for a purpose, and that it is this purpose that drives the understanding process. While third person interpretations of talk cannot share this purpose by definition, I will argue that they can serve to warrant inferences about participant goals, albeit on the basis of indirect evidence.

The present state of thought about goals in discourse is both complex and diffuse, and it may be helpful to review some of the major problems that research in this area faces before proceeding further. A dense, but useful essay on the

subject is provided by Craig (1986), and the discussion which follows is largely based on some important conceptual distinctions that he makes.

2.3.1 Some Goal-Related Distinctions

The concept of 'goal' pervades many of the literatures that I referred to at the outset of this chapter. And work in them (including linguistic studies of discourse, speech act theory, pragmatics, conversation analysis, social psychology, attribution theory, cognitive science, (speech) communication science, and studies of strategic communicative choices in contexts such as negotiation, compliance-gaining, and interpersonal relationship development) rests heavily on the assumption that verbal communication is purposive or goal-directed (Craig, 1986).

In the absence of a more radical approach, I think this assumption must be taken as axiomatic; if only because a practical discipline of communication to which the concept of goal would not be central is difficult to imagine. However, this is not to suggest that the concept should be adopted uncritically, for reasons that Craig (1986) expounds. These include difficulties in pragmatic orientation, and the terms in which theory and research are couched. Yet despite the importance of the concept and its widespread use, no fully adequate account of goals has yet emerged, as Craig points out.

In order to evaluate the various attempts that have been made to evidence relationships between features of discourse and certain goals toward which the discourse is supposed to be directed, Craig moots four conceptual distinctions that are intrinsic to current thinking about the nature of communicative goals. The distinctions are between:

(1) functional and intentional goals;

(2) positive and dialectic goals;

(3) formal and strategic goals;

(4) the possible bases for drawing the inference that a given discourse is directed towards a certain goal.

Before considering each of these in detail, it may be useful to acknowledge another important distinction. This is the distinction Hymes (1972) makes between societal goals and individual goals. Hymes noted that the purpose of communicative events from a community standpoint need not be identical to those engaged in it. I intend to maintain this distinction here by considering the concept of goals from the perspective of the actor's interpretations and understandings of their own doings, rather than from the standpoint of the sociocultural system in which actors operate. This distinction has perhaps been most salient in sociological terms, where the study of the system's purposes as opposed to the purposes of the individual is couched in terms of institutional influence and effect, as opposed to the social actions of the individuals who live and work in them as Duranti reports:

> Whereas (British) functionalist anthropologists tended to pay more attention to the system's reasons for a given cultural phenomenon…contemporary linguists, philosophers of language, and cognitive scientists have tended to couch their discussion of goal-oriented behavior in terms of the individual's goals, or, rather, his alleged intentions. (Duranti, 1985: 204)

Where the latter approach is concerned, however, quite different methodological orientations are involved, and this has led to the kind of conceptual and terminological confusion that is the focus of Craig's (1987) essay.

Craig notes, for instance, that 'goal' is are often used coterminously with words such as 'end', 'intention', 'purpose', 'plan' and 'strategy'. These terms are not only used interchangeably across and within particular disciplines, but also tend to be ill-defined; if in fact they are defined at all. Conceptual problems arise because quite distinct terminologies are sometimes mixed with unfortunate

consequences. The mixing of intentionalistic (action-theoretic) and functionalistic (cognitive) terminology is taken as a case in point, since the vocabularies involved are derived from different traditions about the nature of goals. One is by way of the classification of actions or speech acts, deriving from the work of the philosophers J.L. Austin and J. Searle. The other comes from the computational modelling of language understanding developed through cognitive science (cf. for example, Schank and Abelson (1977); Schank and Burstein, 1985).

According to Austin, three kinds of 'act' are performed in speaking a language:

(i) acts *of* saying something with a certain sense or reference - locutionary acts;

(ii) acts *in* saying something by virtue of the performance of the locution - illocutionary acts;

(iii) acts *by* saying something as an effect or result of what has been said - perlocutionary acts.

Searle brought systematicity to Austin's ideas by offering definitions of the conditions that are required to be present if a given speech act was to be effectively performed. This is not the place to discuss or review this work in any kind of detail, since there is a huge primary and secondary literature that deals with speech act theory in its own right (see p.15 above), but merely to acknowledge the importance of the notion for subsequent research that sought to explore how understanding is achieved by the use of utterances geared towards performing acts of communication. While it has long been recognised that much remains to be done in order to transform speech act theory so that it can be moved from its intuitive and deductive roots to applications in studies of naturally occurring talk, substantial contributions towards this end are provided in the studies advanced by Labov and Fanshel (1977), Kreckel (1981) and Gumperz (1982a; 1982), of which more in Chapters 3 and 4.

From an 'intentionalistic' point of view then, speakers are modelled as consciously intending to bring about a certain state of affairs by means of discourse. According to the 'functionalist' perspective, on the other hand, discourse is best described from the standpoint of an external observer in terms of expected or predictable outcomes. These outcomes are determined by the speaker's cognitive representation of the situation. Clearly, it requires care to avoid equivocating between these two senses of what it might be to refer to the 'goals' of a speaker.

The distinction between 'intent' and 'function' raises the further issue of the relationship, if any, between 'goal-consciousness' and 'goal-seeking behaviour'. But how evident or salient is this distinction in situated interpretation? Craig (1986: 261) notes that even though it may true as Searle (1983) claims, that a person can always answer the question, 'What are you doing now?', speakers accounts of their goals are often vague and inarticulate; or can sometimes be shown to be demonstrably wrong from a functional point of view; or may even be completely denied, since the existence of specific goals may not relevant to the discourse in question. The extent to which participants are aware of their goals in interpersonal communication, and their capacity to either consciously, or unconsciously, invoke them for whatever communicative reason is also the subject of discussion in Schiffrin (1987, Chapter 1). But can goals be characterised in view of the diffuse, ambiguous states of consciousness in which speakers may often act? Goal-awareness is probably a matter of degree, and not an issue that can be researched in any conclusive way. Consequently, Schiffrin tends to sidestep the issue by concluding that "communication occurs when a sender either gives, or gives off, information" (Schiffrin, 1987: 5–6). She assumes that language is always communicative and indeed that it is designed to reflect its communicative base. But she does not tackle the question of how we can recover what is 'given' or

'given off' between speakers themselves, or how this information relates to speakers' goals.

In order to make sense of the claim that discourse is goal-directed, Craig (1986) suggests that a second distinction has to be made; this is the distinction between 'positive and dialectic goals'. This distinction, Craig explains, "addresses not the relation of goals to consciousness but rather that of goals to behavior" (Craig, 1986: 262). Positive goals are defined by Craig as those that are involved in the causal process of producing behaviour. These are essentially of the kind that are found in computer-driven models of discourse, or in the sort of situations in which goals are considered to be relatively easy to identify. The concept of goal in this sense is exemplified in Leech's (1983) means-ends analysis of interpersonal communication, where "the term goal is used in the neutral Artificial Intelligence sense of 'a state which regulates the behaviour of the individual' in such a way as to facilitate a given outcome" (Leech, 1983: 40). Craig argues that this concept of 'goal' is oversimplified, and that goals can have a looser relation to behaviour. Where this 'looser relation' exists, goals may be thought of 'dialectically', that is, they refer to principles or properties such as positivism, honesty, happiness, success and so on. These kind of goals do not necessarily control behaviour to which they refer directly, although they may influence the discourse in indirect and complex ways. While they are different in kind, positive and dialectic goals also seem to overlap with intentional and functional goals. Craig explains:

> According to Searle's (1983) analysis of intentionality, intentions are causally relate to actions and would thus count as positive goals in my terms; so positive goals can be interpreted intentionally. Dialectical goals can also be reduced to functional descriptions as, for example, in Schank and Abelson's (1977) theory of discourse understanding in which 'themes', which in my terms could be thought of as dialectical goals of a sort, perform certain functions. The two distinctions are correlated, however. In order to speak coherently of intentions as causes, one must translate positive behavior into the language of action, which is essentially dialectical…And the functional description of a dialectical goal essentially reduces it to positive terms. (Craig, 1986: 263)

The correlation of these concepts is obviously extremely complex, and is further obscured by the problem of conceptualising multiple goals in discourse. Craig discusses this issue in detail, and concludes that goals are ideas that emerge from the interaction of ideas and continue to be involved in psychological processes apart from the production of behaviour (1986: 265). What seems to be at the heart of Craig's exposition here is the need for further inquiry, and this is expressed in his concern to weigh the implications of interactions among dialectical goals for the interpretation of goals in discourse in general. However, he does not address the issue of how such inquiry might be conducted.

Perhaps the most important of Craig's dichotomies, from my own perspective, is that between 'formal' and 'strategic' goals. He writes: "A formal interpretation of goals is implied by the view that conversation is essentially a matter of following conventional patterns or rules" (Craig, 1986: 266). In contrast, a strategic interpretation assumes:

> that the conversationists behave strategically in pursuit of their individual goals, and that whatever structure conversation may have emerges from this process. Rules and standard patterns are not simply followed but are used as resources to accomplish goals. Rules may be broken, transformed, or used in nonobvious ways. Or if rules are followed strictly, as in a sport or game, they may be only a constitutive framework in which non-rule-governed options are played out.

This distinction is recognised in various different models of the communicative process, but the interdependency of form and strategy is often unclear. Like Fairclough (1989), Craig raises the example of speech act theory which tends to focus on the nature of individual goals in discourse as opposed to how these are cooperatively managed. Grice and others have argued that cooperation is the fundamental purpose of communication, but speakers also engage in discourse for their own individual purposes. Furthermore the goals of interlocutors can be antagonistic and/or diametrically opposed, as Levinson asserts: "Conversation is

not a structural product in the same way that a sentence is—it is rather the outcome of the interaction of two or more independent, *goal-directed* individuals, with often divergent interests" (Levinson, 1983: 294, my italics). Does the cooperative structure of communication derive from individual pragmatic necessity then?

Whether cooperative or individualistic motives are more basic is a moot point. Presumably, as Craig argues, formal/conventional goals can be strategic, while individual goals emanate from a social matrix that is constituted of conventions. Fairclough makes a similar point. He argues:

> Of course, people do act strategically in certain circumstances and use conventions rather than simply following them; but in other circumstances they simply do not follow them, and what one needs is a theory of social action—social practice—which accounts for the determining effect of conventions and the strategic creativity of individuals, without reducing to one or the other. (Fairclough, 1989: 9–10)

A theory of the kind sought by Fairclough has in fact been advanced by Jürgen Habermas (1979; 1984).

Drawing on research in linguistics, the philosophy of language, and cognitive developmental psychology, Habermas seeks to develop a concept of communicative rationality which is not tied in any way to the subjective and individualistic premises of modern social and political theory. This concept serves to integrate a two-tiered characterisation of social action involving what he refers to as the 'lifeworld' and 'system' paradigms. As I understand it, what Habermas is driving at here is the fact that the communicative actions of different individuals are socially coordinated. These actions are essentially purposive, and have two fundamental orientations based on the model of Weber's action theory. The orientations lead to the coordination of action through the interest positions of

individual interlocutors, on the one hand ('strategic actions'), and through the search for normative agreement ('communicative action') on the other.

Strategic action refers to influence which may take different forms depending on the context and motives of particular participants. Strategic actions are oriented towards communicative 'success'. In order to succeed communicatively, individuals select means that seem to them appropriate in any given situation, where 'success' is defined as: "The appearance of the world of a desired state, which can, in a given situation, be causally produced through goal-oriented action or omission" (Habermas, 1984: 285). Success is presumably in the interests of *all* participants in talk. It is not viewed by Habermas as merely egocentric, but as an end that can be achieved by the reciprocal influencing of others, either by overt means (open strategic actions), or covertly by conscious, or unconscious deceit (latent strategic action).

In contrast to strategic actions, where participants are primarily oriented to their own individual successes, communicative actions are oriented towards reaching understanding through interpretive, and consensual accomplishments. Participant interlocutors are taken to pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonise their plans of action on the basis of rationally motivated assent, where reaching understanding is considered to be a process of reaching agreement. Consensual action ensures that the participants retain a cooperative attitude.

This line of reasoning, and in particular the distinction that Habermas makes between strategic and communicative actions, seems highly plausible. However, it remains theoretical, since it is neither operationalised, nor tested in relationship to the analysis of a particular discourse. And this is the problem with theoretically-

driven claims about the purposiveness or goal-directedness of verbal exchange in general, because the nature of such claims will always be unavoidably indirect.

In short, the question of how we are able to reconstruct other agents goals from their actions is an extremely thorny one as Schiffrin suggests: "The fact that inferences about what is causing a particular phenomenon have to be made through observation of its outcome is one reason why conversation is a difficult topic for linguistic analysis" (Schiffrin, 1988: 251). This is a crucial issue for investigators, since what it involves is a higher level of (analytic) inferencing; that is, the situated interpretive work of the participants must itself be subject to a process of interpretation, in order to try to glean what has taken place. Since this process must take place outside of the participation framework, there are considerable ramifications for the construction of interpretive theories as I now wish to explore.

2.3.2 Warranting Inferences about Goals

Given that the notion of 'goal' is an abstract, relational concept, at least as defined in terms of the distinctions discussed in this section, a central issue is the relationship between analytic theories about the goal-directedness of discourse and the data to which they pertain. A further issue is the relationship of the investigator to each of these in turn (Milroy, 1987). The nature of this relationship is dependent on the chosen method of research, and the types of evidence that can be assembled in support of particular claims (see Chapter 3). The question that needs to be considered in terms of these relationships tends not to be directly addressed by analysts of talk (though cf. Labov and Fanshel, 1977, and Wootton, 1989). It is this: "On what basis can a researcher warrant the assertion that a speaker is pursuing a specific goal?" (Craig, 1968: 268). Given the range of methodologies involved, Craig undertakes the very constructive exercise of

isolating and distinguishing the various patterns of inference that may be involved in making interpretive claims about discourse. Four general bases for warranting inferences about goals are identified by Craig (1986: 268ff.). These are:

(1) inference based on the conventional appropriateness of the goal in the situation;
(2) inference based on the functional relationship between the discourse and the goal;
(3) inference based on the orientation of the discourse to a particular focus of attention;
(4) inference based on self-report of the speaker.

For inferences of the first type, it is suggested that speakers must pursue goals that are dictated by the situation. According to the conventions of first meetings between individuals, for example, asking questions may be construed as purposive or goal-directed behaviour, where the purpose is to seek out particular information about one's interlocutor(s). Another example of this inference pattern is found in highly situated types of discourse, where the type of interaction that ensues is contextually (pre)determined. The law court provides a case in point, as the work of Goodrich (1990) exemplifies.

Among other legally formulated instances of courtroom interaction, Goodrich considers the practice of plea bargaining in the initial stages of criminal trials. This practice does not concern either the events, or the perceived wrong at issue, but rather is used to establish the legal statement of charge to which the defendant must answer either 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. Notice how the following exchanges are goal-directed in this regard, and what happens when the relevance of the statement of charge procedure is challenged by the accused (Goodrich, 1990: 23):

Case 1

Clerk: Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

Defendant: Well, yes and no.

Clerk: Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

Defendant: Yes—I was guilty of trespassing—and no—I wasn't intending to steal.

Clerk: So you plead not guilty?

Defendant: That's not what I said.

Clerk: Not guilty.

Despite the attempts at explanation offered by the defendant, a plea of 'not guilty' is entered. The legal 'goal' in this particular instance is not in fact achieved by the clerk, since he fails to elicit the required form of utterance from the defendant. Ultimately, a plea is established, but it is established in the words of the clerk.

In another case that Goodrich cites, the defendant is concerned to avoid stating the required form of words, because of "a legally ulterior purpose to the discourse" (Goodrich, 1990: 23). Again the purpose seems to be one of committing the defendant to a ritual of legal recognition. The double bind following the magistrate's urging to 'say what you *want* to say' is worth noting, since it is clearly not intended as an invitation offering complete freedom of expression. Little room is left for interpretive licence, or manoeuvre, as the magistrate's final imperative suggests (Goodrich, 1990: 23–24):

Case 2

Clerk: Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

Defendant: Yes I did it. I said I did it.

Clerk: Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

Defendant: Yes I did it. I just want to get out of here …

Magistrate: Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

Defendant: Yes, I did it.

Magistrate: No. I'm asking whether you plead guilty or not guilty. You must use either the words 'not guilty' or 'guilty'.

Defendant: (looking towards probation officer) She said, 'Say guilty'.

Magistrate: No. You must say what you *want* to say.

Defendant: Yes, I'll say what you like. I did it.

Magistrate: No. You must use the language of the court.

Clerk: Not guilty.

In both these instances, then, what is going on seems to be related to a broader, functional goal; the goal being that the defendants will formally recognise and submit to the arena of trial.

Craig notes that a variation of this type of inference is to be found in research where the investigator explicitly instructs speakers to seek certain goals, in the manner of getting acquainted, or assembling a set of parts correctly for instance (cf. Burke, 1986). This kind of study is of course dependent on establishing whether the speakers are actually following the instructions as required. The value of experimental work of this and other kinds involving the analysis of verbal exchange is debated in Roger and Bull (1989), and given more detailed consideration in Chapter 3.

The second kind of inferencing for warranting goals in verbal communication is based on the analytic claim that: "A goal is being pursued if a functional relationship can be established between the putative goal and some formal element of the discourse" (Craig, 1986: 269). The assumption here is that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, a speaker who says things having a functional relationship to certain outcomes is in fact seeking those outcomes. An example of

this type of inference is presented Burke (1986) who argues that some of the apprentices in her study used 'transformed repeats', that is, they repeated instructions which they had been given in a more technical vocabulary as a way of demonstrating their expertise. In the following exchange, the apprentice (A) provides a technical label for a component, when the term in question has not been supplied by the expert (E).

> 38 E: And attach the pink thing so it covers the hole in the middle.
>
> 39 A: Got it. One-way valve. We're all set. (Burke, 1986: 214)

Burke notes that the technical ascription here suggests considerable knowledge concerning the task. The repeat thus serves to 'upgrade' the description offered by the expert, with the strategic function of signalling that the instructions as stated are quite sufficient and do not require further, and by implication unnecessary, detail.

Craig cites Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) work on politeness strategies as a variation of the functional relationship type of inference. He writes:

> Here one argues that an utterance exemplifies a particular strategy, not on the basis of what the utterance actually meant on a particular occasion of use, but rather on the basis that it could have a certain meaning and effect, given certain assumptions about context and intention. In other words one can imagine a context in which the utterance might function in a particular way. (Craig, 1986: 270)

A full account of the politeness model is unnecessary, since it has been widely cited, tested and criticised in the decade or so since it originally appeared. The following summary is offered simply to illustrate Craig's point about warranting.

Politeness theory is based on Goffman's notion of 'face' (the public image every person wants to claim, and supposedly wants to maintain) and Grice's model of communication as a maximally efficient means of exchanging

information. Analysis of these notions depends on the linguistic unit of a 'speech act', where this is conceived in relation to the function or action performed by a particular utterance (after the manner of Searle). In uttering the words, "Can you shut the window?", for instance, a speaker performs a request, where this is likely to be perceived as more polite, and certainly less confrontational and abrasive, than the command, "Shut the window". Requests threaten a recipient's desire not be imposed upon (negative face); in other words imposition is minimised by the implication of 'appreciation' ("What a nice person you would be if you were to respond by actually closing the window, and hence meeting my request"). On the other hand, the use of language strategies that attend directly to people's needs to be appreciated and approved of serve the function of indicating positive politeness in locutions such as ("What a superb essay, now that just shows how able you really are") and so on.

Tracy suggests that politeness theory provides "a rich and linguistically elaborated sense of how two very general identity concerns are displayed", but that it fails to "give an adequate picture of the complexity of identity issues that motivate communicative behavior" (Tracy, 1990: 213). These concerns and/or issues are not of immediate interest to the present line of research. But Brown and Levinson's appraisal of the functional relational inferences that they make (although they do not explicitly use this label) are worthy of comment. They write: "Our account…basically suggests that understanding is a matter of reconstructing speakers' communicative intentions, and that this is done by running a logic of practical reasoning 'backwards' as it were" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 8). Brown and Levinson recognise a problem with this approach due to the fact that "no logical system…offers any way of going from conclusions back to premises", because they are not symmetrical systems (op. cit.: 8). They conclude as a result that: "Even if we had a perfected system of means-ends reasoning, it would

remain a conceptual mystery how we are able to reconstruct other agents' intentions from their actions…Yet that we do so, or attempt to do so, is hardly open to question" (op. cit.: 8).

This statement appears to recognise not only the inferential nature of the communicative process, but also the difficulties of exploring it in practice. The emphasis, however, is very much towards a speaker-oriented model of communication, as is made clear in their use of the term 'strategy', "in which people can be seen to be doing something before doing, or in order to do, something else" (op. cit.: 8). Investigation of the routine use of 'strategy', in this sense, is at the heart of conversation analytic research. But work in CA is based on a different method for warranting evidence about the use of such routines, since it focuses on the interactional properties of what people are doing in talk. These properties are examined by detailed analyses of the conventionalised or institutionalised features which are continually organising verbal exchange, and where what is going on is viewed as social action.

This approach brings us to the third of Craig's inferential patterns for warranting inferences about goals, that is, inference based on the orientation of the discourse to an identifiable focus of attention. Speakers' use of 'repetition' and 'emphasis' is cited as an example of this type, where the goal is to draw attention to the referential content or manner of what has been said. Another example is the provision of extra information beyond what is required to answer questions in initial interactions, hence breaking Grice's maxim of 'quality'. The goal here is presumably to give information that is thought to be of salience over and above that which is required to meet the maxim in question.

A variation of the 'focus-of-attention-inference' uses evidence of conversational phenomena such as self-correction and repair as an indication of

goal-seeking behaviour. If one makes an effort to repair disagreements, or misunderstandings, then presumably this is an indication of purposively trying to establish or reach agreement. It is this kind of warranting that I suggest underpins the investigative methods of conversation analytic research. Conversation analysts were among the first to provide systematic evidence for the cooperative nature of conversational processes. These are identifiable not only by dint of their focus, but also by their reproducibility. Wootton notes that there are two ways in which analysis can be concerned with reproducibility:

> The first relates to the capacity of other investigators to understand and replicate the procedures of analysis that have been employed. The second relates to the fact that members of society are continually organising their conduct so as to have it identifiable by others, and that in the course of this they rely on the capacity of the communication system to reproduce forms of conduct from which systematic inferences can be drawn by other parties involved. (Wootton, 1989: 239)

This perspective is integral to the view of verbal communication that is taken in this thesis, since it is centred on what participants do. However, it does not account for the kinds of sociolinguistic knowledge upon which conversational cooperation is presumably based, nor does it explore the interpretive abilities of participants to recover and evaluate what is reproduced in talk in their own terms. This ability is researchable as Gumperz has demonstrated, but seems to be the object of some caution in terms of CA methodology. Wootton, for example, comments:

> Excavating the implicit analyses which parties in interaction make of each other's talk is then a technical task: one which, for example, though it does not preclude consulting with people about what they think are they are doing, has to be grounded in close exploration, analysis and documentation from the behavioural details of the exchange in question. (Wootton, 1990: 254)

I want to argue that such consultation should be considered as both integral and complementary to detailed technical analysis of verbal communication, as I indicated at the outset of this chapter. It is this line of argument that brings me to

the fourth and final of Craig's bases for warranting inferences about goals in discourse, and that is the use of speaker self-reports.

Craig argues that self-reports should not be overlooked as a source of data for warranting inferences about goals, although he is rather circumspect about their status and utility. He gives two major reasons for caution, both of which are concerned with the issue of accuracy. These involve individual presumptions about the general 'social desirability' of goals, on the one hand, and the extent of individual 'awareness' about goals on the other. As far as desirability is concerned, Craig suggests that people will often deny that they have goals to pursue, either because these are conventionally frowned upon, or because they have predictable connotations or expectations. On the other hand, people may be unaware of their goals, or have inaccurate beliefs about their patterns of behaviour. Nonetheless, Craig concludes that:

> self-reports, like all sources of information concerning goals, are fallible: They provide only indirect evidence and require interpretation. The fact, for example, that speakers think they should or should not have certain goals does not necessarily mean that they actually behave accordingly, but it still might indicate something interesting about their goal-orientation. (Craig, 1986: 271)

I propose to follow the spirit of Craig's comments by reiterating that self reports can and should prove of great service to analysts of talk in ways that I intend to demonstrate in the empirical work presented in the remainder of this thesis. However, by and large the nature of such reports have never been explored in anything other than an *ad hoc* way, despite what we might learn from analysis and documentation of what participants think that they are doing.

This exploration becomes possible if what speakers have to say about the goals they are pursuing (or not pursuing as the case may be) is taken seriously. In this regard, presumably what ordinary speakers have to say about their

communicative activities has to be as at least as interesting as theoretical introspection. I am not suggesting that the views of theorists do not have a place, they obviously do. After all, it seems pointless not to assume that discourse is in some sense and to some degree intentionally directed towards goals as Craig (1986: 272) argues. But if academic disciplines can influence our view of what goes on in communication (it is widely assumed that communicative competence can be improved, for example), then surely we should be aware of the consequences for ordinary language users and actual language use? Warranting inferences about goals from a lay point of view may just serve to keep our analytic claims in perspective in this regard, and in my opinion offers a challenging but productive methodological tool for investigating everyday communicative practices.

This tool may prove to have wider significance if extended and applied to research focussing on communicative asynchronies in verbal exchange due to individual and sociocultural differences in inferencing behaviour. Something of these differences, especially in inter-ethnic discourse, have in fact been investigated by Gumperz and others within an interactional sociolinguistic framework (Gumperz, 1982a;1982b, and Chapter 8), but this approach has been heavily criticised by Singh and Lele (1989) on the grounds of cultural and ideological distortion. Although the empirical studies presented in the following chapters are not of this type, I feel that criticisms of the kind levied by Singh and Lele could be reified by taking a listener-oriented approach, warranted on the basis of (third person) speaker-reports. If the work to be reported here is any gauge, such reports would surely indicate interesting, if not salient, information about communicative goals across and within not only different speakers, but also different cultures and different languages.

Fasold suggests that "sociolinguistics only exists as a field of study because there are choices in using language" (Fasold, 1984: 180). An interactional

sociolinguistic approach must not only be sensitive to the nature of these choices, but also to how different participants realise and perceive what they do in them in communicative terms. In Chapter 3, I explore how this approach may be developed by considering the concept of third person metalinguistic ability or capacity, in relation to the recovery and warranting of goals from the products of situated (discourse) interpretation.

2.4 Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the nature of interpersonal communication in verbal exchange, and to present a variety of concepts and distinctions needed to characterise communicative activities. A wide range of disciplines has been called on for this task, demonstrating that the study of verbal communication is not only extremely complex, but also has been broached from quite different theoretical perspectives. Notwithstanding the variety of approaches and many difficulties involved in its description, it would seem that everyday verbal communication can be usefully characterised in two major ways. First, as an inferential process requiring the efforts of two or more individuals in varying participant and addressee roles, and second, as action-oriented behaviour that is purposively organised by interlocutors with a view to achieving particular communicative ends.

This process is dependent upon interactional knowledge that is not only cognitively relevant as Sperber and Wilson (1986) suggest, but is also sociolinguistically based. As Gumperz and others have shown, verbal exchange occurs in social situations, between participants bearing social relationships, and having certain communicative goals. Since sociolinguistics "has not generally adopted the interactional, relational and constitutive perspective" needed to reflect either the complexity or multidimensionality of verbal communication,

Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991: 25) argue that "it will be helpful to have a model that recognizes how linguistic variables intersect with speakers' and listeners' attitudes, goals and strategies, and with the outcomes of interaction". I can only endorse this sentiment, and consequently seek to contribute towards such a model by investigating the repertoire of interpretive possibilities for warranting claims about such 'attitudes, goals, strategies and outcomes' on the basis of various third person perspectives. The studies which such an approach involves assumes that ordinary members have interpretive abilities (as of course do analysts) that can be applied beyond the participation framework. It is the challenge of investigating and modelling these abilities that is addressed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

EVERYDAY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERT OPINION

3.0 Some Procedural Issues

In order to undertake systematic investigation of what ordinary members have to say about inferential processes in verbal interaction, and the interpretive possibilities they raise, a number of procedural issues need to be addressed. These include the questions of how we can begin to collect, analyse and interpret something as familiar as everyday verbal exchange in a principled way and how inferential processes can be studied from a participant-oriented perspective. The design and utility of *post hoc* studies of third person interpretation in order to investigate such practices is presented in Chapter 4. It is the purpose of this chapter to consider the methodological and theoretical issues that these questions, and the studies which they anticipate, raise.

The relationship between methods and theory is important because of its implications for analytic procedure and findings as Milroy (1987: Chapter 1) suggests. Although Milroy's remarks are largely oriented towards secular sociolinguistic studies of the kind pioneered by William Labov, they are most relevant for analysts of verbal communication because they offer a framework for considering different kinds of investigative process and hence interpretive procedures. Milroy suggests that "An account of method divorced from theory is not considered to be helpful, desirable or even possible" (1987: xi), and consequently identifies three major concepts that are intrinsic to "any conceivable descriptive linguistic activity". These are adapted from Kibrik (1977) as follows:

(1) The *subject* of investigation (the language or part of the language).

(2) The *object* of investigation (written texts or tape-recorded data).

(3) The *product* of investigation. This is the *model* of the subject of the investigation which is usually called the *grammar*. (Milroy, 1987: 3)

The way in which these concepts are operationalised is determined by particular research strategies and/or analytic ends. Hence different approaches may be characterised in terms of "the relationship between the investigator, the subject of study and the object of study in the process of arriving at the final product (or model)" (Milroy, 1987: 3). Three possible models of the process by which an investigator arrives at a product are mooted. These are represented diagrammatically as follows (Milroy, 1987: 4):

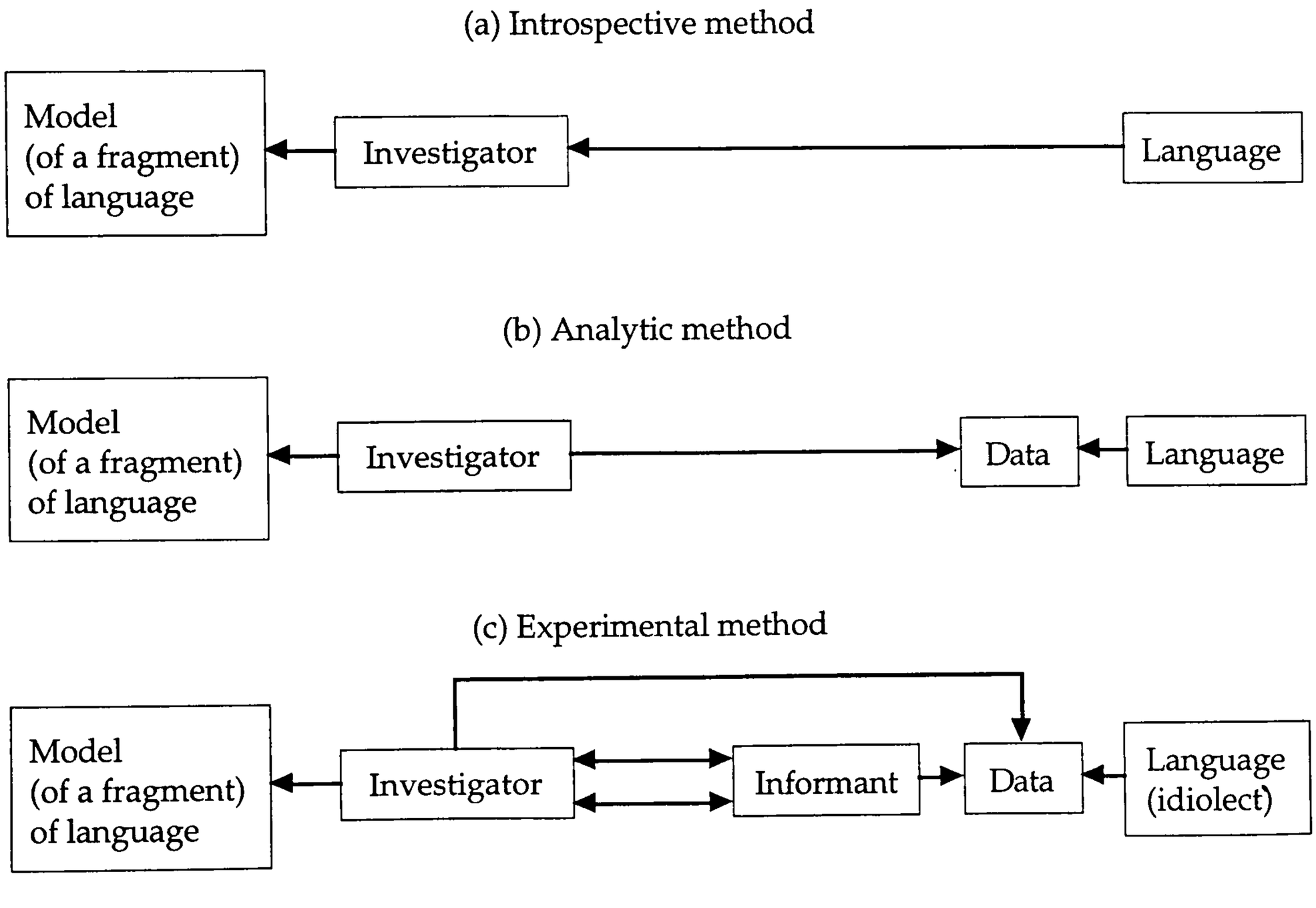

FIGURE 3.1

Modelling the Methods of Descriptive Linguistics

Since methodology clearly provides specific design and analytic procedures, this framework can be used to facilitate discussion of the type of approach that I seek to develop here.

The first method is not appropriate for the investigative purposes of this thesis, since descriptions of verbal communication are necessarily based on a process of introspection and self-observation. This process does not require an object of investigation, and consequently a body of data is absent (Milroy, 1987: 3). Verbal communication is such a complex phenomenon that any attempt to undertake its study without reference to a body of data must be either highly generalised, or speculative, or simplistic. This is not to say that our intuitions about verbal exchange are unimportant, but rather that they cannot be empirically ratified without reference to actual occurrences of what has gone on in the course of their production.

The second method will not be pursued here either. It offers a model that is very much of the type used in conventional discourse analysis (cf. Coulthard, 1977; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Edmonson, 1981; Hoey, 1983). A corpus of independently collected data is assembled and provides the means for generating descriptions of supra-sentential linguistic structure, for instance. The onus for interpreting the results of such descriptions is on the analyst, and the models which result will presumably be tied to particular disciplinary frameworks, or to strongly held theories about the nature of the data object involved.

A rather different analytic approach, of course, is undertaken by CA practitioners whose attempts to systematically describe naturally occurring language data are based on inductive methods that are taken to be autonomous and atheoretically motivated (Levinson, 1983; Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Button

and Lee, 1987; Roger and Bull, 1989). This approach emerged as part of a reaction to inadequate and premature theorising in sociology (Heritage, 1989). By drawing attention to the tacit knowledge that interactional participants have of rules that regulate their everyday behaviour, CA has undoubtedly contributed much to the study of verbal exchange. However, its focus on the microanalysis of conversational organisation, or 'the sequential relevance' of action, has been at the expense of evidential work seeking to directly involve its agents.

Neither the introspective, nor analytic methods therefore allow for participant interpretations of the kind which are mooted here. The third type of descriptive method, on the other hand, does allow for this work by taking into account information that may be provided by participants, and other outside observers, in the role of informant judges. Because situated interpretive processes involve interacting, the investigative product should draw its postulates from what participants, as well as analysts, know about interaction (cf. Gumperz, 1982a). A preliminary framework for investigating what ordinary members know in this regard is developed in this and subsequent chapters.

The value of this framework is that it enables systematic investigation of members' interpretive resources. However, the use of informants in this way raises issues and problems of its own, and it these that I want to explore in the remainder of this chapter. The first of these concerns the data of verbal exchange, and the kind of record that can be produced from its instantiation. The second, concerns how to make use of such data for (analytic) interpretive purposes, and the third appraises the potential of (informant) interpretations as a means of generating and testing hypotheses about the communicative salience of different types of interactional data along the lines Gumperz (1982a, 1982b) suggests.

This latter mode of interpretation is of principal interest, because it is intrinsic to my attempts to recover and warrant inferential processes that are otherwise unlikely to emerge as a topic of discussion for participants. But I will begin the discussion by considering the nature of tape-recorded data as an object of study in its own right.

3.1 The Data of Verbal Exchange

Descriptive linguistic activity which takes as its field of inquiry the study of language in use, as opposed to the study of language systems (the distinction is discussed in detail in Brown and Yule (1983: 20ff.), and Milroy, 1987: Chapter 1), defines its subject matter in relationship to the great diversity of communicative contexts and resources available to human beings for engaging in verbal exchange. When taken as the object of study, the data products of such engagement pose something of a conundrum for investigators. As summarised by Stubbs, the conundrum is this: "What is the researcher to do when confronted with what has been called the 'bloomin', buzzin' confusion' of any normal social setting?" (Stubbs, 1983: 238).

The lack of recognised and accepted procedures for collecting, analysing and interpreting the products of spontaneously occurring verbal exchange is not so much a reflection of analytic confusion, but rather the fact that there are many approaches to interactional analysis. Everyday verbal exchange is "a multifaceted and complex human activity" as Labov and Fanshel (1977: 349), and Chapter 2 of this thesis, have established. Yet, although one must simply accept that "no one technique could say very much of what could be said about a conversation" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 349), a principled approach is possible, and can help to minimise the kind of confusion to which Stubbs refers.

Labov and Fanshel propose a set of procedures for undertaking what they describe as 'comprehensive discourse analysis' (1977: Chapter 2). Their analysis delimits nine stages of procedure, and these can be summarised as follows:

(1) Recording—the provision of a mechanical (audio) record of some exchange; audio-visual records are also highly recommended, though they exacerbate the observer's paradox, and increase the complexity of information to be analysed;

(2) Editing—the preparation of a text, or transcript in terms of the words and other segmentable units taken from the recording;

(3) Fields of discourse—the analysis of contextual styles;

(4) Paralinguistic cues—the analysis of nonsegmentable units of text in terms of prosodic and paralinguistic phenomena;

(5) Expansion—the formal extension of editing to provide more explicit details, e.g. identifying the referents of pronouns and pro-forms;

(6) Propositions—the abstraction of implicit and explicit general statements from the expanded text, e.g. identifying recurrent themes that are communicated between participants, modes of argument etc.

(7) Rules of discourse—the determination of rules for producing and interpreting speech acts, e.g. the rule for making requests;

(8) Interaction—the determination of the actions that are being performed by speakers through their utterances; e.g. representations, requests, challenges;

(9) Sequences—the analysis of the sequential connections that emanate from the nature of the speech acts involved; e.g. acknowledgements and responses.

This schema provides Labov and Fanshel with a research tool to facilitate the investigation of selected episodes of verbal exchange as psychotherapy. The key element of the schema is 'interaction'; the process of determining the *actions* which

affect, alter, or maintain relations between interlocutors (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 58ff.). Labov and Fanshel go on to note that "crucial actions are not just such speech acts as requests and assertions, but rather challenges, defenses, and retreats, which have to do with the status of the participants, their rights and obligations, and their changing relationships in terms of social organization" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 58-59).

Since they constitute the difference between 'what is said' and 'what is done', communicative actions, or rather chains of actions, are viewed as the pivotal construct in the analytic process. Labov and Fanshel explain:

> We have attempted to give specific form to this general distinction and to marshal all of the evidence at our disposal to support these chains of speech actions. Since the interactional statements are always the most abstract, the evidence is always indirect, but these statements provide an account of what the speakers are doing in verbal interaction and so approach the description of meaning in speech. (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 357–58)

It is this kind of analytic mode that I think can be warranted by third person interpretation, where the notion of 'what is said' and 'what is done' in verbal exchange can be can be recovered *post hoc* by both participants and outside observers. But how can this mode be applied in practice? The following analytic tasks are mooted by way of preparing the ground for an answer to this question. They include the process of recording, transcribing, and reporting on speech activities in order to model what members know about verbal communication.

3.1.1 Recording Speech Activities

The question of how one selects a particular event or speech activity to record is usually dependent on the requirements of the project in hand, or the intended 'product' of investigation. Notwithstanding the effects of Labov's 'observer's paradox', the difficulty of capturing the informal spontaneity of verbal exchange by some mechanical means, whether it be audio or audio-visual recordings, is well

documented. Crystal (1983), for example, argues that is virtually impossible to capture this spontaneity using a process of controlled intuitive reflection. However, a corpus-based approach is not without its difficulties either. Grimshaw (1982) notes that two central problems are the logistical demands of accomplishing 'comprehensive discourse analysis' on the one hand, and working with data that are less than fully satisfactory on the other. He cites the following reasons as to why these problems should arise (Grimshaw, 1982: 15–16):

> (a) a paucity of texts of complete speech events, and of events involving more than two participants, and of events focussed on different topics and/or ends;
>
> (b) lack of an ethnographic grounding (or failure to provide it where it might be available) for those texts which are employed;
>
> (c) low quality of textual records generally, and particularly a scarcity of texts with multi-channel (i.e. film or video as well as aural) recordings.

These factors are not to deny that we need many records of naturally occurring conversations, but rather to recognise the intrinsic difficulties of obtaining them for professional observation and analysis; no analysis can overcome flawed recordings for example. I shall argue that the need to supplement these records is paramount, especially with regard to using participant concerns as part of the warranting process.

It is also important to recognise that different kinds of data may be at issue. Grimshaw, for instance, lists the following four possibilities (Grimshaw, 1974: 421):

> (1) 'natural' speech (and other communicative behavior) observed in natural settings;

(2) 'natural' speech (and other communicative behavior) observed in contrived settings (which can become natural), viz., in gatherings convened by the [investigator] or in experimental groups, etc.;

(3) elicited speech (and/or other communicative behavior) reported to [investigators] in response to direct inquiry;

(4) historical and/or literary materials.

Roger and Bull (1989) report that a major methodological issue in the study of interpersonal communication concerns the contexts in which the data are actually collected. They compare in this respect the different approaches taken by social psychologists and conversation analysts, where the former rely heavily on research techniques based on experimentation and quantification, and the latter on techniques based on naturally occurring situations. Roger and Bull explain that by using laboratory settings, social psychologists aim to exert as much control as possible over particular speaker variables that are considered as independent, for example, age, sex, ethnicity, personality and so on. The effects of these manipulations are then observed on dependent variables, such as rate of interruption, and the data are then subjected to statistical analysis. Conversation analysts, on the other hand, strive to employ naturally occurring conversations which can be systematically inspected for pattern. They are not interested in manipulating variables, and their analyses are consequently qualitative rather than quantitative in nature.

Unfortunately, these differences in method have been perceived as dichotomous rather than complementary, which has led to considerable divisiveness between the two traditions. Roger and Bull cite the work of Heritage (1984), for instance, in which the latter argues that experimental work is contrived, since laboratory-based conversations are by nature artificial (Roger and Bull, 1989: 67). Indeed, Heritage goes further than this to claim "that the problem of

experimenter effect is so serious that it is better to work with data derived only from naturally occurring situations" (op cit.: 67). This claim tends to be countered by investigators working in social psychology who suggest that conversation analytic work lacks any objective measure of control, thus resulting in difficulties at the stage of interpreting results.

Because of these difficulties, Roger and Bull suggest a framework for comparing the two approaches (1989: 68–73). This framework is based on the interrelationship of three features that constrain the kinds of exchange product that might be collected. These are:

(1) the selection of the participants;

(2) the setting;

(3) the reason for the exchange.

Roger and Bull conclude that what distinguishes the experimental and naturalistic approaches is not so much selection of participants, or the nature of setting, but rather the reason as to why some exchange has taken place. What they do not appear to discuss is the kind of data that may very well be of the naturalistic type, but which is then subject to further manipulative work. What I am suggesting here is that there is a strong case to be made for making use of both these methodologies. Obviously, naturalistic data can be made the object of investigation in its own right as conversation analysis has demonstrated. However, it can also be used to elicit what might best be described as third person 'interpretive' or 'observer' speech, that is, speech data that has been collected independently of the investigator's own observation.

It is this type of data that I will ultimately be concerned with. Indeed, it seems to be this interpretive approach that Widdowson (1979) had in mind when

challenging ethnomethodological claims about the investigation of actual discourse processes. Widdowson writes:

> The ethnomethodologists seem to make claims that they are dealing with process, with the ongoing accomplishments of practical reasoning, but although they make inferences about process, they typically deal with products. There is no evidence, to my knowledge, that they have attempted to conduct experiments that might yield information about how the participants see the discourse at a particular point in its development and what controls their options at this point. (Widdowson, 1979: 70)

While informant responses to data of various kinds have been the subject of interest for both sociolinguists and social psychologists, this interest has tended to concentrate on the study of language attitudes and interpersonal relations rather than the ongoing process of situated interpretation by participant interlocutors as they attempt to achieve their communicative ends.

Assuming the collection of analytically satisfactory audio-recordings to begin the study of these ends (see 3.1.1), the next question is what to do with them by way of making a data object that can be inspected at leisure.

3.1.2 Transcribing Speech Activities

Most studies of verbal exchange are based on a textual record of either audio or audio-visual recordings that have been collected by the analyst. This record is usually produced as a result of repeatedly listening to the recordings as an aid to analysis. Both the product (the transcript) and the process (transcribing) may be used to identify and locate phenomena of investigative interest. The product will of course depend on the kinds of information and/or detail that the analyst chooses to provide. But in an important sense, whatever is provided necessarily embodies an initial classification and even theorising about the raw material (Abercrombie, 1954).

Moreover, recordings themselves cannot provide a complete account of speech activities. How much reality can a recording capture then? It is difficult to answer this question with any kind of certainty, and the same kind of uncertainty clearly faces the transcriber. How much reality can a transcription capture? One can only try to provide as much detail as one can, but even the most fastidious and patient of scholars is faced with the dilemma that Stubbs raises. He notes:

> Transcription is an enormously lengthy business, and in itself cuts down the amount of data that can be reasonably analysed…Transcription time varies enormously depending on the complexity of the recording, but it could take a minimum of 20 hours to transcribe such a discussion down to word level and hesitation phenomena, and correspondingly much longer to transcribe for intonation or phonetically. (Stubbs, 1983: 222)

The issue of what to transcribe, how to transcribe it, and what makes a valid transcription, in the sense of how adequately it might represent the complexity of verbal communication, is a matter of some contention. It is also a matter that has been broached by different disciplines (see Roger and Bull, 1989, especially Section 3). However, it is not an issue that I wish to pursue here, beyond noting that there are clearly substantial differences between the transcription procedures employed by the various exponents of these disciplines. Roger and Bull (1989: 148) suggest that these differences are not irreconcilable, since they reflect different levels of analysis which can be placed along a continuum, depending on the level of the detail that the analyst seeks to represent. This appraisal may well be the case, but I think a more telling point is made by Jefferson, who writes:

> I take it that when we talk about transcription we are talking about one way to pay attention to recordings of actually occurring events. While those of us who spend a lot of time making transcripts may be doing our best to get it right, what that might mean is utterly obscure and unstable. It depends a great deal on what we are paying attention to. It seems to me, then, that the issue is not transcription *per se*, but what it is we might want to transcribe, that is attend to. (Jefferson, 1985: 25)

The issue that looms in Jefferson's remarks from my perspective is this—is what it is that *analysts* might want to attend to in spontaneously occurring verbal interaction(s) likely to be shared by its *participants*, and/or other outside observers, and if not, what is it that the latter might attend to instead? I confront this issue next.

3.2 Analytic Modes and Interpretive Practice

Verbal exchange has been the subject of investigation from a variety of disciplinary perspectives as I intimated in Chapter 2. A key, but often unstated, element of procedure in many of these approaches is the nature of interpretive practices invoked by analysing observers as they move from data to theory, if and where data is employed as part of the modelling process. In this regard, researchers have tended to rely on one of two major means of deriving information about the interactive products of speaker-hearer exchange. These are the so-called 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to modelling communicative activity between participants in talk, and emanate from the applied reasoning of the researchers' particular discovery procedures (cf. the use of these terms in work involving the computational modelling of language understanding as discussed in Brown and Yule, 1983: 234ff.).

The interpretive practices that these different processing models involve are the subject of discussion in Corsaro (1981). He writes,

> As Cicourel has argued, top-down models generally involve references to higher order predicates that index constituent parts of the discourse such as general goals, beliefs, events, procedures etc., or general relationships which exist between speakers (i.e. superordinate-subordinate alignments). Bottom-up models, however, are characterized by a focus on lower levels of abstraction like syntactic structure, propositional content of syntactic strings, turn-taking procedures etc., with little reference given to status characteristics of participants or organization features of interactive settings. (Corsaro, 1981: 24)

Cicourel's own approach to modelling is also elucidated by Corsaro who highlights the former's methodological and theoretical sensitivity to the complex and multifaceted nature of participant interactional processes on the one hand, and the equally complex issues relating to analytic interpretive procedures for investigating them on the other. This sensitivity, and the vast research potential of Cicourel's work, is manifest in his search to integrate the findings and utility of various discourse models within a single framework (see Corsaro's review, and Cicourel, 1980).

At the core of this enterprise is the idea that participants manipulate multiple levels of information and more than one type of logical reasoning in the course of their interactional accomplishments. Consequently, great care must be taken by the analysing observer because the data of such accomplishments must necessarily be extracted from the organisational settings in which they are realised. Two major methodological difficulties arise in this regard:

> First, researchers relying only on extracted discourse materials must stay close to the interactive data. As a result there can be no explicit attempt to invoke higher level predicates which would identify the kinds of social interaction taking place, how this interaction reveals complex biographical conditions and interpersonal relations, and the way all of these elements reflect aspects of social structure or institutional constraints, beliefs, and practices. (Cicourel, n.d.: 26, in Corsaro, 1981: 28)

What Cicourel seems to be suggesting is that data-driven analysis of extracted materials can distort the participants' sense of what is important for them within some speech event, by way of making explicit their motives and intentions, and individual or shared understandings of what is going on communicatively.

A second problem occurs when researchers (either explicitly or tacitly) go beyond the discourse materials and present interpretations which are based on idealised or stereotypical notions of the social and psychological characteristics of participants.

> When this kind of expansion occurs the problem is more one of 'reification' than mere distortion because the analysis takes on a more extensive, theoretical character which is not based on valid ethnographic observation of the participants and setting under study. (Corsaro, 1981: 28)

The onus on the researcher in the face of these problems is considerable if they are, indeed, to account for "all decisions and interpretations in analysis which involved linking different types and levels of data" (Corsaro, 1981: 29) as Cicourel appears to require. Apart from adopting multi-level analysis procedures, researchers are also urged to provide appropriate background ethnographic data, including 'chronologies' which account for how such data were collected and used in the analysis of discourse materials. In terms of the analytic process itself, Cicourel stresses the importance of assumptions about the reasoning processes of interactional participants. He notes: "Forms of reasoning are viewed as central to the researcher's understanding of the way speakers and hearers presumably understand each other" (Cicourel, 1980: 101). These forms of reasoning are, however, assumed to be recoverable since they are deemed to "parallel the reasoning we employ as researchers in making sense of the speech acts we record and listen to in arriving at some form of analysis" (op. cit.: 101).

This sense of parallelism appears to be shared by other investigators. Bublitz for example notes: "In principle, the analysing observer who is trying to understand is in a position not unlike that of the participating interlocutor. He too arrives at an understanding by means of interpretation, deduction and ascription" (Bublitz, 1988: 12). Bublitz is unequivocal about his role in the interpretive practices he pursues. He explains:

> In describing the pieces of conversation at issue here I also interpret them, i.e. I proceed from my understanding as *post hoc* participating observer, as it were, and provisionally assign speech act patterns and speaker attitudes, topics and topical action patterns, participant roles and coherence to the conversation as a whole and to separate parts. (Bublitz, 1988: 11)

Fairclough (1989: 166ff.) also considers the position of analyst to be akin to that of the participants. His answer to the question, "How is the analyst to gain access to the discourse processes of production and interpretation, when these processes take place in people's heads and therefore cannot be observed in the same way as one might observe processes in the physical world?", is to argue that the analyst must apply her own interpretive procedures "through her capacity to engage herself in the discourse process she is investigating". By drawing on their own interpretive resources to explain how participants operate in discourse, Fairclough argues that analysts must be sensitive to the procedures that they are in fact relying upon to do the analysis in question.

These procedures are rarely made explicit by analysts, but presumably must be the consequence of both everyday and professional assumptions about discourse. The distinction is important, because it helps to identify the essential difference between expert and participant interpretation as Fairclough explains: "The analyst is doing the same as the participant interpreter, but unlike the participant interpreter the analyst is concerned to explicate *what* she is doing" (Fairclough, 1989: 167). If this is the case, there is no reason, of course, why participants should not take part in the analytic process as *post hoc* observers. Cicourel has long argued in favour of using participants in this way as part of the procedure he describes as 'indefinite triangulation'. This procedure requires that "researchers elicit multiple interpretations of discourse materials from participants and compare these data with their own (researchers') interpretations of the same and similar events" (Corsaro, 1981: 30). As Corsaro goes on to explain, this approach was put forward by Cicourel as an important enabling mechanism for researchers who, by dint of consulting participants, could "check the validity of their interpretations *and* possibly discover the reasoning ability of social actors" (op. cit.: 30).

In using participants and researchers alike, Cicourel maintains that they should be viewed as limited capacity processors of information (cf. Sack's notion of 'inference-making machines' of which more later in this chapter). But this argument also has important consequences for methodological practice:

> Cicourel argues that researchers and informants 'are constrained by their knowledge base and contingencies of using working and long-term memory under changing conditions of analysis and social interaction' (n.d.: 35). Cicourel suggests that researchers can avoid the inevitable reification which occurs when they insist on finding something inherently meaningful in everything said by discourse participants, if they treat the processing limits of social actors as problematic aspects of discourse analysis. (Corsaro, 1981: 30)

The debate about analysts' versus users' models of language is constructively tackled by Stubbs (1986, Chapter 14). Although principally concerned with the relationship of linguistic theory to pedagogical practice, Stubbs's argument that the descriptions of professional analysts can be strengthened by taking into account everyday, lay perceptions of language use is widely applicable. Interestingly, Stubbs does not set such models in apposition but rather suggests that they can be mutually enlightening for research purposes, whether these are theoretically or practically oriented. I would strongly support this position on the grounds that analyst models are always likely to be artifactual to an extent because they are warped by professional training and the strength of theory (cf. Bradac et al., 1980).

If we consider the process of 'triangulation', for example, as a method that "resuscitates intended meanings and interpretations allowing the researcher to elucidate the significance of the talk for the talkers" (Adelman, 1981: 7), then I suggest great care must taken. The substance of the work reported in Adelman is concerned with evaluating the interactional success of teacher-pupil exchanges. But the fact is that these evaluations are provided by *post hoc* inferential processes, and their significance is not widely explored. In order to begin such exploration, it

seems to me that some kind of interpretive framework is required which can accommodate the analytic work of professional investigators on the one hand, and the evaluations of non-trained members on the other. This framework needs to recognise the varying roles that individuals can adopt as 'listeners', whether in their capacity as actual participants, or analysts, or outside observers. Each of these roles can be viewed on a continuum of collaborative discourse as Rost (1990) suggests. This continuum is salient because it helps to define the nature of deictic relations that link different kinds of listeners with particular speech activities.

3.2.1 Inferential Roles and Person Deixis

Levinson points out that:

> Given the undoubted importance of deixis to philosophical, psychological and linguistic approaches to the analysis of language, there has been surprisingly little work of a descriptive nature in the area, with a consequent lack of adequate theories and frameworks of analysis. (Levinson, 1983: 61)

Following Levinson's lead, I suggest that person deixis not only provides a means of categorising participant roles in the moment-by-moment process of taking turns at talk, but also offers a framework for the experimental study of *post hoc* interpretation by different kinds of listener.

Within the participation framework, Levinson suggests the following deictic categories:

> the category *first person* is the grammaticalization of the speaker's reference to himself, *second person* the encoding of the speaker's reference to one or more addressees, and *third person* the encoding of reference to persons and entities which are neither speakers nor addressees of the utterance in question. (Levinson, 1983: 62)

These categories need to be further refined, however, to differentiate between the interpretive work of ratified or non-ratified overhearer presence on the one hand, and those whose presence is unknown on the other.

The actual activity of talk requires the mutual presence (or at least contact between, in the case of telecommunications) of two or more individuals. This activity provides a set of positions for identifying present and participating parties, that is, individuals who take on the roles of speaker/hearers. The participation framework thus provides a context in which speaker/hearers are related to each other, because of their mutual presence and shared responsibility for talk. Importantly, it also provides a context in which the persons' concerned relate to what is produced, that is, to the talk itself (Schiffrin, 1987).

From the present perspective, this framework has been most elegantly characterised by Bell (1984) in terms of the concept 'Audience Design', that is, where everyday language use "assumes that persons respond mainly to other persons, that speakers take most account of their hearers in designing their talk" (Bell, 1984: 159). Thus speaker/hearers who become primary participants at the moment of speech, do so in the first person, which distinguishes them in qualitative terms from all other interlocutors: "The first person's characteristics account for speech differences between persons" (Bell, 1984: 159). Bell's basic hypothesis is that 'speakers design their style for their audiences'.

But this hypothesis concerns us here only in so far that it enables Bell to attribute differences within the speech of a single speaker to the presence and/or influence of other parties, that is, to second and third persons (cf. Goffman, 1981; Goodwin, 1981). Bell writes:

> We may distinguish and rank audience roles according to whether or not the persons are known, ratified, or addressed by the speaker…The main character in the audience is the second person, the addressed. There may also be others, third persons, present but not directly addressed. Known and ratified interlocutors in the group, I term auditors. Third parties whom the speaker knows to be there, but who are not ratified participants, are overhearers. Other parties whose presence is unknown are eavesdroppers, whether intentionally or by chance. (Bell, 1984: 159)

The characterisation Bell offers provides a means for beginning to explore different kinds of listening behaviour, particularly where more than two parties are likely to contribute to some speech event (for example, as at a party, or in a seminar, or meeting). It also enables consideration of other non-speaking participants—the audiences 'out there', if you like, who undertake interpretive work in cinemas, theatres, and at home listening to the radio and watching television sets. The role of such individuals is traditionally seen as passive, but this is far from being the case as Bell is quick to recognise. As auditors, albeit in the marked kinds of setting being considered, they too become actively participant in the communicative process of selecting, interpreting and creating patterns of significance from the particular medium they have chosen to attend (see McGregor and White (1986); McGregor and White (1990), who extend this argument to include the inferential work of both listening and reading audiences, in respect of a wide variety of spoken and written texts).

The inferential status of such non-speaking participants is broadly akin to that of persons who may or may not have been present at the speech activity in question, but whose motivation for attending to it is likely to be quite different. Within the participation framework, individuals presumably listen to talk because they expect to make use of it in some way; let us say for purposes of comprehension and recall. However, it is clear that in circumstances where we are 'overhearers' or 'eavesdroppers', our motivation for listening must be different. The Shakespearian characters of Othello and Iago provide an interesting case in point, where each seeks to glean information by deliberate eavesdropping for his own particular and quite distinctive ends. Placed in a position of listening to 'what is going on', or to 'what has gone on' in the talk of others, and seeking to make sense of it, requires inferential work of a different kind.

Precisely what this work involves is not much explored despite the ramifications it has for the analysis of the data products of verbal exchange. A key element in such work has to be what motivates our listening in the first place. Another key element is the nature of our relationship to the material in hand. Let us return to the role of the professional analyst and lay observer of talk in this regard because the deictic relationship of any outside party to the participants and their talk alike can only be indirect. Thus as Leech points out, it is a 'receiver' rather than 'addressee' that the analyst of pragmatic meaning, for example, undertakes his or her work: "The analyst of pragmatic meaning is best thought of as a receiver a proverbial 'fly on the wall' who tries to make sense of the context of discourse according to whatever contextual evidence is available" (Leech, 1983: 13). The nature of this evidence is not always fully documented, though recall Labov and Fanshel's procedures for undertaking comprehensive discourse analysis which attempts to "bring together all the information we might have that will help in understanding the production, interpretation, and sequencing of the utterance in question" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 49). But, whatever the procedure adopted by the professional analyst I take it that her or his interest will be stimulated by a very different kind of audience design from that of the lay observer. I also take it that the interpretive resources of lay and professional observers are likely to be different in kind.

These differences need to be recognised, because they are liable to affect the process of interpretation as it is applied from an observer's perspective. A schematic representation of different listener roles in discourse is presented in Figure 3.2. This figure is adapted from Rost (1990: 5), which in turn is an adapted version of a schema developed from earlier work of my own (McGregor, 1986a).

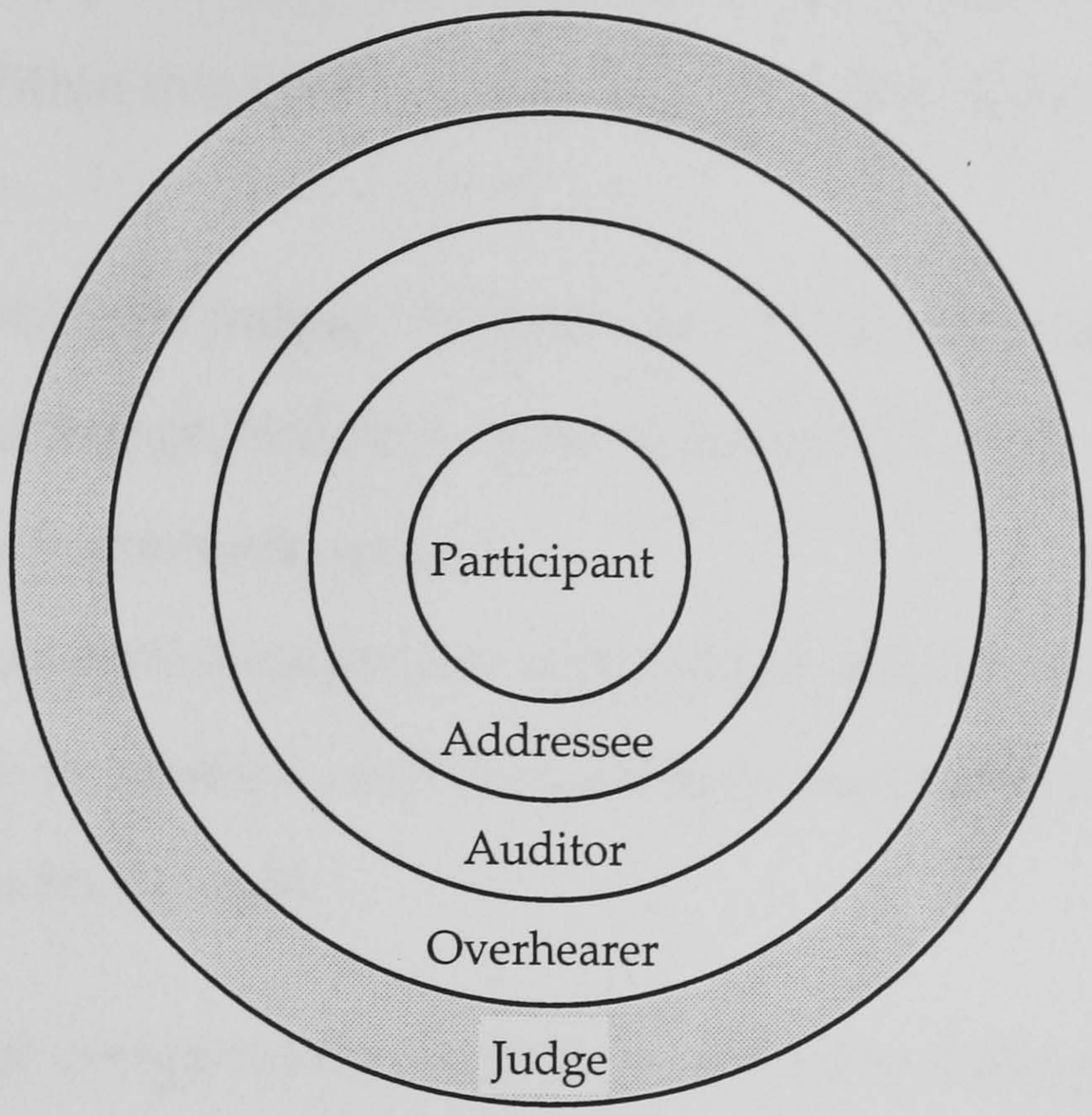

FIGURE 3.2

A Schematic Representation of Listener Roles

The diagram ascribes the following roles:

(1) Participant—a person who is being spoken to directly and who has speaking rights equal to others involved in the discourse;

(2) Addressee—a person in a discourse who is being spoken to directly and who has limited rights to respond;

(3) Auditor—a person in a discourse who is a member of an audience that is being addressed directly and who has very limited rights to respond and is not expected to respond;

(4) Overhearer—a person who is not being addressed, but who is within earshot of the speaker, and has no rights or expectations to respond;

(5) Judge—a person who is outside the participation framework at the time of listening, is not being addressed, but who seeks to respond to the (usually

tape-recorded) product of some discourse for designated, experimental purposes. Within this final category it is necessary to further distinguish between:

(i) *third person participant-judges*—individuals who have actually participated in a recorded exchange, and then come to respond to it from outside the participation framework, and

(ii) *third person non-participant judges*—individuals who have not participated in the exchange in question, and then come to respond to it from outside the participation framework.

Both these latter categories can be further refined to distinguish between professional participant judges (as in the case of Grimshaw above), professional non-participant judges (as in the case of Bublitz) and both participant and non-participant lay judges. It is the inferential capacity of participant and non-participant lay judges that is of particular concern here.

But what kinds of information do different interpreters derive from the same text? And what kinds of interpretive procedures are employed to derive this information? These questions launch the empirical work presented in the following chapters by means of higher level analysis of such descriptive vocabularies of selected texts that one might elicit from third person judges under quasi-experimental conditions. By working backwards from these vocabularies, I suggest that it ought to be possible to recover the nature of members' interpretive capacities, where these are derived from a combination of what Fairclough (1989: 141) describes as being generated from (a) what is 'in' the text itself and (b) what is 'in' the interpreter, in the sense of the members' resources which the latter brings to interpretation.

Like Fairclough, I will prefer the term 'resource' to 'knowledge' because of the restrictive, cognitive associations the latter term has. These resources are based on what Fairclough describes as "common-sense assumptions and expectations" (op cit.: 78) taken from the familiar everyday world that Harold Garfinkel made the object of ethnomethodological study. As Fairclough explains: "Such assumptions and expectations are implicit, backgrounded, taken for granted, not things that people are consciously aware of, rarely explicitly formulated or examined or questioned" (op cit.: 77). This is not to say that the assumptions and expectations of ordinary language users cannot be investigated. I believe they can in the form of the third person data that is considered in this thesis. But such investigation requires yet another level of 'interpretation', one in which the data base of interpretive responses is itself subject to inspection and interpretation for purposes of recovering members' resources, where these must have applied in some way in order to supply the information described in the context of the following chapters.

3.2.2 *Post Hoc* Inferencing

It is only within the last ten years or so that investigators of verbal communication have attempted to make use of participants and outside observers as an integral part of the interpretive analytic process (cf. Kreckel, 1981 and Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b; Tannen, 1984), though Grimshaw's (1982: 37) suggestion that increasing numbers of investigators are employing such practices is perhaps a little over optimistic. Gumperz's work, for example, is based on the premise that focussed participants in various kinds of verbal exchange may be supposed to know what is going on in them. Moreover, he demonstrates that this knowledge is recoverable in a *post hoc* sense, by employing a set of discovery procedures for investigating the kinds of factors that influence and shape the communicative process. Gumperz argues that:

> The analyst's task is to make an in-depth study of selected instances of verbal interaction, observe whether or not actors understand each other, elicit participants' interpretations of what goes on, and then (a) deduce the social assumptions that speakers must have made in order to act as they do, and (b) determine empirically how linguistic signs communicate in the interpretive process. (Gumperz, 1982: 36)

Whilst Gumperz recognises that members' judgements may be elusive, he nonetheless demonstrates that close inspection of conversational exchange allied with descriptive inductive techniques can yield important results. These results are variously reported in Gumperz (1982a; 1982b) where small fragments of data are subject to the methods he describes.

In citing the following encounter, for example, and requiring judges to explain what they thought the speaker was intending to convey, Gumperz was able to elicit a variety of interpretations. The encounter is reported thus (Gumperz, 1982a: 30):

> Following an informal graduate seminar at a major university, a black student approached the instructor, who was about to leave the room accompanied by several other black and white students, and said:
>
> a. Could I talk to you for a minute? I'm gonna apply for a fellowship and I was wondering if I could get a recommendation?
>
> b. O.K. Come along to the office and tell me what you want to do.
>
> As the instructor and the rest of the group left the room, the black student said, turning his head ever so slightly to the other students:
>
> c. Ahma git me a gig! (Rough gloss: 'I'm going to get myself some support.')

The question Gumperz poses in respect of this data is: "How do we analyse such exchanges so as to account for both the linguistic and social knowledge participants rely on in interpreting what went on?" (op. cit.: 30).

Apart from descriptive linguistic information about the distinctive lexis, phonology and syntax, as the student changes from Standard English to Black English, Gumperz reports that judges treated the exercise as a call for: "interpretations of intent, rather than descriptions of referential meaning or

statements about conformance to norms of appropriateness" (op. cit.: 31). Four different groups of response to the extract were identified depending on the nature of their focus on the data. Thus, one group failed to understand, or did not recognise the lapse in dialect. Another evaluated the switch from Standard English to Black English Vernacular as a statement rejecting white academic values. A third perceived some kind of conversational strategy intimating network identity with other Black students in the group. Whilst the fourth offered explanations of intent, along the lines of 'Black game playing in a White dominated environment'.

Further consideration of these evaluations enables Gumperz to identify the kinds of knowledge and assumptions that judges must have drawn from in order to offer the information they do. The crux of his analysis involves showing how different features of discourse (Gumperz calls them 'contextualization conventions' or 'contextualization cues') contribute to participants' interpretations of each others' motives and intentions in order to maintain conversational involvement; where 'intent' is defined in the special sense of: "the socially recognised communicative intent that is implied in particular kinds of social activities signalled in discourse" (Gumperz, 1982b: 17). In putting forward this sociolinguistic approach to discourse analysis, Gumperz argues that the guiding principle is to discover what is necessary for the maintenance of conversational cooperation: "Conversational cooperation is commonly understood to refer to the assumptions that conversationalists must make about each others' contributions and to the conversational principles on which they rely" (Gumperz, 1982b: 17). To this end, three types of analysis are applied to different fragments of data. These are (Gumperz, 1982b: 19):

(1) language usage—an examination of participants' actual verbal practices and patterns of speech;

(2) inferencing—the interactive mechanisms negotiated by participants to derive interpretations, and monitor communicative success;

(3) evaluations—the determination of reflexive formulations by participants for appraising what has been constituted as talk is in progress.

This analytic process and the kinds of information it seeks to model are only ever treated by Gumperz in an *ad hoc* way, however.

Compare in this respect, the detailing of pragmatic inferences in the following constructed data example presented in Levinson (1983: 48):

(1) A: So can you please come over here again right now

(2) B: Well, I have to go to Edinburgh today sir

(3) A: Hmm. How about this Thursday?

Levinson offers six facts that can be inferred from the data including "facts about the spatial, temporal and social relationships between the participants, and their requisite beliefs and intentions in undertaking certain verbal exchanges" (Levinson, 1983: 49). This information is presumably generated not only by what is in the text, but also by the logical processes that Levinson must have employed to derive them. Levinson suggests, in fact, that the inferences he makes are systematic, in the sense that "they are decodable by different interpreters in the same way" (op. cit.: 49). This claim seems to me to be problematic, given the likely difference between the kind of inferential work that Gumperz describes and the professionally motivated inferencing of Levinson. However, it seems reasonable to assume that other individuals from the same speech community should possess inferential abilities of the kind Gumperz puts forward. This ability would seem to be linked to the capacity of human beings to describe or make sense of anything at all as de Beaugrande (1980: 30) argues: "The question of how people know what is

going on is a special case of the question of how people know what is going on in a text at all" (de Beaugrande, 1980: 30).

The kind of interpretive capacity suggested by de Beaugrande was first recognised in any explicit sense in a brilliant series of lectures given by the late Harvey Sacks (1967–72), whose ideas about talk are characterised by their emphasis on practical reasoning and social cognition. Sack's work presupposes the use of interpretive procedures that are learned by individuals as a general phenomenon, the mechanisms of which are displayed in even the smallest and most fleeting fragments of verbal exchange. To the extent that these mechanisms are shared, that is related to the values, norms and concerns of others, they become what Sacks terms 'observables'. Thus individuals "can deal with and categorize and make statements about communicative events previously unseen"; they can act as inference-making machines (Sacks, 1985). It is the capacity of different individuals to act as inference-making machines that I believe can help facilitate analyses of the kind Gumperz puts forward.

3.2.3 Studying Inferential Capacity

Apart from the interactional sociolinguistic research that Gumperz and others have launched, and as far as I am aware, the only systematic and empirically based work that has made the inferential capacity of ordinary members its object of investigation is that of Kreckel (1981). Using data from *The Family*, a televised documentary about life in a British urban environment, Kreckel sets out to investigate how members of the family talk to one another in order to achieve their communicative ends. Two questions are at the heart of this enterprise:

(1) How do speakers transmit messages in natural discourse?;

(2) What are the physical properties of these messages?

In developing a theoretical framework to address these questions, Kreckel demonstrates that family members know a great deal about one another, and use this knowledge in everyday communication. In order to study what it is that they know, she sets out to explore the idea that various degrees of conceptual convergence operate in different kinds of interaction. This sense of convergence is related to how participants perceive the interaction emotionally with respect to expectations about the achievement of mutual understanding, and their likely tolerance of frustration if these expectations are not met. The difference between the speech activities of family members and relative strangers in this regard leads Kreckel to hypothesise that:

> the better that people know each other, the more they expect complete understanding…and the greater the frustration if the interaction does not live up to it. Conversely, the less people know each other, the lower the level of expectation and the higher the tolerance of frustration. (Kreckel, 1981: 40)

Kreckel is not only interested in the psychology of interpersonal familiarity, but also in how communicants interpret their own interactions. Do participants share the same view of what has been achieved or understood through verbal communication, or do they have quite different views?

The empirical research that is undertaken to explore the extent of conceptual convergence in verbal exchange, and its impact on the understanding achieved by different interlocutors, is based on the analytic procedure of drawing inferences from observable utterances. In this regard, she proposes that there will be a difference in the status of professional as opposed to lay interpretations of communicative acts. Hence she suggests:

(i) that only linguists and philosophers of a certain persuasion will approach verbal interaction from a metasemantic perspective;

(ii) that naive native speakers can be expected to possess metapragmatic abilities;

(iii) that they will produce metapragmatic categories when describing what is achieved by speech;

(iv) that participants in the interaction and outside observers will make use of the same type of categories, but not necessarily of the same tokens. (Kreckel, 1981: 131)

These hypotheses are investigated by a four way analysis which is based on:

(a) establishing that tone units are the units of speech that naive, native speakers associate with interactional messages;

(b) exploring how such units are geared towards performing acts of communication;

(c) demonstrating that in order to interpret tone units in terms of these acts naive, native speakers have to make use of metalinguistic abilities;

(d) developing a coding instrument for representing these abilities as expressed by a catalogue of descriptive terms or categories used by naive, native speaker to interpret selected tone units in terms of what is done with speech.

'Metapragmatic' categories stand for the communicative concepts conveyed by specific tone units, and as a result of Kreckel's work, 210 of these categories were generated (see, for example, the tokens listed in Appendix J which were identified in Study V of her research). The scheme which Kreckel puts forward for representing these categories is formulated on the principle that 'etic' and 'emic' coding schemes are of limited value to the research worker who is interested in specifying the kinds of communicative act, or acts which may be employed by speaker-hearers in the course of verbal exchange. Kreckel offers instead the notion of 'ethnomic classification': "In contrast to etic categories ethnomic ones are derived from naive, native speakers; in contrast to emic categories they are not

confined to speakers whose communication is based on one specific system" (Kreckel, 1981: 142-143).

Thus while the etic point of view studies communicative behaviour from outside a particular system, and the emic from within the system, Kreckel argues that ethnomic categories are of more relevance to analysts of verbal exchange because they are: "The condensate of the sub-code specific repertoires of the naive, native speakers from whom they have been elicited" (Kreckel, 1981: 143). What Kreckel is suggesting here is that analysts can explore the naive native speaker's ability to name the messages that are communicated in speech activities by ethnographic research into the nature of their listening behaviour as *post hoc* observers. This ability presumably stems from interactionally developed, metalinguistic capacity, where this pertains to the kinds of report that different individuals are able to provide about what is accomplished by context-dependent speech (Kreckel, 1981: 129). In short, Kreckel's work demonstrates that listeners must have a highly developed model of the kinds of things that speakers can say.

Something of the character of this model may be expected to depend on the metalinguistic repertoire available within a given language or speech community, though the actual metalinguistic performance of participant and outside observers may be hampered, first, by lack of awareness of what is achieved through the highly conventionalised medium of speech, and second, by the impact of extralinguistic knowledge about the construction of specific events. However, the nature of such repertoires tends to be little explored in linguistic study, and it is this hiatus that is of central concern here.

The need to investigate the interpretive repertoires of naive native listeners, without attempting to pre-empt or prejudge what kinds of information they might provide, is I believe analytically paramount. But as Labov and Fanshel (1977),

amongst others, have recognised there is a critical methodological issue that attends any attempt to model the communicative properties of verbal exchange. The issue is that: "Working with real conversations of real speakers poses a profound and perhaps insoluble problem for the external observer, and we may refer to this as the 'problem of correct interpretation'" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 350).

3.3 The Problem of Interpretation

The problem of interpretation arises because the perceived significance and/or communicative effects of verbal exchange can only be studied as an *emergent* phenomenon. This phenomenon is explicitly specifiable retrospectively, and then only by way of simplifying procedures that may well distort the participants' experience (Dore and McDermott, 1982: 386). In other words, it is impossible to determine exactly what it is that participants understand in the moment-by moment sequencing of verbal exchange. This issue is confronted in the remainder of this section.

The concept of 'understanding' is arguably at the very core of how forms of language are used in interpersonal communication as I intimated in Chapter 2. As such, it raises a number of fundamental questions, many of which underlie linguistic inquiry in general, as Rost (1990) suggests. These questions are:

> To what extent can we say that the interlocutors of any interaction understand each other? To what extent do they 'comprehend' through the words that an interlocutor uses and to what extent do they 'interpret' ideas that are related to the words that an interlocutor uses? Is understanding a mental phenomenon recoverable through probing the mind of the hearer or is it a social phenomenon recoverable through examination of subsequent behaviour by the listener? (Rost, 1990: 1)

It is the latter part of Rost's final question that is the most obviously pertinent to the work of this thesis because of its focus not only on the nature of content in

language, but also on the nature of interlocutor roles in verbal interaction. The issue of 'understanding', in the sense that there has been 'subsequent behaviour by the listener', becomes empirically researchable for the very reason that it is manifest in how individual interlocutors make sense of what has been said. But accounting for the nature of this behaviour is not as straightforward as one might imagine, because of 'the problem of interpretation'. At least two major difficulties confront the analyst in this regard. These are the questions of 'What is salient?' and 'What is idiosyncratic?' in *post hoc* interpretation.

3.3.1 What is Salient?

First, and to the best of my knowledge, it is impossible to determine exactly what a listener understands in the sequential process of taking turns at talk. Unlike the grammarian who can "view a sentence as an enduring structure to be scanned at leisure", the listener "is exposed to an utterance just once and is "forced to register its ingredients in just the temporal sequence in which it reaches him" (Hockett 1986: 50). Not only that but the listener "cannot know for sure part way through an utterance just what is going to be said next; he can at most have an array of expectations derived from earlier experience (that is from his knowledge of the language) and from what has been said so far this time" (op. cit: 50). Given that the interpretive strategies of focussed addressees are context-specific, analysts surely cannot know for certain what has been of particular communicative salience for the participants. What analysts can do, however, is to pursue either or both of the following lines of inquiry:

> One can on the one hand, deal with instances of discourse from the point of view of the third person analyst; that is to say, one can deal with discourse from the point of view of the participants caught, as it were, in the act, that is to say as a process. (Widdowson, 1979: 70–71)

Whatever the method of inquiry, however, we simply must accept that the problem of correct interpretation can never be resolved entirely because, as analysts, we "can never hope to have *all* the knowledge that the participants shared among themselves" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 351; my emphasis). As Widdowson (1979: 70) neatly puts it "what the analyst observes is not necessarily what the participant experiences". The question thus arises as to how we can overcome this difficulty for analytic method without falsifying or simplifying the complexity of processes that everyday talk involves.

In order to offer any assessment of what is going on, that goes beyond his or her own subjective platform, I suggest that the analyst must accommodate participant perspectives. However, a second difficulty arises in attempts to ascertain what type of communicative activity has taken place from the purview of participant interlocutors, and thence to delimit the necessary forms of knowledge that their talk implies. Put another way, how do analysts know that their interpretation of a text is not idiosyncratic?

3.3.2 What is Idiosyncratic?

The difficulty here is due to the fact that there appears to be many levels of contextual frames that affect the interpretation of participant motives and intent. Can analysts unequivocally state what some speaker has 'meant' or prescribe the communicative effect of what has been said from the actual listeners point of view? The answer to this question would seem to be a guarded 'no', since among other issues analysts must confront the established asymmetry between utterance production and utterance comprehension (see also Tannen's (1984: 37ff.) discussion of 'accountability in interpretation', of which more below).

Straight (1976; 1982; 1986), for instance argues that any processually neutral account of language knowledge is problematic. It is problematic because research

from various disciplines (Straight cites work in semantics, syntax, phonology historical and developmental linguistics, sociolinguistics, and neurolinguistics) indicates that the kinds of information processed by the comprehension mechanism are qualitatively different from those produced by the production mechanism. These differences suggest that there may be a gap in the communicative interface between 'intention' and 'effect'.

Something of this gap has been explored in the context of Grice's work on conversational implicature (Grice, 1968). By making the distinction between 'what is said' and 'what is implicated', Grice was able to demonstrate that 'intention' is a dynamically manipulable variable. As a consequence of examining the processes involved in the interpretation of different types of utterance, Grice raised the particular problem of how listeners assign implicatures to what is said on some given occasion of utterance. These implicatures may be considered as indirectly conveyed 'understandings'; they provide the difference between locutionary content and illocutionary force.

Work on the underlying meaning of conversation put forward by Grice and others clearly recognises that listeners take into account the essentially reflexive nature of 'intention'. Bach and Harnish, for example, note that "the intended effect of an act of communication is not just any effect produced by means of the recognition of the intention to produce an effect, it is the *recognition* of that effect" (Bach and Harnish, 1979: 15, my italics). However, it must surely be the case that something more complex than this is going on in verbal exchange, because we cannot really recover 'intention' except through the nature of some reply and response to it (cf. Goffman, 1976). Subsequently, analysts need to account not only for the performance and recognition of various acts of speech, but also for circumstances in which different meanings are imputed. Distortion and

simplification are inevitable if unanimity is assumed between utterance and interpretation as Goffman (1976) recognises. He notes:

> (If speakers and hearers were to file a report on what they assumed to be the full meaning of an extended utterance, these glosses would differ, at least in detail). Indeed, one routinely presumes on a mutual understanding that doesn't quite exist. (Goffman, 1976: 261)

The reasons why this mutual understanding does not quite exist are presumably also related to the individual and social differences that occur within contexts that help to determine the nature of verbal communication. Lesley Milroy (1984), for example, cites various instances of 'miscommunication' which arise due to syntactic, contextual and inferential disparities that may exist between speakers from different dialect backgrounds. In order to avoid such disparities, individuals must do communicative work to inform themselves of what they are jointly doing. However, "the momentary and often fragmentary understandings which people must share in order to organize their concerted behavior" (Dore and McDermott, 1982: 386) are not entities that exist in either time or space. They are the result of what Dore and McDermott refer to as "working consensuses".

The problem for the analyst is how to assess the kinds of consensus that has been reached (if any) as talk is actually in progress. Goffman summarises this dilemma as follows: "How individuals arrive at an effective interpretation on all those occasions when the stream of experience makes this easy and instantaneous is not much explored, this exploration being rather difficult to take from a sitting position" (Goffman, 1976: 278). In other words, the question facing the analyst is: How can one ascertain 'what is going on' in the talk of others, such that one can provide evidence for one's claims?

Labov and Fanshel's comprehensive discourse analysis suggests that an approximate solution to the problem of interpretation can be offered by developing strategies that take into account as much of the available evidence as

possible. But the extent we can formalise such strategies, or indeed fulfil the kind of research programme Labov and Fanshel envisage, is not only subject to the kinds of constraints discussed thus far, it is also subject to the deeper, metatheoretical question that I raised at the outset of this chapter, that is: "Whose model (of a fragment) of language our investigations represent—those of the analyst or those of the participants?"

Although the accuracy, relevance and use of participant reports in helping to analyse conversational data has attracted criticism on conceptual grounds (see, for example, Goodwin, 1981: 33ff.), I want to emphasise the positive aspects of such an approach without minimising the inherent difficulties it involves. Thus criticisms of the kind levied by Goodwin and others are countered here on the grounds that:

(1) analysts miss essential knowledge about verbal exchange by ignoring lay interpretations;

(2) lay interpretations are entirely legitimate, though they may differ from those of professional analysts (cf. Tannen, 1984; Bublitz, 1988);

(3) lay interpretations can be investigated directly in ways Gumperz (1982a) and Kreckel (1981) and Tannen (1984) have suggested;

(4) lay interpretations ought to be investigated systematically because I presume that if a linguistic phenomenon is spoken about by native language users, it merits professional concern.

Tannen (1984: 37) addresses the potential objection "How do you know this is what is really going on?" with respect to her analysis of 'talk among friends' by offering three replies. The first suggests that we must accept interpretive multiplexity. She writes:

> I do not offer mine as THE explanation of what is going on. It is simply one explanation, an account of certain aspects of a mass of components in the interaction. (Tannen, 1984: 37)

The second is to suggest that "interpretation is not fished out of the air". A set of procedures is offered by way of 'providing evidence for', rather than 'proofs of', what has gone on. These procedures include:

(i) evidence in the form of recurrent patterns of interactional phenomena;

(ii) evidence in the form of participant behaviour, for example, 'misunderstanding' or 'impatience';

(iii) evidence in the form of 'playbacks' to elicit the independent reactions of the participants.

And finally the third, and what Tannen suggests is "the most significant reply", is what she terms 'the ah ha factor'. However, this reply puzzles me a little, since it seems to deny the first premise of interpretive multiplexity. Tannen writes:

> If my interpretation is correct, then readers, on hearing my explication, will exclaim within their heads, 'Aha!' (Tannen, 1984: 38)

I am less convinced by this third procedure than with the first two, but wish to make special note of the interpretive evidence that can be provided by the technique of 'playback'. Apart from eliciting the independent reactions of participants, Tannen also uses this technique with outside observers. These are individuals who did not take part in the interaction in question, but who "listened to segments of the tape and commented on their reactions and the reasons for them" (Tannen, 1984: 38). My own work is based on a more systematic exploration of interpretive reactions of precisely this kind.

Quite apart from the kinds of interesting information that it might yield, I suggest that interpretations derived by playback can provide researchers with an important source of evidence as they move from data to theory, and hence help to

strengthen analytic claims. Perhaps it is simply a matter of having a little more faith in the abilities of lay judges. Kreckel (1981: 258), for example, reports that the performance of untrained outside observers in recognising and coding tone units to form communicative acts can be rated as 'highly satisfactory'. I am not suggesting that lay interpretations are likely to be any more 'correct', since I assume that individual and social differences in interpretation are to be expected. Indeed, Grimshaw (1982) acknowledges a striking lack of success in fully understanding the episode of verbal interaction he presents for analysis both in his roles as objective analyst and retrospective participant.

What I am suggesting is that the methodology of *post hoc* observation can be useful in providing a source of preliminary data about verbal interaction as Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991: 38 ff) also seem to suggest, since this approach helps to facilitate the initial formulation of conceptual categories for analysis, for example. What one must be cautious about, however, is the strength of analytic claims that are derived on the basis of such observations, as Coupland, Coupland and Giles readily acknowledge. They note: "The method does not allow for any degree of generalization; nor do we have the basis to claim here that the interactional strategies we identify and interpret are unique to intergenerational contexts" (Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991: 38). This is not to say that the adequacy of analytic claims is in doubt, but rather that they can be checked against other kinds of interpretation. It is something of this motivation that I guess underpins Grimshaw's call to extend our analyses, and therefore our understanding, of verbal exchange by means of "more adequate cognitive and cultural models of participants' knowledge and practices" (Grimshaw, 1982: 38).

From my own perspective, two fundamental questions are prompted by this suggestion. These are:

(1) How can we begin to provide such models?;

(2) What can they contribute to our understanding of the speech communication process?

It is these questions that motivate the empirical research presented in the following chapters, but in order to answer them a rather different approach to analysing verbal communication is required.

At the heart of this approach are the everyday resources that underpin third person interpretive practices. These are resources that enable (non) participants to: (a) perceive and interpret particular constellations of cues in reacting to the situated discourse of others, and (b) evaluate the discourse from a communicative point of view as individuals pursue their own, and/or conjoint, interactional ends. It is crucial to remember, however, that whatever method of inquiry is adopted, the problem of interpretation remains; or as Coupland, Coupland and Giles most appositely state, "there are no final or authoritative or final accounts of communication data" (Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991: 39).

3.4 Conclusion: The Need for 'Fresh Data'

As long ago as 1964, Hymes argued that in ethnographies of communication, there was a "need for *fresh* kinds of data, a need to discern patterns *proper* to speech activities, and that such an approach *could not* take linguistic form or a given code or speech itself as a frame of reference, but must investigate communicative habits *as a whole*" (Hymes, 1964: 2–3; my emphases). It is with this need in mind that I have chosen to research the value of third person interpretive data as part of the exploration of everyday communicative practices.

By close examination of what participant and non-participant listener judges have say about verbal exchange, I hope to demonstrate the potential rewards of

this kind of data as an investigative tool for complementing and supporting other kinds of interactional analysis. While Gumperz (1982a, 1982b) has focussed on the importance of contextualisation conventions for recovering what speakers are doing in talk, this work could benefit from wider and more systematic investigation with reference to third person perspectives.

Because of the interpretive possibilities they raise, these perspectives are likely to be no less complex in nature than the inferential processes which are used to create interactional products in the first place. This is not to argue that what third person interpreters have to say will necessarily match their experience as actual speaker-hearers, but merely to point out that the process of interpretation can be the object of empirical research; albeit from what has been understood outside the participation framework. The detailed methods and findings of this research are presented in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER 4

INVESTIGATING THIRD PERSON PERSPECTIVES

4.0 Empirical Orientation

From an analytic point of view, a first approach to the data of everyday verbal exchange usually focuses on the description of interactional phenomena that are revealed by different types of microanalysis drawn from observational and/or experimental studies, and which have been recorded by various overt and covert means using a variety of sorts of equipment. After undertaking a series of comparisons and contrasts regarding how such phenomena are manifest, analysts often document some claim about the general properties of the data in question. In the previous two chapters, I have established that a crucial element of this process is how arguments are actually assembled (cf. the methodological possibilities outlined in Section 3.0). I have also established the problems and limitations associated with attempts to warrant claims about features of talk on the basis of indirect evidence. A number of taxing questions face the analyst in this regard, including those raised by Jacobs (1986). Jacobs asks:

> How ... could an analyst's subjective *intuitions* about an *example* of discourse ever hope to serve as empirical evidence for some general property of language? How do we objectively verify the existence of the features the analyst claims to see in the examples? And how can we be sure that anyone else shares these intuitions? (Jacobs, 1986: 149)

These are questions that are not always confronted by analysts of talk. Indeed, the methodological and theoretical axioms that presuppose particular warrants about conversational data are often taken for granted. As a result, I suggest that general techniques for dealing with conversational material need to be developed

in a more principled way. Empirical claims about language use and structure really require systematic sampling and observation of actual linguistic behaviour.

In this regard, analysts of talk can learn from practices long established in secular sociolinguistic research, where issues of data collection, fieldwork strategy, and analysis are the subject of methodological and theoretical concern (see, for example, Milroy (1987), and Chapter 3 of this thesis). While appreciating the need for a more systematic approach, the present work seeks something of a different direction in attempting to unravel the intricacies of verbal interaction. The focus here is on communicative issues rather than the nature of vernacular language behaviour, and particularly the contribution of ordinary members in helping to delimit what these issues might involve. By exploring the interpretive resources of third person informants, I hope to demonstrate that it is possible to provide other kinds of evidence for warranting interactional goals. Presumably, the best analysts can do is to assemble as much and as many types of evidence about the nature of these goals as they can. The investigation of third person perspectives is an attempt to devise an analytic instrument for precisely this purpose.

4.1 Providing Evidence from Transcriptions

The work of Harvey Sacks, and subsequent scholarship in the conversation analytic tradition, has demonstrated that much important evidence about participant goals can be gleaned from what is observable in the properties of (recorded) interactional products. These products are then employed for the purpose of doing 'transcription', where this term can refer to "an activity, to the tools of that activity and to the result of that activity" (Kelly and Local, 1989: 197). Kelly and Local limit the use of the term 'transcription' to the activity itself. The terms 'notation', and 'record' or 'analysis', are used to describe the tools and results of the transcription process. This terminology will be adopted here.

The dominant paradigm informing most current research on naturally occurring conversation views interpersonal communication as a complex form of rule governed behaviour (see Chapter 2). A considerable amount of this research has been devoted to identifying and formulating rules through which two or more people take turns at talk, and particularly the work stemming from Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) which has become known as Conversation Analysis, or 'CA' as I shall refer to it from now on.

CA analyses stem from exemplars emanating from the activity of transcription, and from the visual *records* that are produced as a consequence of applying this activity to selected data fragments. Inductive proof of what participants are doing is provided with respect to identifiable details that can be verified by other investigators. Thus as Hopper explains: "If a feature [of verbal exchange] is audible (or visible) in recordings, it is likely to have been available to participants" (Hopper, 1989: 59). The proof of the pudding is in what participants have produced as it were.

However, this kind of analytic approach places a methodological restriction on the kinds of claim that can be made about what participants may be said to be doing for reasons that were introduced in the previous chapter. This restriction involves three main issues. First, the action has already occurred, and can therefore only be studied as an emergent phenomenon. Second, descriptions of this action are restricted to details of what is captured by the process of recording. Hopper (1989: 59) notes that "Recordings are at best incomplete copies of actual talk", but nonetheless "seem relatively rich and replayable representations of many speech details". And third what can be represented (by way of a record) is subject to the limitations of what is displayed therein, and its subsequent representation in written form.

While CA practitioners espouse textual empiricism in their analyses, these are subject to all the vagaries of trying to capture in writing what has been achieved by the activities of speaking and listening. In part CA practitioners, or indeed practitioners of any other persuasion, are at the mercy of their notational systems. The act of transcription is not always given the consideration it might (cf. Kelly and Local, 1989), though it clearly has important ramifications for the status of analytic claims, especially where these involve interpretations of what the participants are judged to be doing in communicative terms. However, Hopper (1989) points out that the textual empiricism of the CA practitioner involves a methodical restriction rather than an epistemological claim. It is not being claimed, for example, that "everything important about 'context' is invariably displayed in talk; nor a claim that every actor in every scene perceives everything that gets displayed on recordings" (Hopper, 1989: 59). Given this limitation, it would appear that the more instances of particular phenomenon that are collected, and hence fragments containing those instances, the stronger the case becomes for empirically verifying the kinds of convention or activity involved. Evidence of the observable in talk is provided by the data itself. By working in this way, CA has clearly yielded a great deal of information about the shared design principles that people use and orientate to in their communicative dealings with each other. But I wonder how communicatively salient these principles are for the interlocutors themselves, especially in the light of their goals?

This question is largely avoided by CA practitioners, since they maintain a strict atheoreticism in respect of the data products that are studied. Hopper, for example, suggests that: "Mostly, analysts listen for nothing, returning repeatedly to recordings, and to writing descriptions of speakers' accomplishments. Repeated listening is the daily of work analysis. The rest of analysis hinges on skills developed in repeated listenings" (Hopper, 1989: 59). Repeated listening may well

be the work of daily analysis, but it is worth remembering that actual listeners only get one opportunity to process what is said to them (see Section 3.3.1). Their achievement is all the more remarkable for that.

Since it is widely accepted that verbal communication is an inferential process (see Section 2.2.2) , it seems unlikely that ordinary members will 'listen for nothing', in the manner Hopper suggests for the conversation analyst. In his work on conversational inferencing, Gumperz (1982a: 31) in fact reports that: "All judges treated our inquiries as calling for interpretations of intent". Although unmotivated listening has interesting ramifications for interactional practice, I would be very surprised if individuals were discovered to listen to others in an interpretively neutral way. Indeed, CA glosses in respect of particular transcriptional details often seem to be based on singularly individual interpretations (see, for example, discussion of the applications of CA methods in Taylor and Cameron, 1987: Chapter 6).

I suggest that the tendency of analysts to try to withdraw from involvement with their data, to try and create some kind of analytic distance, is not only extremely difficult, but also comes at the cost of understanding something of its richness and complexity (cf. the approach of Bublitz (1988) who proceeds as a *post hoc* participating observer). As Widdowson (1979: 71) remarks:

> The analyst is inclined to move from process to product, and then to convert procedures inferred from the product into rules of use and then, wherever possible into rules of usage. There is a comfortable sense of security to be found in the specification of precise invariant rules and we shall never feel really at our ease until we can express all behaviour as knowledge within a unitary theory of linguistic description; until all the creative procedures of human beings are expressed in terms of exact rules. But one sometimes wonders whether this sense of security is worth the price that one might be paying for it.

In view of Widdowson's comments, the work for which this chapter prepares is pursued in anticipation of some risk taking. There is a risk in consulting naive,

native speakers about their goals because of the possible errors in self-reporting (see Section 3.3) There is also a risk in assuming that informants cast in the role of judges will be inclined to report on anything at all.

It is my contention, however, that if what is observable is amenable to *post hoc* interpretation by analysts, then something of these properties must be amenable to *all* speakers of a language. But what kinds of feature might prove of interest or salience to the non-professionally motivated listener? This question is researchable. It becomes researchable because people regularly talk to one another about what has transpired in their daily interactions. They talk about what has been said. They talk about what has been understood, and also of course about what has been miscommunicated or misunderstood (see Grimshaw, 1980a; Humphreys-Jones, 1986a, 1986b; Varonis and Gass, 1985). Indeed, explaining why someone acted or behaved in a particular way would appear to be one of the most ubiquitous of conversational topics as attribution theorists have argued (see, for example, Hewstone, 1983a; 1983b; Burleson, 1986).

Given this apparent willingness to comment on the nature of everyday speech activities, the aim of this chapter is to lay the empirical foundations for exploring what analysis might gain from different *post hoc* interpretations of talk, as opposed to interpretations of transcriptions of talk. But how can this work be undertaken, and what procedures should inform the task?

4.2 Developing a Research Procedure

Post hoc interpretations are derived from quasi-experimental work involving participant and outside observers in the role of third person judges. This work essentially involves three tasks. These are:

(1) to create situations and texts in order to provide data objects for investigation, and for use in playback;

(2) to select informants for use as judges;

(3) to devise a means for eliciting interpretive accounts or reports.

The studies I have in mind as a result of employing this procedure are not guided by the activity of transcription, notation, and analysis for its own sake, in the manner of other discourse and conversation analytic traditions. Rather, they are guided by an orientation which is defined by ordinary members in relationship to the accomplishments of ordinary members, where such accomplishments as are achieved become the subject of *post hoc* interpretation.

In order to prepare for the empirical approach that is being mooted here, a number of basic methodological issues need to be confronted. These include decisions about what to record in the way of speech events and how the recordings that are anticipated are to be accomplished. Since the cooperation of participants is assumed as an intrinsic part of the research design, the question of how recordings can be achieved without either exacerbating the observer's paradox or distorting personal relations between the analyst and potential informants also need to be considered. These issues are tackled in the following sections.

4.2.1 Creating Situations and Texts

Something of the general issues that are involved in collecting, recording and transcribing everyday verbal exchange have already been introduced (Section 3.1). In this section, I want to consider the particular criteria that determine how situations and texts are selected for use in the study of *post hoc* interpretation in its own right.

CA argues that the best recordings are not those made in carefully controlled circumstances, but those made upon the stage of everyday life. The difficulty of collecting real data in real situations is well documented in secular sociolinguistic studies as well as in the large number of textbooks and articles on the structure and uses of verbal exchange published in the last twenty years or so (see Section 2.0). Many analysts have made a virtue of constraint, however, and concentrate on interaction between strangers, especially between students who do not know each other.

Roger and Bull (1989: 5), for example, point out that social psychological research on interpersonal communication is frequently conducted in a laboratory setting, while CA uses any situation as a source of data, with the probable exception of the social psychology laboratory. A survey of the data of verbal exchange employed by various disciplines, including CA, is revealing, since the following commonly cited contexts are used as sources of 'conversational' exchange: job interviews, telephone calls, joke and story telling episodes, teacher-pupil exchanges, and a range of reported and recorded psychiatric, psychotherapeutic and psychological investigative activities.

Since the range of talk *per se* is so great, a comprehensive study of the many different activity types that are created by verbal exchange is simply impracticable. The question of how much data is required for researching such activities is a moot issue. Bublitz (1988) argues that a borderline has to be drawn between what is to be observed and what is to be ignored, as in any analytic scientific work. He writes: "The essential task is to draw the line so that the remaining amount of data available is sufficiently extensive to serve the purpose of the analyst" (Bublitz, 1988: 11). Where the purpose of the analysis is to account for the occurrence or lack of occurrence of particular communicative conventions or features, presumably the more data that is collected the better.

Bublitz makes use of the Svartik/Quirk corpus of spoken English discourse, which must be one of the most extensive held on record (Svartik and Quirk, 1980). The material comprises of thirty four conversational extracts, each of at least 5,000 running words, and is based on the files of the *Survey of English Usage*. Bublitz's own research is concerned with descriptions of twenty eight of these extracts, providing him with a corpus of some 140, 000 words. The data represented in this corpus consists of:

> spontaneous, reciprocal, informal and, for the most part, surreptitiously recorded face-to-face conversations on topics of general interest among two to four adult (twenty to sixty years old) British speakers, educated to university level, who are usually on an intimate or equal footing with each other. (Bublitz, 1988: 8)

Printed orthographic records of these conversations are available in book form, and are accompanied by varying details of prosodic analysis. These analyses are further modified by Bublitz in order to "make the extracts reproduced…easier to read" (1989: 10). It is these records that provide the bases of Bublitz's interpretive, analytic work (of which more in Chapters 7–9).

In contrast to this corpus based approach, other analysts have chosen single episodes, and even fragments within those episodes, as a research site for examining the details of recorded verbal behaviour. The microanalytic procedures developed by Labov and Fanshel (1977), for example, are used to analyse the first fifteen minutes of a psychotherapeutic interview. This interview is the twenty fifth in a series of other similar sessions, but was the first to be tape recorded. Following the preparation of an appropriate textual record (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 40ff.), the analysis explores the goals and techniques of therapy through a close examination of the linguistic forms used by patient and therapist in the chosen segment. Like the Svartvik/Quirk material there is no visual record of the session. However, Labov and Fanshel claim there is little doubt that "an extension of our approach with video tape or film will have valuable results, but the

problem of presenting it and interpreting the rich visual field has not yet been resolved to anyone's satisfaction" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 7).

Yet, even when the data is limited to audio-recordings only, the problem of just how exhaustive analysis can be arises (cf. the comments of Bublitz above). Labov and Fanshel comment: "If we are to be accountable to the events of the therapeutic session, or even to 15 minutes of that session, we will be faced with an extraordinary amount of detail and the problem of making that information accessible and intelligible to the reader" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 27).

In an attempt to address this problem, Grimshaw (1981) takes a multidisciplinary approach. *The Multiple Analysis Project* (MAP) as he calls it engages an unspecified number of anthropologists, linguists, psychologists and sociologists to apply their own specialist analytic skills to a segment of data taken from the defence of a doctoral dissertation. The defence was chosen because of its "salience for participants, and the density of interaction" (Grimshaw, 1981: 46). Analysis is undertaken along the lines of Labov and Fanshel. It is based on a ten minute stretch of the defence, selected from about one hour of an audio-visual recording of the proceedings; the proceedings themselves lasted two hours in total. Results of the analysis are variously reported in Grimshaw (1980a; 1980b; 1981; 1983).

A rather different use of audio-visual recordings is made by Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991). This work studies the ways in which individuals introduce and formulate age-identifying statements. It also explores the consequences of realising such statements across and within intergenerational discourse. In order to try and capture such statements, a corpus is assembled by essentially experimental means. The corpus consists of: "40 videotaped interactions where pairs of volunteer subjects, woman aged 70-87 and 30-40 years

took part in first acquaintance conversations" (Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991: 57). After participants were recruited, they were given a simple verbal instruction. The instruction was 'to converse with people of different ages'. The speakers, who had never previously met were then asked "to get to know one another" (Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991: 57). The pairs were then left alone and videotaped, with their knowledge, for eight minutes. Following this session, recording was continued for a further two minutes, but participants were unaware that filming was still taking place. In this way some 400 minutes of audio-visual data was collected.

The advantage of Coupland et al.'s approach is that it enables instances of the phenomenon to be studied to be recorded in sufficient quantity to make analysis worthwhile. Analytic interest in this case is in how age and health identities are formulated and negotiated. The method of data collection also enables the analyst to control speaker variables which may be of salience for the research. Age is an obvious factor, but gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background could be equally well made constants for purposes of investigation. Critics, on the other hand, might claim that what this kind of approach gains in experimental rigour, it looses in spontaneity reciprocity, and informality. While the only effective way to meet these criteria would seem to be surreptitious recording, a practice that is largely condemned nowadays on ethical grounds, there is a much larger issue here than perhaps analysts of talk have been willing to confront (see also Section 8.6.1). The issue involves the role of participants in playback situations, especially where this involves microanalysis.

4.2.2 Using Participants as Informants

Labov and Fanshel (1977) illustrate the difficulties raised by involving participants in microanalysis in the following incident which emerged in the course of their research.

> One student submitted to us a half-hour tape recording of a dinner party with two couples present, including her and her husband. According to her recollection, there would be nothing in this conversation that would prevent it being used as an example for analysis in a seminar. After two hours' discussion, she was horrified at the aggressive mechanisms revealed, and she insisted that all copies be withdrawn immediately and destroyed. (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 353)

The paradox here is that it is presumably only with the aid of such data that the analyst can begin to unravel the mysteries of everyday verbal communication with reference to a wide range of naturally occurring speech activities. However, on the basis of the example that is cited, it would appear to be extremely difficult to record such data and then gain the consent of the participants to have it used as an object for detailed analytic scrutiny. Although she sought prior permission to tape-record a group of friends during a Thanksgiving dinner, Tannen (1984: 32) reports that there was a degree of reticence about the event being recorded at all by at least one of the participants. Tannen notes:

> By capturing the speech of this interaction on tape, I irrevocably altered the experience for those who participated. By asking them to listen to the interaction after the fact, I confronted them with images of themselves, which like it or not have remained with them. (Tannen, 1984: 34)

Clearly enormous care has to be taken in order that personal feelings and privacy are not only protected, but also respected.

Kreckel (1981), on the other hand, was able to utilise a more publicly accessible form of data. She admits to "considerable fortune" (Kreckel, 1981: 96) in having obtained:

1. access to the entire filmed everyday interaction of one family, recorded over a period of four months;
2. the consent of the family members for using these recordings;
3. the cooperation of the family members in interpreting their own interaction and in defining the communicative concepts they used for this interpretation;
4. the cooperation of outside observers in interpreting the same family interaction by using the same procedure as the family members.

Kreckel explains that before recording took place a film team lived with the family for two months in order to familiarise themselves with its members, and to familiarise the family in turn with the equipment that would be used. 16mm colour film was used without artificial lighting and family members' permission was gained for using everything filmed except interactions and personal behaviour involving the most intimate activities. In this way, many hundred hours of excellent quality of material was gathered. Part of this material was used for the cinema-verity-type documentary, *The Family*, and broadcast on BBC television.

It is not the nature of this material as such that is of interest here, but rather what Kreckel did with it that I want to consider. Kreckel's main aim is to investigate how speakers transmit messages in natural discourse, and then to explore the physical properties of these messages. To this end, she seeks to establish the conceptual and expressive units which are assumed to be associated with interactional messages, and analyse their linguistic properties. Tone units are established as the units of speech that naive, native speakers associate with such messages, through a series of experimental studies. Further studies explore the interpretive abilities of listener judges and the categories they use when interpreting tone units in terms of what is accomplished by different interlocutors.

Finally, a coding instrument is developed that fits these abilities, based on the categories that have been generated.

The research is accomplished by asking the participants in the interaction (i.e. the family members of the BBC documentary) to interpret their own interaction, and by comparing these interpretations with those of outside observers. In fact, Kreckel seems to have made relatively little use of the large number of hours of filmed interactions between family members for this experimental purpose. The reasons for this are largely practical as should become apparent in the discussion which follows. While Kreckel does not address these practical considerations directly, they have considerable bearing on the kind of (experimental) empirical research that is conducted; and not least on the potential role that non-trained, third person judges can play in helping to interpret the communicative content of different data episodes from their own perspective.

Kreckel presents the findings from ten studies in all. This work is based on three sources of data extracted from the main body of the documentary recordings. These include:

(1) An extract involving an argument between two participants - Marian, the eldest daughter of the family and Tom, her fiancé.

Kreckel describes the record of this argument as follows:

> The transcribed extract preserved all the ungrammaticalness, hesitations, false starts of natural speech and used punctuations according to orthographic conventions. (Kreckel, 1981: 107)

Speaker changes were omitted from the extract, and this provided a final textual record of some 1693 words in length (Kreckel, 1981: 108).

(2) A series of six extracts involving two different types of material.

These involve three extracts in which family members were interviewed by the film director, and three extracts from arguments between family members.

Kreckel explains that these extracts were chosen at random amongst a wide range of alternatives. In fact, they stem from different periods of filming, some near the end and some near the middle of recording. Records of the extracts concerned were made, and these provide a total of 811 words of text (Kreckel, 1981: 115-116).

(3) A meal time conversation involving three members of the family - the mother, father and eldest son.

Kreckel provides the following details:

> The topic centred around the question of whether one should give a key to the house to the next door neighbour so that she could enter in emergency cases ... The recording was subsequently transcribed by the mother who, thus, ensured its accuracy. The extract to be interpreted was a continuous piece of verbal interaction, segmented into 168 tone units. (Kreckel, 1981: 154)

The research conducted with reference to these three data sources involves the use of different types of stimulus material, which Kreckel presented to groups of different informants including family members, and various outside observers chosen from the subject pool of the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford. The material included:

(i) written material only (in the form of transcribed records);

(ii) written material plus audio-tape;

(iii) written material plus video-tape.

Informants were then required to undertake specific interpretive tasks with respect to this material as follows.

4.2.3 Eliciting Interpretive Accounts

In the first of Kreckel's studies, twelve subjects were drawn from the subject pool. The individuals involved ranged from 25-56 years of age, were of both sexes and had different educational backgrounds (Kreckel, 1981: 107). Subjects were then split into groups of four and each group was required to work with a different type of stimulus material. The groups received the same type-written instructions. The instructions were:

> In this experiment you will be asked to detect the number of messages communicated in a dialogue between two persons ... That is, after having read (listened to, watched) the whole episode and, thus, having familiarized yourself with the material, I would like you to indicate on the transcript all the messages you can detect by means of a slash. (Kreckel, 1981: 108)

In other studies, different sets of subjects were required to segment extracts into tone units (Study 3); to detect the messages communicated in the extracts with the aid of *Roget's Thesaurus* (Studies 5 and 6); and to assign labels from a list of metapragmatic categories to tone units (Studies 7, 8, 9), and so on.

From Study 7 onwards, the sessions were conducted with an experimenter who took notes. The sessions were also tape-recorded, and subjects were encouraged to 'expand on the categories they provided' (Kreckel, 1981: 153). Labov and Fanshel's (1977) 'playback approach', where David Fanshel and the therapist reviewed recordings of patient interviews, and then report on the nature of their professional deliberations is worth comparing in terms of this procedure, as is the work of Tannen (1984) with the friends and outside observers who listened to her dinner party discourse.

As a consequence of giving family members the opportunity to comment further, Kreckel collected a number of interpretive remarks pertaining to her experimental material. Examples of the type of comments that emerged are given below. These result from 'feedback' given by three family members in response to

listening to 11 tone units of dialogue between Margaret (the mother) and Tom (the fiancé of her daughter, Marian). The comments include statements such as the following (Kreckel, 1981: 236):

> Margaret
> It certainly sounds to me that I am trying to push him [=Tom] into something, he is backing off which is understandable now ... The whole conversation sounds like me saying to him, you had better marry her and that's it ... I am really demanding him that he does marry her. In actual fact he is rejecting the whole idea in the end ... You see what he is doing in a way is, he is, telling me to mind my own business, really.
>
> Marian
> I could imagine Mother standing there and saying "I know she wants to", it's still the same urging and insisting. She knows that I wanted to be married before I moved into that flat, so she's really trying to put that across. Seems mother is fishing for an argument. She's going to tell him, she knows for a fact that she's right, she's just down right telling him ... Tom seems to wave it off, you know. He's trying to push Mother away, he doesn't want to talk about the subject, and in the end he thinks the only way is to say "that's it".
>
> Gary
> In different ways Mother's still saying the same thing "you've got to marry her" or "you're going to marry her, in different ways the point is always made, you see, but Tom doesn't want to know. "She expects to be married", it's an order, I think ... "I tell you she does" it's not forceful, I think, it is just a repeat because she knows Tom's not saying what she wants him to say, she wants him to come out, come out and commit himself ... "With me talking about it anyway", what in fact he is saying, he's saying "I've not had any say in the matter, because you and Marian are telling me what to do, and I'm not going to stand for it", because "me" was emphasized ... And then "they've a flat to let, haven't they", in other words, "it's a challenge, but I am open to compromise". He is open for negotiation.

Notice the descriptive vocabularies that are being used in these commentaries. For instance:

Margaret
I am trying to push him [=Tom] into something
he is backing off
I am really demanding him that he does marry her
he is rejecting the whole idea in the end
he is telling me to mind my own business

Marian
it's still the same urging and insisting
she's really trying to put that across
mother is fishing for an argument
she's just down right telling him
Tom seems to wave it off
He's trying to push Mother away
he doesn't want to talk about the subject

Gary
Mother's still saying the same thing
Tom doesn't want to know
"She expects to be married", it's an order
Tom's not saying what she wants him to say
she wants him to come out, come out and commit himself
in other words, "it's a challenge, but I am open to compromise"
He is open for negotiation

These vocabularies provide clear evidence of third person interpretive capacity. They are also provide evidence that verbal communication is perceived by judges as a collaborative, inferential process, that is, the participants are apparently adjudged as having something to communicate as speakers, and can contextualise or respond to what is communicated as addressees, as the following examples suggest.

Margaret
I am trying to push him [=Tom] into something
he is backing off
I am really demanding him that he does marry her
he is rejecting the whole idea in the end

Marian
Mother is fishing for an argument
she's just down right telling him
Tom seems to wave it off
He's trying to push Mother away

Gary
Mother's saying the same thing
Tom doesn't want to know
she wants him to come out, come out and commit himself
He is open for negotiation

In other words, the process of situated interpretation is being described by these observers *post hoc*. This process appears to be taken as purposive, or goal-directed (cf. judges' comments in Chapter 9). Compare the verbal phrases or verbal instruments (Grimshaw, 1981) that appear in the descriptive statements.

Margaret
trying to push him [=Tom] into something
demanding him that he does marry her
rejecting the whole idea in the end

Marian
insisting
trying to put [that] *across*
fishing for an argument
trying to push Mother away

Gary
not saying what she wants him to say
wants [him] *to come out*

I want to explore the extent to which other non-trained observers might provide similar kinds of comments and/or information in respect of different speech activities. I also want to compare the kind of communicative strategies that are reported in this third person sense, since they appear to be intrinsic to the interactional process.

By analysing the descriptive repertoires used to describe these strategies, and particularly the verbal labels that seem to characterise them, I hope to provide empirical evidence for warranting participant goals (cf. the battery of interactional terms established by Labov and Fanshel (1977: 60–61) on the basis of work by Bales in 1950). It is precisely the sorts of general comment that Kreckel's informants provided that I am interested in exploring as a data resource in their own right. However, I want to devise a methodology for eliciting such comments without attempting to direct, pre-judge, or pre-empt what it is in some stretch of discourse that non-trained, native informants might find of communicative significance. It was with this aim in mind that the following investigative framework, and subsequent set of studies, was devised.

4.3 Investigative Framework

The investigative mode which I am about to describe is a variation of the 'playback' technique employed by Labov and Fanshel (1977); Gumperz (1982a); Kreckel (1981) and Tannen (1984). Essentially playback involves:

(1) making a series of tape recordings, and obtaining participants' permission for their use;
(2) replaying the recordings to the participants, and other outside observers in the presence of an investigator, with the aim of inquiring into their evaluation of what has taken place;
(3) noting and/or tape recording the evaluations for subsequent inspection and analytic use.

Something of this procedure is applied by Labov and Fanshel in their work on psychotherapeutic interviews. Following (permitted) tape recording of the interviews, the tapes were replayed in the presence of a researcher (in this case David Fanshel), and the therapist. The therapist was encouraged to respond

critically, and questions of any nature that arose would be discussed at the appropriate juncture; at which point, of course, the tape recorder would be switched off. The therapist would then comment further by elaborating on the significance for the patient of what was taking place, introducing material based on the patient's personal history, and utilising this material in order to aid the interpretation of what was transpiring in the interview. Critical evaluation of the therapeutic process could then take place, and this would presumably help to inform future professional work with the patient in question (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 4).

My interest in this procedure is not to evaluate its professional merit, but rather to explore its potential for investigating the significance, for ordinary members, of everyday communicative practice. I take it that the method can be applied to any type of recorded speech activity by the way. Since I did not have a specific type of speech activity in mind (cf. Labov and Fanshel (1977); and Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991) for instance), I evolved a fieldwork strategy that would enable me to record a range of communicative events, and hopefully maintain access to the participants who had created them. The rationale for this strategy was formulated in the spirit of Erving Goffman's practice of trying to record happenings between persons regardless of how uninteresting and picayune these events seemed to be. Goffman assumes that all interaction between persons takes place in accordance with certain patterns, and hence, with certain expectations. Thus, in his terms, there is no *prima facie* reason to think that one event is a better or worse expression of this patterning than any other. I can but endorse this sentiment.

However, the one difficulty that had to be confronted in recording the episodes of verbal exchange was the problem of obtaining data samples that would not be contaminated by analyst's presence. The issue here does not concern

how one might contribute to the problem of the observer's paradox in seeking to obtain the vernacular, but rather being conscious of the need not to contribute to the organising behaviour that was to be examined. Goodwin (1981: 43) explains the difficulty as follows:

> Analytically distinct from the behavior of the observer, is the observer as an addressee of the participants. People act differently towards different types of other, and this will have consequences on their production of talk. The implications for an investigator are obvious. If the investigator is the addressee of the party he is observing, as in the case of interviews, what he will generally obtain are samples of how these different individuals talk to an academic stranger - rather than how they talk to each other.

In assembling a corpus of speech activities, the research agenda of this thesis is to make use of collected data episodes, not so much as a corporate body of material for technical description, but rather as a textual resource, or stimulus for investigating the listening behaviour of (non-) participant judges, and thence attempting to model this behaviour in terms of the interactional knowledge and practices that it presumably implies. The first element of this agenda is to consider the kinds of textual resource that I made use of for this purpose.

4.3.1 Textual Resources

The following criteria were applied, as far as practically possible, in order to prepare a body of text that would prove suitable for experimental use:

(1) the data had to be spontaneous, in the sense of being unplanned;

(2) it had to occur without the intervention of the analyst;

(3) ethnographic detail had to be available;

(4) a range of participants, and events focussed on different topics had to be involved;

(5) good quality recordings have to be made for playback purposes, within the limitations of a situation over which the analyst had no control.

The medium of recording the data was restricted to tape as opposed to video records in order to try and restrict the amount of detail that judges would have to confront (c.f. the comments of Labov and Fanshel in Section 4.2.1 above).

The recordings were made in the same location over a period of one week in order to provide a manageable corpus (cf. the nature of other corpora discussed in Section 4.2.1 above). A single environment was chosen for the following reasons:

(1) to try and control the amount of relevant detail which might influence the interaction;
(2) to try and facilitate a reasonable quality of recording;
(3) to maintain access to the participants for purposes of further research.

Recordings were made using a Uher 4000 Report Ic tape recorder which was set up in a university office. It was not unusual to have audio equipment in this office, hence the recorder with microphone attached were placed in a central and clearly visible position. The usual occupant of the office agreed to act as operator of the machine and to turn it on whenever he remembered to do so. In this way a number of different interactions were collected. These mainly involved the operator interacting with anyone who visited the office. If visitors enquired about the recorder they were told it has either been switched on or off as the case may be. If they did not wish for recording to take place the machine was unplugged. The interactions that were recorded provided material of both a personal and professional nature covering many different topics.

There is also an ethical issue here of course. The research required participants and outside observers to offer their *post hoc* comments on the exchanges. Consequently, I did not want to affect or influence what they might say prior to listening to the recordings. Visitors were therefore invited to erase the material if they so wished, and depending on their response were then further invited to act

as (participant) judges. In this way, some twenty one hours of continuous talk were collected, with permission granted to use the material for further research.

My absence from the scene proved problematic in a number of different respects. Since I was absent I was not able to obtain accurate details about the situation and participants. These details had to be gleaned from the operator of the machine. Neither was I able to control the quality of the recordings; many of which turned out to be so poor that they were unusable (see, for example, judges' comments in Section 5.2.4). Part of the reason for this was the use of a single microphone. Without the use of individual lavalier microphones, there is a considerable problem in attempting to record verbally reticent, quiet or unclear speakers as I discovered; the advantages of using lavalier microphones are discussed in some detail by Goodwin (1981). Other factors affecting the quality of recordings included various sources of internal and external noise. For example, the noise of a kettle being boiled; coffee and tea making activities; the constant hum of the strip light located immediately above the microphone; people passing in the corridor outside the office, especially when the door was left open; and traffic noise from the street located below the office window. For something of a more technologically sophisticated approach to data collection, Bull and Roger (1989: 10–12) describe the advantages of a using a purpose-built social psychology laboratory.

While all visitors were informed that taping had taken place prior to leaving the office, the machine was turned on and off at the discretion of the operator. This not only meant that a number of interactions were incomplete, but also that the types of exchange that were recorded were limited by his decisions of when to record. Although many people visited the office in question, much of the data involved the operator in discussion with others. Since it was his office, he often turned out to be the dominant speaker. Furthermore, I did not know any of the

participants in many of the interactions. Hence it proved virtually impossible to consistently distinguish between speech varieties in order to identify individual speakers. It was also impossible to recover who was addressing whom, because of absence of visual information, and also the frequency of overlapping sequences involving more than two speakers. Audio-visual recordings would partially help in resolving these difficulties, but in the circumstances all multi-party discourses were eliminated from the corpus.

Using the criteria of audibility and the number of participants involved, the corpus was reduced to seven hours of continuous conversation involving two party exchanges only. It was largely, but not exclusively, because of its quality, that this data was supplemented by the published recordings of Crystal and Davy (1975). These recordings comprise fifteen extracts totalling some forty minutes of talk. The recordings were made in circumstances that are described by Crystal (1983). Briefly, friends of the author were invited to his house for a social occasion, but with a specific request to help participate in an 'experiment' on accents. The room in which the recordings were made was prepared with centrally placed visible microphones, apparently attached to a visible tape recorder. In reality, Crystal explains, the microphones were linked to a mixer and recorder in an adjacent room. On arrival, the informants were given an experimental task to do, for example, reciting the alphabet. Once this task was completed, the tape recorder was "ostentatiously switched off, and the microphone pushed back somewhat, but left directly in front of the participants" (Crystal, 1983: 154). In fact, the hidden recorder was permanently on. In this way many good quality recordings of were obtained in the context of a normal domestic environment. Crystal and Davy note that:

> The salient points about this material which differentiate it from most of the recorded conversations that are commercially available are twofold: (a) it spontaneously produced utterance, no scripts or other written cues being involved in its production; (b) it is representative of a range of colloquial

> usage which avoids the formal levels of discussion or debate, concentrating instead on the kind of language that is naturally used between people of similar social standing when talking about topics of common interest on informal, friendly occasions. (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 12)

Since Crystal and Davy were participants in the exchange, they were able to provide contextual information which is briefly outlined at the beginning of each extract. Nine of the fifteen extracts that are published are in fact reported as involving speakers who were unaware of being recorded. These are extracts 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15. The collection as a whole forms part of the *Survey of English Usage* material that Bublitz (1988) used for his research.

Each extract is published as a written record using the conventions of ordinary English orthography, and is accompanied by an analysis of the main prosodic features used by the speakers; these include variations in pitch, loudness, speed, and rhythm, as well as paralinguistic effects. The record is further analysed into tone units, within which words containing nuclear syllables are capitalised; the pitch movement of syllables is also marked (see Crystal and Davy (1975: 15–18), and Crystal, 1969). Similar records were produced for the seven hours of material that I had collected, of which more shortly.

Another important criterion for selecting the Crystal and Davy material was the fact that their textual records were accompanied by what they describe as "a commentary, which deals with points of pronunciation, syntax, lexis and usage which might cause temporary difficulties of interpretation as one listens to the conversation" (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 13). I should point out that the corpus is intended for non-native students of English who wish to improve their conversational skills. Thus where Crystal and Davy consider it appropriate, students referring to the text are advised of important prosodic effects that require elucidation in order to clarify what is being signalled. In commenting on these effects, Crystal and Davy incorporate important decisions about those utterances

or stretches of utterance that led them to interpret the data in a particular way. I anticipated that these decisions would provide a useful gauge against which non-trained judges interpretations of the extracts could be compared. Thus apart from what judges might have to say about the extracts in general, two further research questions seemed to present themselves. These were:

(1) Would judges focus on the same utterance or stretches of utterance as Crystal and Davy?;
(2) Would their interpretations match those of the Crystal and Davy in any way?

Before addressing these questions, however, a general research strategy had to be devised for eliciting interpretive accounts from both participants and outside observers. This strategy is described in the following section.

4.3.2 Stimulus Material and Design

In conjunction with producing written records of the material, I followed a procedure derived from CA practice and listened to the seven hours of 'office tape' material many times. I also listened repeatedly to the fifteen audio-recorded episodes that had been produced by Crystal and Davy. In the process, I made notes concerning:

(1) the auditory quality and general intelligibility of the recordings;
(2) episodes that seemed worthy of note;
(3) particular features or interactional phenomena that might bear further inspection and/or analysis;
(4) any raw conceptual categories that might help to characterise individual communicative strategies and/or their outcomes.

This exercise produced a huge, and ultimately overwhelming amount of information that clearly required more circumspect treatment. Since I wanted to make use of the material for *post hoc* evaluation by other third person listeners, two crucial issues had to be confronted. These were:

(1) how to predict what would constitute acceptable or productive stimulus material for participant and outside observers to listen to;

(2) how much of this material, by way of 'chunks' they could be reasonably asked to listen to for the purposes of conducting the kind of *post hoc* interpretive work I had in mind.

It is perhaps worth recalling the attempts of other scholars to delimit data episodes for work of this kind. Labov and Fanshel (1977), for example, apply their comprehensive discourse analysis to fifteen minutes of interview data. They note that "An immediate problem is to locate units manageable enough to be subject to analysis" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 38). However, the question of units and unitising in verbal exchange is rather fraught. Should the analyst work on 'episodes', 'fragments', 'segments', or complete 'events'? And what are the boundaries of these entities? Labov and Fanshel comment: "In the study of conversation, some attention has been given to finding units to be coded... but most of the systems analysts pay much more attention to the categories than to the units to which these categories apply" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 38). Some fifteen years later, I think this statement still holds true. There is simply no magic formula for dividing conversational data into discrete analytic blocks (but compare the 'time base' and 'event base' procedures described by Collett, 1989). Labov and Fanshel analyse their data into constituent parts they describe as 'episodes'. These are defined as "radical shifts in the overt topic or reference of the conversation" (1977: 38). Whether such 'episodes' are communicatively salient for the participants is not explored.

Other analysts simply provide selected data passages, often without context, to exemplify their theoretical axioms (cf. Gumperz, 1982a; 1982b). Single utterances or pairs of utterances are utilised in the same way. Kreckel's (1981) experimental work is conducted on the basis of tone units. The problem in all of this is what units and how much data should be chosen for interpretive research? Working on the material as a professional analyst is one thing, asking others to listen to say fifteen seconds, fifteen minutes or even fifteen hours of tape recorded data quite another. One simply cannot predict the optimal, real-time-length suitability of data extracts in advance. The issue of 'How much data?' one might work on is broached by Stubbs (1983). Stubbs is pragmatic enough to recognise the difficulty and simply concedes that "Different amounts of data such as audio-recordings or notes, are needed for different purposes" (Stubbs, 1983: 223).

Where participant and outside observations of naturally occurring talk are sought, as in the case of the present study, there seem to be a number of attendant dangers. By providing too much material, one risks overtaxing memory and inducing informant fatigue. On the other hand, if the material is too slight, then judges may have little or nothing to say at all. As far as I am aware there is no accepted method for minimising these dangers; one simply has to experiment.

The exploratory studies which I describe in detail in Chapter 5 seek to determine the extent to which different individuals might infer different kinds of information from different kinds of pre-selected, tape-recordings of verbal exchange. This information may involve who is involved in the recordings, and in what relations. It may involve accounts of what is going on, in terms of the qualities, dispositions and motives of the individuals concerned. I am not suggesting that third persons will always infer such information, nor that they will be necessarily interested in talking about it. What I am suggesting is that the processes of inferring information about the interactional behaviour of others are

investigable as a result of third person interpretations. Third persons must utilise inferencing in order to make sense of recorded conversations, and a set of interpretive procedures or strategies must be available to them in order to organise the material they have listened to.

4.3.3 The Subjects

In order to illuminate and document what is of communicative significance in the talk of others from different third person perspectives, the research design obviously requires the cooperation of individuals willing to act as judges. Participant judges in effect select themselves, by dint of their involvement in creating the recorded products of their own interactional behaviour (cf. Kreckel's family members); that is, of course, if they are available and willing to act as *post hoc* interpreters Outside observers, on the other hand, must be selected on the basis of other criteria. Bales (1950) used trained observers in applying his *Interaction Process Analysis* to the study of small group interactions. Grimshaw (1981) used trained analysts and teams of analysts from different disciplinary backgrounds in his *Multiple Analysis Project*. But the normal practice seems to be to make use of non-trained, student subjects. Much of the work undertaken in the Social Psychology laboratory, for example, and which involves the study of different kinds of listener judgements, is conducted using student subjects (cf. the plethora of language attitude studies presented in Giles and Powesland, (1975); Scherer and Giles, (1979;) Ryan and Giles, (1982) and elsewhere; and Giles and Sassoon, (1983) for a specific example). Kreckel's (1981) non-participant obsèrvers were drawn from the subject pool of the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford which is presumably largely student based. Students are readily available, represent different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and cover a wide range of ages. But what qualities make a good judge, and how are they to be approached?

During his recent solo tour of New Zealand, actor and popular media personality Peter Ustinov was interviewed on national television. Apart from the usual biographical interrogation, Ustinov was asked to name the quality or qualities that he thought made 'a good conversationalist'. Without the slightest pause or hesitation, he answered 'being a good listener'. This answer might seem a little puzzling, especially given Ustinov's widely recognised talent as a raconteur. Perhaps one might have expected instead a myriad of other desirable qualities - 'the ability to communicate ideas clearly', 'oral fluency', 'eloquence of expression', 'personal warmth and directness', 'an extensive vocabulary', 'a sense of humour', 'the avoidance of cliches', 'having something to say' and so on. But no, Ustinov did not select any of these *speaker* attributes. He chose, rather, to focus on the attribute of remaining *silent;* that mysterious skill that is the provenance of the largely unsung hero(ine) of conversational exchange - *the listener*.

The contribution that listeners make to conversation in this regard is not always appreciated or made explicit as I argued in Chapter 2. However, communicative success is clearly dependent upon the interpretive resources and capacity of the *silent raconteur*. Any property of the words that are produced is a product of interactional effort, where participants must engage in the activities of both speaking and listening in order to determine what to say next. Presumably, a good conversationalist is sensitive to the dual roles involved in these activities and can balance her or his contribution according to need.

But if there is an art of 'good speaking', then what is the art of 'good listening'? Unfortunately, Ustinov's reply gave nothing away. This is not to say that he chose to be deliberately opaque, or enigmatic. Rather, one wonders the kinds of attribute he had in mind. The problem here of course is how to begin to investigate such attributes whilst conversation is actually in progress? Though speakers might occasionally enquire if their interlocutors or audiences are actually listening

(school classrooms and theatre settings spring most readily to mind), I aver that one seldom attempts to discover whether one's addresses are being good listeners. Indeed, continued questioning about receivership would presumably lead to communicative breakdown. Yet if 'good listening' is at the heart of 'good conversation', or any other type of speech event for that matter, then surely we must be able to specify the qualities it might involve?

One way to address this question is to simply consult other listeners. Another is to consider the nature and extent of reciprocal actions in verbal exchange, that is, where these are determined by *post hoc* evaluation of listener replies and responses. As far as consulting other listeners is concerned, I approached ten different people in and around my own work environment. Individuals were approached at random, and given the context of Ustinov's interview remarks. They were then asked - "What qualities do *you* associate with being a good listener?" The resulting responses were elicited, and are presented simply in the order in which they occurred. In the interests of equality, I can report that five of those concerned were women and five men. The responses were:

(1) Non-verbal qualities. The ability to convey interest. Affirm what others say, even when you don't agree.

(2) Appearing interested. Eye contact.

(3) Tricky. The gaps. Listening to the process that is not there.

(4) Tuning in to the same wavelength and paying genuine attention both to the verbal and non-verbal. Picking up the agenda. Eye contact.

(5) Understanding what somebody says. Understanding more than the words. Anticipating responses.

(6) I don't know. Attentiveness to what someone is saying which is coupled to eye contact and things.

(7) Eye and body language suggesting openness to conversation. Acknowledging what is said with uhms and ahs and whatever. Looking for what the speaker is signalling.

(8) Bit hard to say. Personality. Interest in others. Wanting to learn.

(9) Concentration, patience, understanding.

(10) The ability to respond sympathetically to what someone is saying. The ability to give good feedback in such a way as to accurately represent what the other person has said. Not talking too much.

Despite the *ad hoc* nature of the questioning and the very small number of people interviewed, there does seem to be a reasonable degree of unanimity in the comments that were offered. Three attributes in particular appear to be of significance. These include:

(1) Paying attention to S(peakers);

(2) Signalling interest in S;

(3) Trying for agreement/understanding with S.

All three of these attributes seem to require very positive motivation. Listeners, by these terms at least, are required to be actively 'attentive', 'cooperative' and 'supportive'. Interestingly, these attributes are much in line with the speaker strategies delimited by Brown and Levinson (1987) to express politeness by appeal to 'positive face'; that is, appeal to our need as human beings to be liked and admired by others. Positive face in this regard is used in contrast with 'negative face'; namely, the need not to be imposed upon by others. Briefly, positive politeness strategies involve three broad mechanisms. The mechanisms are (a) to claim 'common ground' with H(earers), (b) to convey that S and H are 'cooperators', and (c) for S to fulfil H's interests, wants or needs as a consequence. While Brown and Levinson are able to cite examples of these strategies in terms of

actual language use, it is theoretically and methodologically challenging to consider if there are concomitant strategies for listeners, and this is where the second of our research possibilities (*post hoc* evaluation) can help. However, the question of what qualities are likely to make a good judge remains.

The process of selecting, interpreting and creating patterns of significance from the disparate signals listeners receive in talk is clearly an extremely complex business. Paradoxically, one can only gain some idea of this complexity when listeners become speakers, that is, by consideration of their replies and responses. In turn, it is only possible to discover the interpretive capacity of third person judges by inviting them to make their interpretations public. Since one cannot predict in advance what judges are going to say, and my interests were qualitative rather than quantitative, I did not attempt to sample likely informants in any way. Individuals were simply approached on an *ad hoc* basis and at random (cf. the sampling techniques of secular sociolinguistics as reported in Milroy, 1987: Chapter 2). The one constraining factor regarding the selection of judges was availability. Consequently, I restricted my approaches to individuals to those within my immediate working environment. The non-participant observers that took part in the studies, shortly to be described in full, are mostly students as a result.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined a procedure for investigating the listening behaviour of untrained third person judges. The aim of this work is twofold. First, it seeks to elicit and use the verbal accounts of third persons in order to illuminate and document what may be of significance in everyday verbal exchange, from the perspective of ordinary members. Second, it seeks to explain how the actions that speakers perform on each other communicatively can be recovered and warranted

with reference to the interpretive substance of the vocabularies that were provided.

Judges were asked to listen to a variety of stimulus material in order to derive these vocabularies. Partially due to the limitations of the data I had collected, including my lack of control over the recording process, this material was supplemented by the recordings made by Crystal and Davy (1975). The studies that were undertaken in relation to this data attempted to elicit the widest possible range of comments by giving instructions that tried not to pre-empt or pre-judge what it was that judges might listen for. Three different studies were conducted along these lines, and details of (i) the materials and design, (ii) the subjects, (iii) the procedures, and (iv) the results and findings from this work are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORATORY STUDIES OF *POST HOC* INTERPRETATION

5.0 Introducing the Studies

This chapter reports on the studies and resulting data which was used to investigate the interpretive behaviour of different third person judges. The third persons in question were participant and non-participant judges who were asked to listen to and comment on selected tape-recorded fragments of verbal exchange taken from the office-recordings, and from those of Crystal and Davy (1975) as described in the previous chapter. Three different studies are discussed. Since little systematic work of this nature has been undertaken to date, each subsequent study is modified in the light of the one which precedes it. In other words, the studies are exploratory. What the studies have in common is that they are all based on a variation of the 'playback approach' used in the research of Labov and Fanshel (1977), Kreckel (1981), Gumperz (1982a, 1982b), and Tannen (1984), which I introduced earlier (Section 3.2.2; Section 4.2.2).

5.1 The Playback Approach

The playback approach provides a method for facilitating the interpretive analysis of tape recorded data fragments, where the research is undertaken by *post hoc* listening in the third person. In the case of Labov and Fanshel's research, a single data fragment is taken as the object of investigation. The fragment comprises of the first fifteen minutes of a psychotherapeutic interview between a professional therapist and a patient who is being treated for anorexia nervosa. Apart from

detailed linguistic analysis of what had taken place, the interview was replayed in the presence of the therapist who conducted the session, with a view to inquiring into her evaluation of what had taken place. Hence the therapist was encouraged to comment on and/or discuss what seemed to be transpiring in the session as an aid to illuminating the theoretical basis of her professional behaviour, and of course her client's responses.

Kreckel (1981), on the other hand, uses the playback approach to investigate how participant and outside observers can help identify and label the communicative messages that speakers transmit in naturally occurring discourse. Various small fragments of discourse are selected for this purpose, and then played to the individuals concerned under experimental conditions. The results of this work serve to demonstrate the interpretive or metalinguistic capacity of ordinary members, and how this relates to the linguistic properties of everyday language use in general.

Interpretive methods of study based on the playback approach are, of course, a feature of the research pioneered by Gumperz (1982a; 1982b). Again various fragments of verbal exchange are pre-selected by the analyst, and then examined *post hoc* from a variety of evaluative perspectives. An important form of evaluation is derived from the responses of judges to recorded sequences of talk that they have been asked to listened to. The responses are obtained by playing back part of a sequence and eliciting judges' comments (Gumperz, 1982b: 19).

A variation of this approach is developed by Tannen (1984) as discussed in Chapter 3.3. Tannen's work is based largely on records of conversations in which she was a participant (sometimes her students were participants), and on playbacks in which conversational participants are asked to comment on the replay of recordings of conversation they were in. In other words, the analysis

comes from the analyst-as-participant, and from the analysis of interpretations by other participants about what is going on. It is something of this approach that I want to utilise in the studies presented in this chapter.

The method itself is relatively straightforward in so far as it seeks to elicit third person interpretations with respect to pre-selected audio or audio-visual recordings. Hewstone (1983: 241) refers to such comments and materials as 'response language' and 'stimulus language' respectively. Putting the method into practice is a little more difficult than it may first seem, however.

As far as the stimulus language is concerned, difficulties arise in trying to determine the kinds of material that might prove suitable for experimental use as I suggested in the previous chapter. A major problem is that it is impossible to predict what different individuals might find of interest in the products of their own and others' verbal interactions. In choosing the stimulus material for the present research, I therefore decided to make use of my own analytic experience by selecting fragments that I had marked as worthy of note during the transcription process.

In order to generate response language, the fragments were played back in the presence of participant and non-participant judges with a view to eliciting as wide a range of comments or responses about them as informants were willing to supply under *post hoc* conditions. A free-response format was designed for this purpose. This format was preferred to using *a priori* response scales (cf. attribution experiments of the kind reported by Hewstone, 1983), because I did not want to control the nature of the response language, as far as this was possible. Consequently, in order to avoid directing or influencing the listening behaviour of the judges who agreed to participate in the experiments, the instructions given were deliberately formulated in general terms. The aim of this procedure was to

try and establish a corpus of response language which would become an object of study in its own right. While this procedure was more or less successful, as far as my particular aims were concerned, it produced a very amorphous kind of data which created concomitant difficulties for analysis.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, three different exploratory studies were devised Each study is detailed below in terms of:

(1) the stimulus material played to the judges;

(2) the individuals who acted as judges;

(3) the experimental design and procedure;

(4) the results and findings of the research.

In order to facilitate analysis of what judges actually said about the fragment, their comments were reproduced in the form of a transcribed record. It is this record that is used for more detailed exploration of the kinds of interpretive accounts that emerged from the research. These accounts are then subject to higher level analyses in an attempt to model the tacit assumptions and inferential processes upon which they might be based. The analyses in question are presented in Chapters 6–9 following.

5.2 Study 1

The first study, which functioned as a pilot study but which is also reported here, involved the use of a single fragment of continuous talk taken from an exchange between two men. The exchange lasted approximately an hour and a half in all, and the playback approach was used to try and determine what, if anything, individual participant and non-participant observers would have to say about it. A record of the fragment is presented in Appendix A. The study was conducted as follows.

5.2.1 Stimulus Material

The fragment was selected by following the precedent of Pittenger, Hockett and Danehy (1960) who limit their analysis to the first five minutes of a psychiatric interview. *The First Five Minutes* was the first major study to attempt the direct observation of film or tape recording, and to provide detailed analysis of participant interactional behaviour as a result. Pittenger et al. explain their reasons for selecting their material as follows:

> We thought it might be more revealing and interesting - and perhaps easier - to examine the opening gambits of people who had never met before than try to understand some comparably brief episode deep in the middle of an extensive course of therapy, when the participants have already established a host of special conventions and mutual understandings. (Pittenger et al. 1960: 6–7)

By selecting the first five minutes of the longest exchange that I recorded, I attempted to apply similar criteria. The exchange took place in the office where the recordings were made. It involves two male interlocutors who had arranged to meet on a Saturday morning, and hence outside of normal office hours. The participants had met before, but had not talked in face-to-face interaction for over a year. Both were both in full employment as teachers from different sectors of the post-secondary and tertiary education spheres. There was at least a ten year age difference between the pair, and they had some previous contact when the younger of the two had attended university as a student. The ensuing exchange, and in particular the first five minutes, seemed to provide suitable material for the pilot study for a number of reasons. These were:

(1) the fragment seemed relatively self-contained as an opening gambit;

(2) it had not yet developed the kind of mutual understandings and subsequent complexity that Pittenger et al. were keen to avoid;

(3) the participants were willing to make the material available for *post hoc* inspection by themselves and outside observers.

The record of the fragment presented in Appendix A is based on the orthographic conventions of Standard English. It does not attempt to use the kind of notation developed by conversation analysts because my interest is not in the sequential organisation of the talk, but rather in the nature of its perceived communicative content. Hence no attempt has been made to represent overlapping or simultaneous speech, for example. The speakers are simply named in order of speaking, A, B etc., and at a change of speaker the record uses a new letter. A phonetic transcription is not used either, since vernacular styles of speaking are not the object of analysis, and in any case, only trained phoneticians would be able to deal with such data.

Instead, the record is presented as a series of speaker contributions in the form of tone units after the manner of Kreckel (1981). Two hundred and twenty tone units were identified from a running total of some 1075 words. These units are established following the conventions of Crystal and Davy (1969; 1975). Detailed prosodic analysis of a particular utterance or stretches of utterance realised in the course of the fragment is presented in the main text only as required for purposes of exemplification and discussion.

5.2.2 Judges

The judges were the participants themselves, and sixteen outside observers who I had approached at random. The outside observers, or non-participant judges, were all university students from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds in the 18-25 age range. None of this group had undergone any linguistic training, and were registered for a variety of degree subjects. The number of judges was chosen on an *ad hoc* basis dependent on the availability of individuals willing to participate in the research. A total of eleven women and five men agreed to act as judges. Non-participant judges were allocated a number

according to the order in which they listened to the fragment, and this number along with their sex is indicated in the following table.

TABLE 5.1

Subjects Used in Study 1

Judge	Sex
A	male
B	male
1	female
2	male
3	female
4	female
5	female
6	male
7	female
8	female
9	male
10	female
11	female
12	female
13	female
14	female
15	male
16	male

Each judge was invited to participate in a short research exercise that would involve them having to listen to an unspecified fragment of verbal exchange at a time that was mutually convenient. With the exception of Study 3 (see 5.4.2 below), participant judges were asked to listen to the fragments as soon as practically possible after the recordings had been made.

5.2.3 Procedure

The research was conducted in a room that contained a desk, two chairs and a tape recorder. Judges were invited to this room on an individual basis. Individuals

were accompanied by myself, and were seated at the desk in front of the tape recorder. In order to facilitate a free-response format, judges were informed in advance of listening to the material that while I could not specify what I wanted them to listen for, any comments they made in respect of the fragment would be welcome and then noted for the purposes of my research. Judges were then given the following verbal instructions:

> I am going to play you a short extract of talk which I have tape-recorded. At the end of the recording, I will switch the machine off. If you have any comments to make about the extract I would like to note them.

If more explicit instructions were required, I explained that I would not be offering feedback, since I did not want to prejudice the outcome of the research. Despite this disclaimer, a number of judges insisted that I try to explain more fully what was required of them. Questions of the following kind arose:

Judge 1
what do you want me to tell you about it then

Judge 2
do you mean I'm supposed to tell you
where they come from or what

Judge 7
am I supposed to comment on their accents
or in the way they say things

Judge 16
I'm not sure what you want me to listen for
what exactly are you interested in finding out

My answer to these questions was to point out once again the need not to prejudice the outcome of the experiment by providing information whose significance I could not predict in advance. Judges were further assured that *any* comments they made would be of interest. Each judge was also given a sheet of paper and invited to make notes if they wished. The audio-recording of the fragment was then played to the participant and non-participant judges in turn

and comments invited. When comments were offered before the end of the fragment, the machine was switched off. All comments were noted and the machine was then switched on again.

Judges were invited to listen to the recording for a second time. Whenever appropriate, they were invited to try and elaborate on why they had made particular comments. Sometimes this information was supplied spontaneously, but when necessary I attempted to prompt further comment by asking questions such as: "How did you know it was *x*?", and/or,"What was it about the fragment that made you say *y*?". While this ploy was not always successful, any more comments provided were again noted. With the exception of Judge 15 (see p. 142 and pp. 145–146 below), the procedure took between approximately half to three quarters of an hour per informant.

Using the notes that I had taken and notes made by the judges, I was able to construct a verbatim record of judges' responses to the instructions. This record is presented in the form of a written account of the various verbal remarks that were produced as a result of listening to the fragment (participants commentaries are presented in Appendix B, and non-participant commentaries in Appendix C). For ease of reference, the record is produced as a sequence of descriptive statements in ordinary English spelling.

Preliminary inspection of the accounts reveals that judges responded differently to the instructions they were given in the sense in which some individuals offered many more comments than others. The comments also reveal the use of a wide range of interpretive repertoires or vocabularies. While different tokens make up these vocabularies, it is remarkable how many of them provide similar types of information. In order to investigate these similarities further, an analytic instrument was devised. The instrument had to be flexible enough to

account for the diversity of repertoires, rigorous enough to allow subsequent comparisons between the judges who used them, and detailed enough to examine any findings with respect to the kinds of interpretive work they might encode. Given the variables involved, and in order to meet these requirements, it was necessary to use a computer to process the transcribed accounts.

The MacIntosh Hypercard Program proved well suited for this task as it incorporates sophisticated text editing and graph generating capabilities. Data processing was undertaken in three stages. First, the number of words in each commentary was calculated, and the totals compared across judges. Second, word lists were generated to establish the frequency and type/token ratios of individual words. Third, concordances of selected words were produced, and their occurrences compared across and within the comments provided by each judge. Results and discussion emanating from the first stage of processing are considered in the next section. An analytic framework emanating from the processing undertaken in stages two and three is presented in Chapter 6.

5.2.4 Results and Discussion

The experiment yielded some 2786 words of commentary across the eighteen judges who took part in the study. A breakdown of the number of words per judge, given in the order in which individuals listened to the fragment, is presented in Table 5.2. The sex of each judge is indicated in brackets.

TABLE 5.2

Words Per Judge in Study 1

Judges	Words
Participant A (male)	165
Participant B (male)	366
Judge 1 (female)	102
Judge 2 (male)	188
Judge 3 (female)	133
Judge 4 (female)	196
Judge 5 (female)	102
Judge 6 (male)	275
Judge 7 (female)	73
Judge 8 (female)	118
Judge 9 (male)	197
Judge 10 (female)	99
Judge 11 (female)	122
Judge 12 (female)	134
Judge 13 (female)	104
Judge 14 (female)	163
Judge 15 (male)	11
Judge 16 (male)	238
Total	2786

The table shows that there were marked differences of response, ranging from the 366 words of commentary given by Participant B to the 11 words given by non-participant, Judge 15. When compared to other non-participants, the discrepancy between Judge 15 and the others is still striking. There is a difference of 264 words between Judge 15 and the non-participant judge who said the most, Judge 6 (275 words), for instance. Apart from my own observations, some clues as to why the responses might vary quantitatively across judges in this way are provided in the context of the comments that were given. Two main factors seem to be of salience here. These include:

(1) the data and setting used to conduct the studies, and

(2) the personal characteristics of those who acted as judges.

1. The data and setting

As far as the situation is concerned, a number of comments suggest that judges responses may have been constrained by the auditory quality of the stimulus data in a significant number of cases. Despite my apparent care in having chosen the fragment, difficulties relating to audition were in fact reported by both participants, and ten of the sixteen non-participant judges. Problems seem to have arisen because of the interference of various kinds of non-linguistic noise on the one hand, and variations in loudness and speaker dsyfluencies on the other.

Six of the non-participant judges were apparently distracted enough by these problems to make them the subject of their opening remarks. Compare, for example, the comments of Judges 1, 8, 10, 11 and 12 below.

Judge 1
the kettle noise makes things a bit difficult

Judge 8
the background noise of the kettle
covered a great deal of the conversation

Judge 10
the noise is disturbing
it's a buzzing noise and it gets worse

Judge 11
there is a noise problem
it's probably an electric drill or cement mixer

Judge 12
there is a lot of noise

Problems with 'noise' were also raised by Judges 4, 5, 6, 14 and 16. The noise is variously attributed to 'a kettle' (Judges 4, 14 and 16); 'a bad tape' and 'fuzz' (Judge 5); and 'a kind of hum' (Judge 6).

Judge 4
there is a kettle noise
which made things difficult to hear

Judge 5
it's a bad tape
fuzz seems to obscure most of what they are saying

Judge 6
there is a lot of surface noise
a kind of hum

Judge 14
the kettle boiling makes it difficult to follow

Judge 16
the kettle boiling didn't help any

Both participants commented on the noise too, and were able to identify its source as follows:

Participant A
the kettle sound makes it difficult to recover
what was said on tape

Participant B
the kettle noise is pretty bad
and you can hear the constant hum of the strip light

On the other hand, Judges 2 and 16 attributed something of their difficulties to the nature of the recording set-up, and the speech style of one of the participants. They said:

Judge 2
a lot of it was mumbly
one of them was sitting much nearer the tape-recorder

Judge 16
the one who was nearest the microphone
knew he was being recorded
he distinguished his words more,
the other seemed to jumble his words
I couldn't tell what he was saying
till he thought about it

Presumably, any non-laboratory setting is subject to the sorts of difficulty referred to in many of these comments. While no attempt was made to doctor the

recordings, the quality of the record is clearly of considerable importance in undertaking experimental work of the kind reported here. Indeed, one of the main reasons for choosing the Crystal and Davy material used in Study 3 was because of its superior auditory quality. It is possible that my failure to spot the problem with my own pilot data was due to my being over-familiar with the material, as I had listened to the fragment a great many times for both record making and analytic purposes.

My role as an observer may have also constrained what was said, especially as I took pains to provide as little feedback as possible. What feedback I did provide was restricted to backchannel and non-verbal cues of encouragement. Though the situation was obviously contrived, I attempted not cast myself in the role of an interviewer as such. It is possible, however, that my own personal characteristics and perhaps perceived asymmetries in status may have had their own unpredictable effects. A more telling issue might be that of gender, since a different result may have emerged had I used a female observer with the female judges (cf. the use of female as opposed to male interviewers in social dialect studies of the kind undertaken by Holmes, Bell and Boyce (1991) for example).

Nevertheless, of all the judges, it was a man (Judge 15) who seemed to be the most reticent of the informants. Despite my attempts to ensure that he did not feel inhibited in any way, this judge provided only eleven words of commentary. He, in turn, assured me that he was perfectly comfortable and that his comments were as expansive as he considered necessary. His relative lack of comments compared to those of the other judges could be attributed to the experimental situation, in which informants in general often report a sense of being tested in some way, or perhaps to some personality trait. Human beings can and do refuse to perform in all manner of interactional situations, and the comments of Judge 15 must be accepted accordingly, however minimal they might seem. That Participant B had

the most to say is perhaps predictable, since he was the normal occupant of the office in which the recordings were made, and the operator of the tape-recorder used to collect the data. In his own words, and in an important sense, he did have "more knowledge available". Notice, however, that much of his commentary is taken up with explaining what the situation had involved for him.

While judges had the choice of whether to attend or not to attend to the exchange in question, I suggest that what they said must be a reflection, at least in part, of their listening behaviour. This behaviour may reflect not only aspects of an individual's interest in the stimulus material, but also a longer term sense of his/her interests as a conversational participant. The fact that the fragment involved two men, as opposed to say two women, could have affected the nature of judges' remarks, as could the nature of the subject matter. While it is difficult to generalise on the basis of such a small sample, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose, for instance, that women judges might have had more to say had the fragment involved women participants instead of men, even if the purpose of the talk was similar. Holmes (1987) suggests that in the course of talk, some differences in interpretation are due to predispositions the listener may have towards certain kinds of people and certain kinds of conversational topic. Thus some listeners may be predisposed to respond to transactional rather than interpersonal information in a speaker's contribution, while others may ignore transactional content and respond only to the interpersonal. Something of these predispositions seems to be evident in the judgemental responses of third persons, and it is this issue that brings me to the second major consideration in attempting to account for the quantitative differences across the commentaries, that is, the potential effect that individual variables such as age, ethnicity, sex and socio-economic background might have had on what judges said.

2. Types of judge

Although speaker variables are of considerable theoretical importance in secular sociolinguistic research as Milroy (1987: 97) argues, I did not attempt to apply controlled sampling procedures in the process of contacting informants. Like Kreckel (1981), my interest in the first instance was in the nature of judges' interpretive comments rather than in the personal characteristics of individual informants.

Kreckel simply gives a very broad description of her informants. For example: "The twelve subjects were drawn from the subject pool of the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford. They ranged from 25 to 26 years, were of both sexes and had different educational backgrounds" (Kreckel, 1981: 107). Nevertheless, speaker variables are presumably extremely important in interpretive studies of the kind attempted here, since they are intrinsic to our interactional experience. On the basis of the responses that were elicited, two speaker variables seem worthy of note. The first is sex of speaker, and the second social network links.

While the experiment was not conducted with a view to comparing the responses in terms of sex differences, the number of comments offered by the female as opposed to male judges is worth noting, especially since the men produced considerably more words on average per commentary, even taking into account the relatively low number produced by Judge 15. Where the number of words are averaged across the non-participants only (Table 5.3), judges produced on average 141 words of commentary. Where the average is taken across male judges as opposed to female judges, the mean increases to 182 words per judge for men, and decreases to 122 words for women.

TABLE 5.3

Average Number of Words for Non-Participants

	Male	Female	Male & Female Combined
Number of Words	909	1346	2255
Number of Judges	5	11	16
Average Number of Words per Judge	182	122	141

The distribution of comments in descending order of number (Table 5.4) shows that male judges are predominant in terms of the greatest number of words provided. Indeed, five of the seven males who participated in the experiment offered comments involving 192 words or more. The anomaly is Judge 15, but it appears that he is a special case in relation to the rest of the sample.

Table 5.4

Words Per Judge in Descending Order of Number

Judge	Sex	Words
Participant B	male	366
Judge 6	male	275
Judge 16	male	238
Judge 9	male	197
Judge 4	female	196
Judge 2	male	192
Participant A	male	165
Judge 14	female	163
Judge 12	female	134
Judge 3	female	133
Judge 11	female	122
Judge 8	female	118
Judge 13	female	104
Judge 1	female	102
Judge 5	female	102
Judge 10	female	99
Judge 7	female	73
Judge 15	male	11
Total		2786

In order to establish whether differences in the male and female results are statistically significant, a t-test was calculated using StatsView-15. The results of this test are presented in Table 5.5, where it is shown that there is a significant effect of .0293. While the sociolinguistic differences in men and women's use of language is well established (Coates, 1986; Coates and Cameron, 1988), differences in listening behaviour across the sexes is yet to be systematically explored; but see Anderson (1986), Holmes (1987), and Tannen (1991) for examples of research in this area.)

TABLE 5.5

Unpaired t-Test for Study 1

X_1: Sex Y_1: Words				
DF	Unpaired t value	Prob. (2-tail)		
16	-2.394	.0293		
Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev.	Std Error
Female	11	122.364	33.898	10.221
Male	7	205.714	109.16	41.259

The other major factor that may have affected judges' comments are the nature of an individual's personal network links since it is clear from the comments that different kinds of judge can be distinguished according to their knowledge of who took part in the exchange. The opening remarks of both participants are significant because they appear to place constraints on what they were willing to say in a *post hoc* context. Compare:

Participant A
what I have to say is bound to be biased
because I took part in the exchange

Participant B
fact number one is that what I have to say is probably confusing
since I can remember the situation
I've got more information available
and my knowledge of the situation determines
what I have to say about it

This type of information clearly distinguishes participants judges from non-participants. However, rather than deal with participant responses separately (in fact participants sometimes seem to say much the same kind of thing as non-participants), I will deal with any differences that emerge as they arise.

While both participants provided information about the situation, they provided quite different details about what it involved for them. Compare the following comments:

> Participant A
> I was conscious of the situation
> we were not meeting as mates
> it was very much a student supervisor chat
>
> Participant B
> it was a Saturday morning
> nothing happened in terms of seeing this bloke
> it's all preliminary crap
> the function of the talk is one simple introduction
> to the physical characteristics of space

While non-participant judges also commented on the situation in terms of locale and type of interaction, these comments were often inaccurate. A full discussion of such comments is presented in Chapter 8. However, seven non-participants indicated that they recognised at least one of the participants by naming him. Where the participants were not named, I presume this was because they were not recognised. I further presume that where the participants were recognised, non-participant judges would have access to information of a different kind from those who did not recognise one or either of the participants. I suggest, therefore, that speaker recognition is an important factor for distinguishing between different kinds of judge. The relevant distinctions are presented in Figure 5.1.

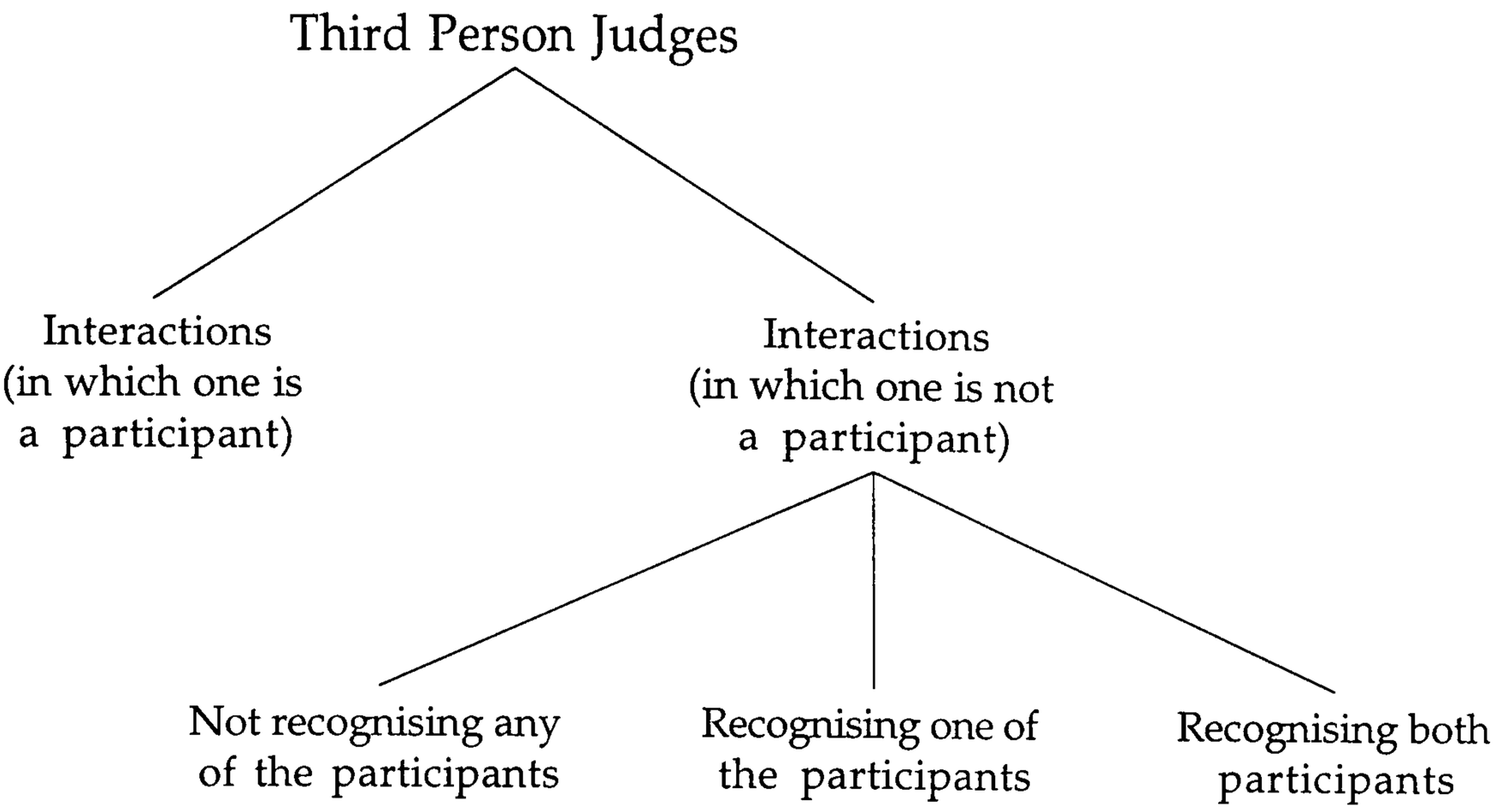

FIGURE 5.1

Types of Judge

While non-participant judges cannot share the same knowledge of what went on as the participants, they do have access to their own members' resources resulting from real, stereotypical or imagined interactional experience. It is the nature of this experience, as rendered in the commentaries, that I want to try and model in the present work. However, this is a task for future chapters. For the moment it is enough to report that apart from indicating who was involved and what the exchange was like, little information was provided by individuals about the process of third person interpretation.

Although the participants indicated that their comments would be 'biased' and 'confusing', they tend not to elaborate on why this should be the case. Of the non-participant judges, only one was to comment on the *post hoc* nature of the exercise. She said:

> Judge 5
> I missed half the content
> listening to the general flow of conversation

PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL

5.3 Study 2

The second study was constructed with two aims in mind:

(1) to determine if the same procedure used in the pilot study would elicit the same or similar responses from a different set of judges;

(2) to establish whether different stimulus material would result in different types of response.

Different individuals were therefore approached, and asked to listen to and comment on a variety of different fragments that were selected from the office tape-recordings. The study was conducted in the same environment and under the same conditions reported in Study 1.

5.3.1 Stimulus Material

Rather than limit the second study to another single fragment of some exchange, I wanted to compare judge's comments across a series of fragments taken from different exchanges. But this aim raises two immediate methodological questions:

(1) How much material judges might be expected to listen to? (cf. Study 1);

(2) How many fragments should this material should involve?

Given the range of responses to the fragment used in the pilot study, there did not seem to be any objective way of measuring the suitability of the stimulus material for this kind of interpretive use. Other analysts simply seem to work on an *ad hoc* basis. Kreckel (1981: 115), for example, reports that following her own pilot work she chose her stimulus material "at random amongst a wide range of alternatives". While there was also a degree of random selection in the choices I made, I tried to ensure that the fragments would be coherent enough to facilitate explanations of what judges thought might be going on communicatively. I also chose to restrict the real time length of each fragment to no more than one minute

of continuous verbal exchange. This decision was taken to enable judges to make comparisons between the fragments, if they so wished, without inducing fatigue or overtaxing memory. Though her aims were somewhat different, Kreckel (1981) also used relatively short sequences of dialogue (between 12 and 46 tone units) for her studies. By restricting the number of tone units that her judges were required to listen to, Kreckel was presumably able to restrict the amount of information that her informants would have to process in order to make the judgements they did. I was correspondingly interested in exploring what constraints, if any, smaller segments of stimulus material would place on what judges had to say. Would a reduced number of tone units result in a reduction of the number of comments judges were prepared to make, or would they affect the types of interpretive information they might be either willing or able to provide?

In order to try and answer this question, six different fragments of talk were selected from the corpus of recordings I had collected. All the fragments were dialogues involving one speaker, Participant B from Study 1, talking on different occasions with six different interlocutors. Each fragment was extracted from different periods of the recordings, some near the beginning, some near the middle and some near the end of the exchanges involved. I tried to ensure that the fragments were as noise free as possible to minimise problems with audition. The fragments that were selected for experimental use ranged from 45 to 81 tone units of continuous verbal exchange. A written record of each the six fragments is presented in Appendix D, following the conventions adopted in the pilot study. The brief ethnographic details which follow were supplied by the participant who features in all the fragments.

The first fragment consists of 61 tone units. It involves a male university teacher and a female undergraduate student, and is taken from roughly mid-way through an exchange that lasted about forty five minutes in total. The exchange

was the result of a pre-arranged meeting prior to the end of term and the onset of final year examinations.

Fragment two involves the same male participant talking with a male colleague and close friend. The exchange took place early in the morning and prior to their playing squash together. It is taken from the closing section of a conversation that lasted more than an hour, and consists of 63 tone units.

The third fragment is taken from near the beginning of a much shorter exchange lasting no more than ten minutes. The participants are the male occupant of the office and an elderly, male porter who was doing his late night rounds. It consists of 45 tone units.

Fragment four is from the closing 65 tone units used in the pilot study material (see 5.2.1). The sound quality in this fragment is rather better than in the material that precedes it.

In fragment five, the participants are once again colleagues and friends. The visitor to the office on this occasion is a different individual from the one involved in fragment two, but is also male. His visit is casual and social rather than pre-arranged, and the exchange of 30 tone units is close to the beginning of his call. The exchange lasted for about twenty five minutes in all.

Finally, fragment six is taken from an exchange of about an hour. The purpose of the exchange was described as 'phatic'. It involves the usual occupant of the office and a male acquaintance who is a postdoctoral research fellow from another university department. The latter is also a regular visitor to Paris, because of the nature of his research. The fragment occurs some fifteen minutes into the exchange and at 71 tone units was the largest of the series.

5.3.2 Judges

Eight judges participated in the second study. They were all outside observers, since information about the communicative situation was provided by the participant who had made the recordings. All judges were approached in the same way as the individuals who took part in the pilot study. The judges were aged between 21-42 years and came from a variety of educational and socio-economic backgrounds. None of the judges had any linguistic training, but three of the judges were colleagues of Participant B. The other five were students from different sectors of the University. Two women and six men agreed to act as judges. Each judge was allocated a number as in Study 1. This number along with their sex is presented in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6

Judges in Study 2

Judge	Sex
1	female
2	male
3	male
4	male
5	male
6	male
7	female
8	male

5.3.3 Procedure

Because the playback procedure used in Study 1 seemed to be successful, the same experimental format was adopted; though, of course, judges were asked to listen to and comment on a variety of recorded fragments on this occasion. Judges were again consulted on an individual basis, and I acted as the participant observer who

conducted the research. I also attempted to invoke the same free-response format, and judges were given similar verbal instructions. The instructions were:

> I am going to play you six extracts of talk which I have tape-recorded. At the end of the each extract, I will switch the machine off. If you have any comments you wish to make about the extracts I would like to note them.

Keeping to the practice employed in the first study, I responded to any questions about these instructions by pointing out the need not to prejudice the outcome of the research. Each of the fragments was then played in turn, and all comments recorded in writing. Records of the comments for all judges across all six fragments are presented in Appendix E.

5.3.4 Results and Discussion

The experiment yielded a total of 4309 words, and these were processed using the Hypercard program. Quantitative and qualitative differences in the responses were noted much as in the pilot study. The total number of words provided for each fragment is presented in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7

Words Per Fragment in Study 2

Fragment Number	Number of Words
1	1322
2	647
3	650
4	846
5	491
6	353
Total	4309

Although the first fragment attracted by far the most comments, my guess is this is because it was first in the series when judges' interest levels might be expected to be high. Individuals appeared to become less interested as the study progressed, which may account for the steady decline in the number of comments offered. One judge commented after the playback sequence that:

> Judge 7
> by about fragment four
> I had simply had enough

She also reported that she found the fragments up to this point "kind of boring". In fact, the number of words she provides peaks at Fragment 4 and then drops sharply for Fragment 5 (see table 5.9).

Fragment 4 attracts the second largest number of comments overall. It is difficult to know why this should be, since the trend appears to be for numbers to decline as the study progresses. Fragments 2 and 3, for instance both yielded approximately half the number of comments provided in the case of Fragment 1 (647 and 650 respectively). By Fragment 6, the number drops to 353 words. The exception to this pattern is Fragment 4 at 846 words. The distribution of comments for individual judges across the six fragments is presented in Tables 5.8 and 5.9.

TABLE 5.8

Words Per Judge in Study 2.

Judge	Fragment Number 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Judge 1 (female)	346	178	103	92	106	11	836
Judge 2 (male)	251	38	63	108	36	45	541
Judge 3 (male)	86	89	69	58	27	28	357
Judge 4 (male)	123	26	117	52	40	33	391
Judge 5 (male)	24	9	30	108	128	21	320
Judge 6 (male)	276	125	145	209	79	71	905
Judge 7 (female)	97	97	78	139	27	74	512
Judge 8 (male)	119	85	45	80	48	70	447
					Total Words		4309

TABLE 5.9

Average Number of Words in Study 2

	Male	Female	Male & Female Combined
Number of Words	2876	1433	4309
Number of Judges	6	2	8
Average Number of Words per Judge	479	716	539

At 905 for all extracts, it was a man (Judge 6) who produced the most comments. Of all the judges used up to this point, this judge seemed to be most comfortable and enthusiastic of the non-participant informants. I suggest his responses may have been influenced by the nature of his professional training, since he worked in the field of assessing and rehabilitating adolescents who had been committed by

the justice system to a closed Borstal Unit. Judge 1 also contributed a relatively large number of comments compared to the others in the sample. She was an undergraduate student with no previous linguistic training, and also the youngest judge in the sample. Notice that the number of comments that she offers drops sharply for Fragment 6. She claimed not to be able to hear the fragment properly, and consequently stated that she had "nothing to say". While I tried to encourage further comment, this was not readily forthcoming and I concluded the experiment forthwith. I think perhaps there was element of fatigue in this last response, since up to this point she had approached the study with considerable enthusiasm. One might compare, for instance, the very detailed nature of her comments about Fragment 1.

ANOVA analyses of the responses in terms of the number of words offered per fragment (Table 5.10) shows that there is a highly significant difference (.0069) between judges. This result suggests that the choice of stimulus material is very important, since judges presumably have more to say about those fragments that have captured their interest or attention in some way. I presume that the locus of interest for some individual may be motivated by either positive or negative evaluations of a particular recording or recordings.

However, there appears to be no significant difference (.1478) in this study regarding the incidence of judges' comments and sex. Since only two women took part, this result may be skewed due to the size of the sample involved.

TABLE 5.10

ANOVA Analysis of Study 2

Anova table for a 2-factor Analysis of Variance on Y_1: Words

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-test	P value
Sex (A)	1	8145.062	8145.062	2.188	.1478
Fragment (B)	5	71305.062	14261.013	3.831	.0069
AB	5	9401.562	1880.312	.505	.7704
Error	36	134027.5	3722.986		

There were no missing cells found

AB Incidence Table on Y_1: Words

Fragment	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Totals
Female	2 221.5	2 137.5	2 90.5	2 115.5	2 66.5	2 42.5	12 112.333
Male	6 146.5	6 62	6 78.167	6 102.5	6 59.667	6 44.667	36 82.25
Total	8 165.25	8 80.875	8 81.25	8 105.75	8 61.375	8 44.125	48 89.771

5.3.5 Conclusions Drawn from Study 2

While judges listened to a different number of tone units in each of two studies that have been presented (220 units in Study 1, and 378 units in Study 2), the number of comments that were produced by eight judges across six fragments was substantially more than that produced by sixteen judges for one fragment. I presume this is because judges always had a new context to work on with each of the six fragments in turn. With less tone units to listen to in each fragment they were also perhaps more likely to remember particular details of the

communicative behaviour involved. Although it was possible that judges would make comparisons between the fragments in the sample, few comments of this type seemed to arise. By presenting judges with smaller fragments, a much more specific and detailed kind of interpretive work was elicited. This work appears to focus on the nature of inferentially based, communicative processes rather than contextual or situational determinants. It seems plausible to assume that the more talk judges have available, the more likely it is that they are able to create a context from what they hear. Conversely, the less context that is provided the more judges are likely to focus on the communicative content of what was said (see Chapters 8 and 9).

Unlike Study 1, comments about the auditory quality of the recordings are rare. Although judges were again provided with minimal feedback, this aspect of the research still seemed to be problematic. I found it increasingly difficult to avoid discussion with the judges as the study progressed. Consequently, in order to minimise my influence as analytic observer, I decided to change the research procedure by using pairs of judges. This strategy seemed to me to be less artificial, in the sense in which it is not unusual for human beings to talk to others about talk. I also felt it was important to change the stimulus material, since one speaker was involved in all the fragments and may have become the focus of judges' attention as a result. The issue of speaker recognition could also have affected judges' attentional strategies, and certainly seemed to affect what judges actually said.

It was for something of the above reasons that I designed a third study. This study was based on the published audio-tape recordings provided by Crystal and Davy (1975), and details of the work involved are considered next.

5.4 Study 3

In order to provide a basis for comparison, a further six fragments of talk were chosen as stimulus material. The fragments were selected from the published corpus of Crystal and Davy (1975) because of the high auditory quality of the recordings; the fact that there was little chance that the speakers would be recognised; and the fact that the recordings are accompanied by an analytic commentary of the kind reported in Chapter 4. The fragments were played to pairs of judges, rather than individuals, to help minimise the effects of observer presence.

5.4.1 Stimulus Material

The stimulus material consisted of six fragments taken from the Crystal and Davy extracts. Fragments were selected on the basis of the commentaries provided by C&D in the notes accompanying each of the episodes they present, especially where these involved interpretive remarks relating to prosodic aspects of the exchanges. The fragments consisted of 222 tone units in total. Details of the communicative situation are provided for each of the fifteen episodes that make up the C&D corpus. These are briefly summarised for each of the chosen fragments as follows. Orthographic records of the fragments are presented in Appendix F.

The first fragment I chose is taken from the last 40 units of what C&D describe as a long conversation between two men (Participants B and C) and one of the authors, (Participant A) who were all around 40 years of age (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 19) The three had apparently been friends for many years. B and C had been invited to A's house for drinks and were unaware that they were being recorded. The situation is described as being very relaxed. B is an accountant from Ireland, but has lived in Berkshire for some years. C is a primary school teacher whose

accent is predominantly Yorkshire. The episode as presented by C&D occurs about an hour after the start of the conversation.

The second and third fragments are taken from the end of a half-hour conversation which involves four people (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 39-40). They are two women in their thirties (Participants A and C) and their husbands (C and D) who have just entered the room in which the women have been talking. A and C are from Liverpool and B and D from the Midlands. They have all lived in the South of England for some years and are described as displaying degrees of regional pronunciation. A and B are housewives, although B also does some primary school teaching. C and D are university teachers. The couples are well acquainted and since the wives have not seen each other for some time, they have been catching up on news. A has been telling B about her family's summer holiday, when they went to stay on a farm. Fragment 2 is taken from the first 45 tone units of this conversation, and Fragment 3, which consists of 26 tone units, from mid-way through it.

The fourth and fifth fragments come from an episode that was recorded during an informal supper party at the house of Participants B and C who are husband and wife (Crystal and Davy (1975: 56); 1975: 75). The participants are in fact different from those who produced the previous fragment, but I have kept to the alphabet initials used by Crystal and Davy to avoid confusion with references published in their book. In Fragment 4, Participants A and D are the invited guests and are also husband and wife. The episode is a part of pre-supper conversation. A is from South Wales but has lived in England for many years; B and C are from the North of England. The two couples have been friends for years but have not got together for a few months. A is in the middle of a long explanation of how she came to have mice in her house. The fragment consists of 36 tone units. In

Fragment 5, B had begun to tell a story about how her children believed in Santa Claus and fairies and in general. This fragment also consists of 36 tone units.

Finally, Fragment 6 is taken from the same material used for Fragment 1. The topic is football and occurs just before the beginning of that fragment. It consists of 35 tone units.

5.4.2 Judges

The fragments were played to eight different pairs of judges. These included one pair of participant judges who were a married couple (B and D in Fragments 2 and 3), and seven pairs of non-participant judges. Although it was nearly twenty years after the Crystal and Davy material was published, I was fortunate enough to make contact with two speakers who had participated in a number of the exchanges. The couple in question were keen to participate in the study, and offered to listen to the fragments and tape-record their comments in line with instructions that I provided. They preferred to do this at home, in their own time, and without my presence. A written record of their comments is presented as Appendix G. Further discussion of the nature and status of these comments is presented in 5.4.4 below.

Six of the non-participant pairs were university students aged between eighteen and twenty four from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds. The pairs were constituted by approaching individuals on an *ad hoc* basis and requesting their participation in the research. Where individuals agreed to participate, they were further requested to bring a friend or person of their own choosing to help them with the task. The remaining pair were a married couple aged 27 and 28 (Pair 5). The were employed as a Public Health Engineer and a Social Worker respectively. Table 5.11 gives details of the pairings in terms of gender.

TABLE 5.11

Judges in Study 3

Pair Number	Sex of Judge A	Sex of Judge B
Participants		
	Female	Male
Non-Participants		
Pair 1	Female	Female
Pair 2	Male	Female
Pair 3	Female	Female
Pair 4	Female	Female
Pair 5	Male	Female
Pair 6	Male	Male
Pair 7	Male	Male

A total of sixteen judges took part in the research.

Though working within a different paradigm, the use of pairings in *post hoc* research of this type is also suggested by Burleson (1986). The idea emerges in the course of his discussion of the ways in which one might investigate impression formation processes. Burleson explains that within this paradigm subjects are provided with several passages of information describing a character who engages in seemingly inconsistent acts. The example he cites is an individual who ridicules a peer's examination performance in front of a newcomer. In order to explain what might have motivated this behaviour, subjects are asked to write an impression of the character explaining why that person acted as he or she did. Burleson goes on to moot the idea that pairs could be instructed to talk about why the character acted as he or she did and decide between themselves on a motivation for the character's act. By tape-recording and transcribing the resulting discussion, Burleson argues it would be possible to supply data for the examination of publically manifested attribution processes in something of a more natural way,

since one of the most common activities human beings engage in is talking about why others act as they do (Burleson, 1986: 81).

5.4.3 Procedure

The procedure that is described by Burleson is fairly close to the kind of judgemental work that I have been attempting to explore and therefore merits some comment. While my subjects were not directly asked to give their impressions of the data they listened to, nor to provide written comments as such, their responses could be broadly described as attributive. I surmised that the use of pairs might not only help to minimise the effect of observer presence, but also would serve to generate something of a more spontaneous appraisal of the stimulus material. Sociolinguists such as Labov (1966) and Milroy (1980) have of course been long aware of this difficulty in their attempts to elicit and record vernacular speech.

Since it would be difficult to keep a record of two sets of comments, the experimental procedure was modified in a number of ways. The pairs of non-participant judges were invited to the same room that the previous studies were conducted in and invited to occupy the two chairs sitting in front of the tape-recorder ready to playback the stimulus material. They were shown how to use the machine, since I explained that as far as possible they would be left alone to undertake the task that was required of them, namely, to listen to and comment on the six recorded fragments. Permission to record their comments was sought, and to this end a second tape-recorder was placed in the room. The pairs were instructed to switch this on at the end of each fragment and prior to making any comments. They were given the same instructions as in the previous two studies and following any questions about what was required were left to their own

devices. While the same mode was used with the two participant judges, they undertook to complete the study in their own home as I noted above.

A transcribed record, in ordinary orthography, was produced for each pair of comments. The comments of the non-participant judges are presented in Appendix H. Permission to use the comments for purposes of the present research was given in all cases.

5.4.4 Results and Discussion

Given the number of comments that were generated by this study, in relationship to the least number of tone units, the use of pairs of judges has to be rated as highly successful. The participant judges produced 2536 words of comment across the six fragments, and the non-participant judges a total of 5051 words, giving an overall total of 7587 words (see Table 5.12).

TABLE 5.12

Number of Words for all Fragments in Study 3

Judges	Words
Participant 1	1226
Participant 2	1310
Total Words for Participants	2536
Pair 1	448
Pair 2	680
Pair 3	618
Pair 4	622
Pair 5	626
Pair 6	708
Pair 7	1349
Total Words for Pairs	5051
Overall Total	7587

The participant judges produced the greatest number of comments by a considerable margin, presumably because, like Judge 2 in the pilot study, they simply had more information available. The male judge from this pairing also had professional analytic interest in the material since he had helped to collect and publish the corpus. It is not my intention to use these comments in order to make rigorous analytic comparisons, since a great deal of time had elapsed between the recordings as the informants themselves note. If participant responses are to be of analytic use in ascertaining what has gone on in an exchange, in line with the kind of work undertaken by Gumperz (1982a) or Tannen (1984) for example, then they clearly have to be elicited as soon after the exchange as practicable (cf. the comments of the participants in Study 1).

The following example is perhaps rather extreme, but demonstrates the kind of difficulty that can arise, since one of the judges fails to recognise even her own voice.

Study 3 (Extract 2)

B
well
do you remember recording that
A
I don't
B
don't you
well you could recognise yourself on it couldn't you
A
was that me
B
yeah
A
that was I was talking about the pig
B
yes
no no
the one saying most about the pig was Holly
A
oh
B
about the children's reaction to the pigs
you were in the background
B
in the foreground really
I was in the background
you subsequently tell the tale about the pig
that the kids from Wynchmore Hill went to see um
where they were they fed him with bits of carrot
all the kids gave him bits of carrot
do you
A
yeah yeah
B
remember that
A
mm
yes yes
I do
but what oh
I didn't remember that at all

A's expressed difficulty in recalling where the event took place and who was involved in fact surfaces on more than one occasion. Rost (1990) comments on this issue in his discussion of potential sources of distortion that should be taken into account in different interpretive contexts. He notes:

> Tasks that require responses during the text listening may provide constraints on the listener different from those that require responses after text listening. Responses after listening are subject to intervening conditions that affect memory for detail, whereas responses while listening are subject to conditions of time pressure that may affect one's ability to reflect upon the meaning carried by the overall text. Both conditions constrain the listener's response. (Rost, 1990: 125)

However, the responses also include interpretations of communicative behaviour that are not unlike those provided by the non-participant judge pairings, and I have included them in my analysis accordingly. Compare the following comments provided with regard to Study 1, Extract 1, for instance:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Participant A
the one guy
in spite of the other one
was trying to comment factually on the game
and the other one
was expressing his reactions to overcrowding
and so on

Participant B
that's right
the sea of bodies
and the hordes of children
whereas the other one
was describing the size of the opening

Pair 1
was it in a pub somewhere
cos it sounded like just after the match
an they were having a drink or two

you mean because they sounded so garbled

Pair 3
it seems to be some discussion of a match
yeah
one guy is talking about gates
and the other guy is talking about a sea of bodies
mm
when they talk about Chelsea and Leeds
he didn't seem so pleased about it

Pair 5
they're both commenting on the same thing
and they're both wanting their word in
do you know what I mean James
mm

Pair 6
it sounded like two friends
who were chatting over a football match
both knowing what the others opinions are
so there is no need to communicate just talk
a lot of it is not so much words as uhm blah blah blah
sort of sounds

Pair 7
the subject that they were talking about is exciting
but I don't think they were excited themselves
they are trying to create an atmosphere of excitement

it's quite repetitive
especially the guy
who was trying to hog the conversation

Notice also the interactive nature of these responses. In the two previous studies, I had tried to avoid entering into any kind of dialogue with the judges in order that any information provided would be based on their perceptions of what was going on rather than mine. The pairing technique allows for a much more spontaneous kind of data to emerge. It also demonstrates that individuals are not always in agreement about what they have observed or inferred from the stimulus material.

Of the non-participants, Pair 7 provided a substantially larger portion of comments than the other judges. This pair described themselves as acquaintances rather than close friends, and this is perhaps reflected in the nature of their comments which tend to verge on the argumentative throughout their discussion. As in the two previous studies, different individuals again responded to the fragments with varying degrees of verbosity. The distribution of comments in terms of the number of words produced by non-participant judges is presented in Table 5.13.

TABLE 5.13

Number of Words Per Judge in Study 3

Judge	Fragment Number 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Participant 1 (female)	152	310	285	160	192	127	1226
Participant 2 (male)	211	336	208	190	177	188	1310
Judge A from Pair Number:							
Pair 1 (female)	38	19	51	72	18	21	219
Pair 2 (female)	57	80	68	67	21	50	343
Pair 3 (female)	82	99	1	37	10	38	267
Pair 4 (female)	68	32	49	86	78	26	339
Pair 5 (female)	74	46	88	95	59	23	385
Pair 6 (male)	53	58	29	25	76	62	303
Pair 7 (male)	59	105	97	63	15	210	549
Judge B from Pair Number:							
Pair 1 (female)	32	52	47	27	36	35	229
Pair 2 (male)	57	39	51	69	44	77	337
Pair 3 (female)	95	84	50	48	47	27	351
Pair 4 (female)	49	71	10	76	24	53	283
Pair 5 (male)	59	72	27	31	25	27	241
Pair 6 (male)	105	47	60	61	23	109	405
Pair 7 (male)	126	217	126	75	29	227	800

ANOVA analyses of the non-participant responses are presented in Table 5.14. As in Study 2, the results show that there is a significant (.046), though not as marked, effect across the sample in terms of the number of words used to describe the different fragments. As in Study 1, but unlike Study 2, there is a high level of significance (.0058) in terms of sex. This pattern would seem to confirm that the results of the second study are probably distorted, because of the size and distribution of the sexes in the sample, and also with males producing significantly more comments. Given the level of significance indicated by the ANOVA results, I think future work with third person judges could well benefit

from controlled sampling with regard to sex of speaker. The distribution of comments across both single and mixed sex pairings would also be worth investigating.

TABLE 5.14

ANOVA Analysis of Study 3

Anova table for a 2-factor Analysis of Variance on Y_1: Words

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-test	P value
Sex (A)	1	10751.254	8145.062	8.07	.0058
Fragment (B)	5	15926.627	14261.013	2.391	.046
AB	5	19047.585	1880.312	2.859	.027
Error	72	1332.264	3722.986		

There were no missing cells found

AB Incidence Table on Y_1: Words

Fragment	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Totals
Female	8 61.875	8 137.5	8 90.5	8 63.5	8 36.625	8 34.125	48 50.333
Male	6 76.5	6 65	6 65	6 54	6 35.333	6 118.667	36 73.194
Total	14 68.143	14 72.929	14 53.857	14 59.429	14 36.071	14 70.357	84 60.131

If the number of words are averaged across the non-participant sample in terms of sex (Figure 5.2), male judges are found to provide 58% of the comments. There were three female to female pairs, two male to male pairs, and two mixed pairs of judges in this group.

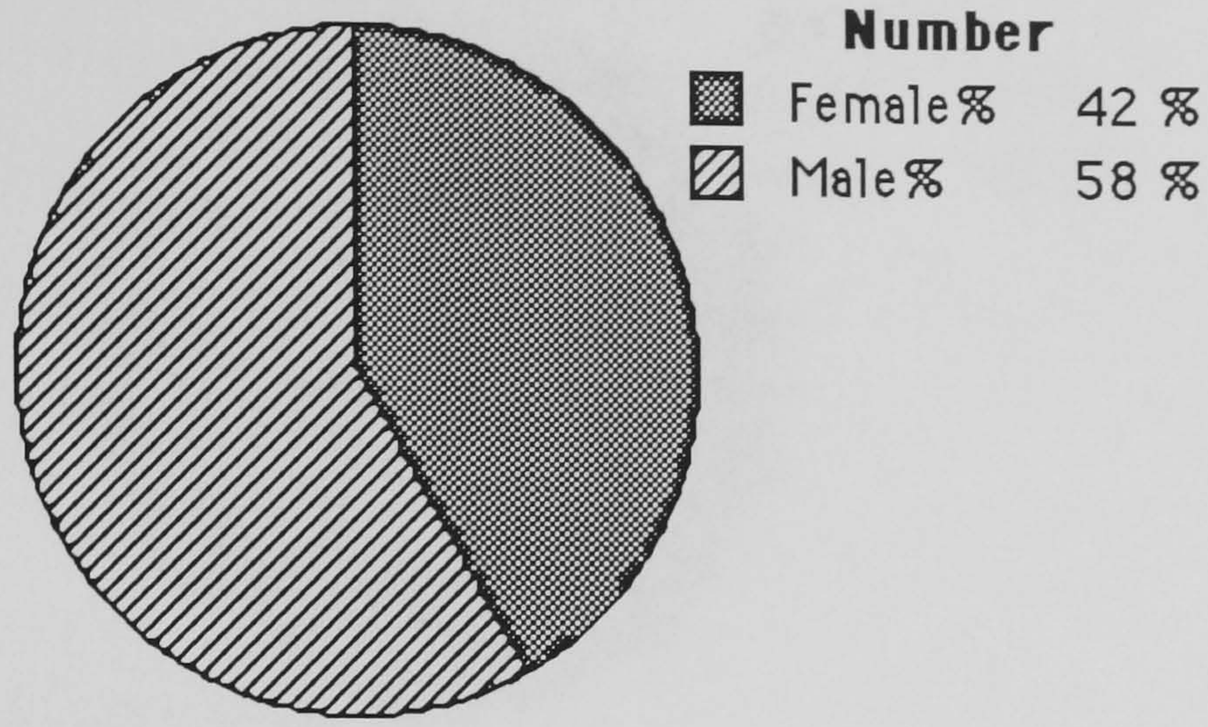

FIGURE 5.2

Average Non-Participant Words for Study 3

The proportion of comments shared by the participant mixed pairing was again male dominated, but the difference between the two was much less marked as can be seen in Figure 5.3.

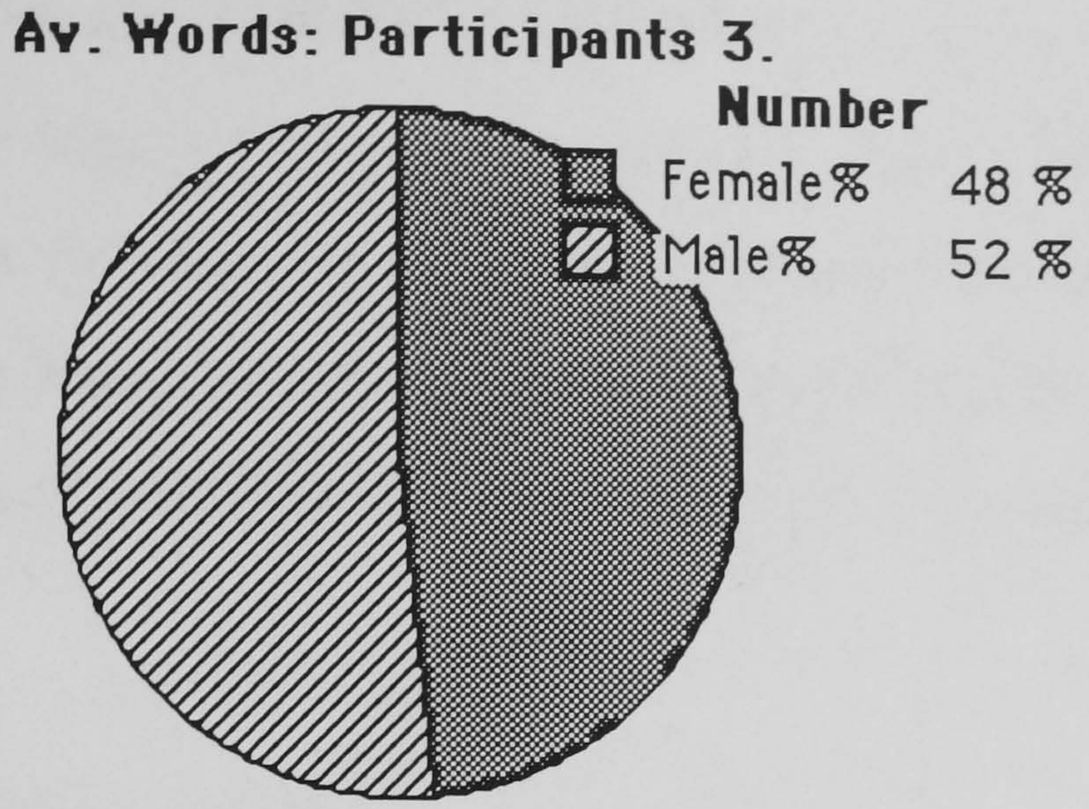

FIGURE 5.3

Average Participant Words for Study 3

Given the distribution of comments across the fragments, I think it is fair to say that the use of pairings must have affected the judgemental process. If the six fragments are ranked in terms of the number of words elicited, then the following order is produced:

Table 5.15

Rank Order of Words in the Three Studies

Fragment Number	Rank Order
1	1
2	2
3	6
4	4
5	3
6	5

The pattern here seems to be different from Study 2, since Fragment 6, for example, attracts the third largest number of comments. By having to share the interpretive work, it is possible that the pairs may have helped to minimise

fatigue. They were also able to share their different perceptions and interpretations of the fragments in a way that had not been made possible in the previous two studies. For these reasons alone, I suggest that future interpretive work with third person judges would benefit from being conducted with pairs of informants, rather than with individuals operating in conjunction with the researcher.

5.5 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to provide an empirical means for exploring the evaluative responses of third person judges to a variety of spoken language episodes. Judges' responses were obtained by playing back part of a sequence of verbal exchange to different individuals and eliciting comments. A free response format was designed for this purpose. Three different studies were undertaken. These studies were exploratory in the sense in which the research design changed as I proceeded. In other words, changes were made in terms of stimulus material, judges and methods used in each study in the light of experience and findings gained from the preceding one.

The studies involved forty two judges who produced a total of 14682 words of comment. The commentaries provided a substantial data base for investigating the scope and utility of third person interpretive work, and it is this work that I now want to consider. Two major questions arise from these studies:

(1) What kinds of information are revealed by the vocabularies that were elicited?;

(2) What kinds of interpretive work do the vocabularies imply?

In order to answer these questions, judges' repertoires were inductively inspected for pattern.

Since to my knowledge there are no existing frameworks or procedures for investigating the nature of such data, the following chapter attempts to devise an appropriate analytic instrument. Because of the nature of the data, I have sought to devise an instrument that is flexible enough to describe the range of responses elicited and rigorous enough to make comparisons across and between them. The results of applying this instrument will then be subject to higher levels of predication in order to facilitate exploration of the tacit assumptions upon which they are based (Chapters 7–9). Assessment of findings will be gauged in terms of their potential contribution to the analytic process of warranting claims about talk in general.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSING THE RESPONSE DATA

6.0 Third Person Metalanguage

The data for analysis in this and subsequent chapters is provided by the corpus of interpretive comments that were elicited under the conditions described in Chapter 5. These comments demonstrate the willingness and ability of third person judges to provide information about various communicative matters from outside the participation framework. Since the comments consist of utterances that are used for talking about instances of actual language use, they can be considered as a special kind of metalanguage, and thus as expressing an everyday kind of metalinguistic awareness. Crystal (1977: 385) defines metalinguistics as "a term used by some linguists for the study of language in relation to other aspects of cultural behaviour". The metalinguistic ability of ordinary members as explored in this thesis pertains to their capacity to respond to what is accomplished by context-dependent speech, under *post hoc* conditions.

While I presume that this ability depends on the metalinguistic repertoire available within a given language or speech community, the actual metalinguistic performance of judges may have been hampered by the lack of awareness of what is achieved through the highly conventionalised medium of speech, and/or by the impact of extra-linguistic knowledge on the construction of specific speech events. Like Kreckel (1981), I also presume that the metalinguistic repertoires available within a given language or speech community will vary according to the communicative norms of the community in question, and also across different

speakers or groups of speaker within those communities. Although the use of everyday metalanguage in different language communities would make for interesting cross-linguistic comparison, and could form the basis of future work, this chapter focuses on the nature of interpretive vocabularies elicited from linguistically naive native judges of English. The notion of metalanguage in this case, then, is perhaps most closely related to what Bloomfield (1944) refers to as 'secondary responses' to language, where these consist of non-technical or non-scientific utterances based on popular lore (cf. the metalanguage used by linguists to describe and analyse the object language; also Isaacs and Clark (1987), who compare references in conversation between professional experts and ordinary members). It is the character of these non-scientific utterances, as applied to pre-selected stretches of discourse, that is considered here.

There are long established precedents for studying what ordinary members have to say about language use. Hoenigswald (1966), for example, suggests that one of the main concerns of scholarship should be to match informants' descriptions with the linguistic analysis of the data. He notes: "We should not only be interested in (a) what goes on (language), but also (b) in how people react to what goes on (they are persuaded, they are put off etc.) and in (c) what people say goes on (talk concerning language)" (Hoenigswald, 1966: 20).

While my particular interest is in what people say goes on in language ('talk concerning language'), this interest is not precisely in the traditional folklinguistic sense that Bloomfield and Hoenigswald intend. As opposed to being of a more general type, the responses that I want to explore involve folklinguistic metalanguage that is derived from playback; that is, where what judges have to say is mainly, but not always exclusively, concerned with the *post hoc* description of recorded (stimulus) fragments.

I am not concerned with debating the psychological status of this metalanguage (see, for example, Nisbett and Wilson (1977), who discuss the relationship between verbal reports and ordinary members' awareness of perceptual and memorial processes in the context of social psychological experiments; also Stitch and Nichols (1992), and Goldman (1992a; 1992b), who debate the nature of folk psychological ascriptions and the relative merits of simulation theory in helping to account for them), but rather seek to develop a research instrument for analysing the response data. The data analysis can be divided into three main components or stages (cf. the procedures for doing critical discourse analysis advanced by Fairclough, 1989). These are:

(1) *Description* of the kinds of vocabulary that judges use in their responses;

(2) *Codification* of the types of information that are made salient by these vocabularies;

(3) *Modelling* of the (*post hoc*) interpretation abilities that different types of response imply.

The instrument is intended to be flexible enough to describe judges' comments in general, and rigorous enough to facilitate comparisons across and within them. Once established, it will be used to examine how individuals make use of linguistic and social knowledge in their *post hoc* interpretive accounts. This examination forms the basis of subsequent chapters, the empirical findings from which are used to support the thesis that studies of lay understanding and explanation can contribute important 'common-sense' or 'real world' insights into the nature of human communicative behaviour, and particularly the signalling of communicative goals. It also ought to help redress the widely held and 'unflattering view of the lay person as an imperfect scientist' (Hewstone, 1983b: 25).

6.1 The Descriptive Framework

To the best of my knowledge there has been little or no work that has attempted to investigate response language of the kind at issue here in any systematic way (cf. Gumperz, 1982a; 1982b). In the absence of an established framework, I have developed an analytical procedure that is synthesised from a variety of disciplinary sources. It is this procedure which is considered next.

6.1.1 Preparing the Data Base

In order to facilitate description of the object data (in the form of the transcribed records which I detailed in the previous chapter, and which are presented as Appendices B, C, E, G and H), a text-processing program was developed using Macintosh-Hypercard. The task of writing this program was accomplished in the following way:

(1) the comments of each judge were sorted into individual, MacIntosh-Hypercard files;

(2) the Hypercard stack was programed to produce an alphabetical listing of the words used by each judge, and also the total number of words generated from each of the three experimental studies;

(3) on the basis of these listings, all closed-class lexical items (i.e. auxiliary verbs, coordinators, determiners, prepositions and pronouns) were filtered out of the corpus, since they were not considered to be informationally salient;

(4) the remaining open-class lexical items were listed in terms of the number of unique words used by individual judges, and then tabled in descending order of frequency;

(5) each item of unique (open-class) vocabulary was ascribed to its own lexical category (i.e. noun, adjective, main verb, and adverb), thus enabling the

provision of head-word frequencies and concordance listings for all uses of a particular word.

This procedure was repeated by systematically working through the Hypercard stacks until each item of lexis was counted. The total number of words used by each judge was recorded at the head of each list, followed by the number of unique words, and finally the number of words that were filtered out.

Once frequency listings for the unique words were established by 'splitting' the vocabularies' in this way, a second program was developed in order to generate concordance strings of all occasions on which selected words were used. Regular patterns of language use, across and within particular strings, could then be readily discerned by the process of 'lumping'. In the next section, a small number of examples are presented to show how this procedure of 'splitting' and then 'lumping' the vocabularies was applied in practice.

6.1.2 Searching for Pattern

Given the large number of unique words involved, I initially undertook to identify and list only those items of vocabulary that judges appeared to use in a quasi-technical way. The ten most frequently cited words of this kind are presented in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1

The Ten Most Frequent Quasi-Technical Descriptors

Rank	Terms	Total number of occurrences
1	talk	98
2	conversation(s)	82
3	sound(s)	50
4	voice(s)	39
5	tone	28
6	question(s)	22
7	word(s)	22
8	answer(s)	21
9	accent(s)	15
10	speech	14

Concordances were generated for each of these words using the Hypercard program. Hence 98 concordance strings were produced for the word 'talk', 82 strings were produced for 'conversation', 50 were produced for the word 'sound(s)', 39 strings were produced for 'voice(s)', and so on. The strings were then inductively inspected for pattern, and then 'lumped' into groups. Examples of the groups identified in this way are listed below. These are taken from concordances for the words 'conversation', 'talk', and 'tone'.

conversation

it's like any conversation
it's chatty conversation
it's quite a serious conversation
it's a peculiar conversation
it's a toilet conversation
it's a filling-in-space conversation
it's not official conversation

talk

they talk about a range of topics
they talk about money
they talk about a kid's language
they talk about previous events

they talk about tax
they talk about the tax man

tone

she changes her tone quite often
she changes the tone of her voice
he changes his tone
there was a complete change of tone
yes and no have the same tone

Notice that these examples typically involve a predicator and argument describing some state of affairs. While the details may differ, what is described in the comments are semantically related properties or qualities that judges have associated with the stimulus fragments.

Consider, for example, the set of strings involving the word 'conversation'. Here a number of references are made to what are presumably conventional properties or qualities of named speech activities ('conversations'). These references are provided in the form of evaluative statements to the effect that the recorded fragment 'X' can be described as a particular type of conversation in two basic ways: (a) by comparing it to similar forms of talk ('it's like any conversation'), and/or (b) by contrasting it with other forms of talk that are distinctive (cf. the adjectives 'chatty', 'serious', 'peculiar', 'toilet' etc.). Many instances of this type of statement were noted, but further inspection of the concordance lists also revealed that the word 'conversation' was used by judges in a rather different sense as the following examples show:

the host leads the *conversation*
the *conversation* is disjointed
the *conversation* doesn't follow a logical pattern
there are lulls in the *conversation*
the *conversation* shifted

Here, judges' comments seem to refer to some perceived unit of social action/organisation, namely, 'a conversation' (cf. Levinson, 1983: 318). This use of

the word 'conversation' leads to a different type of evaluation, since the references are not so much concerned with specifying the type of speech activity involved, but rather with how this activity has been organised or managed by its participants. Instances of this kind were therefore collected separately.

Concordances for the word 'talk' reveal that it is used as a synonym for 'conversation' in both the above senses. However, in the examples cited above it is used as a prepositional verb in conjunction with phrasal complements that provide evaluative judgements which refer to the 'subject' of interaction, or what is being 'talked about'. The subjects that are named in this regard include:

a range of topics
money
a kid's language
previous events
tax
the tax man

Examples of this kind were, once again, collected as a distinctive set.

However, the referential focus of judges' remarks were not always easily delimited. Comments involving the word 'tone' provide an interesting case in point. In folklinguistic terms, at least, the semantic boundaries of this word seem to be rather fuzzy, presumably because 'tone' is an abstract lexical item. As a result, one can only guess at the sense(s) in which the term is used/understood by different judges. It seems, for instance, that 'tone' is not only used to describe the linguistic behaviour of individual speakers (e.g. "she changes her *tone* quite often"; "he changes his *tone*"; "she changes the *tone* of her voice"), but also the properties of individual utterances (e.g. "yes and no have the same *tone*"), and indeed, properties of the discourse in general (e.g. "there was a complete change in *tone*"). Are the changes and/or properties referred to here directly concerned with prosodic modulations, say in voice quality or pitch? Are they attempts to evaluate

speaker moods, states and attitudes, or even 'keyings', in the sense of Hymes (1972)? Or could they in fact be referring to an admixture of all these properties? It is simply very difficult, if not impossible, to establish whether the term is used by judges in any consistent way.

This difficulty was addressed at the next stage of analysis, that is, when the various patterns identified at the 'lumping' stage were used to establish an informal descriptive taxonomy of the types of linguistic and social information which judges made salient in the commentaries. In order to try and ensure a comprehensive system of classification, and one that could also be checked or replicated by another coder working independently, I adopted the following procedure (cf. the SP approach to coding reported in Bull and Roger, 1989: 15–18).

6.2 Coding Procedure

The procedure is based on characteristics systematised from the point of view of the third person descriptions. Different types of description were classified with the aid of a binary features matrix, and along dimensions that are both general and specific. These dimensions were to be modified or refined on a great number of occasions to accommodate the range of comments that judges provided. Problem cases, as with 'tone' above, were characterised by multiple coding.

6.2.1 Ethnographic Categories

In the first instance, judges' comments were subject to a general system of classification based on the ethnographically motivated framework proposed by Hymes (1972; 1974). This framework suggests that the analysis of a communicative event ought to begin with a description of those components or factors that are likely to be salient for professional observers. I was interested to discover which, if any, of these factors might prove salient for my naive observers.

Hymes uses the acronym SPEAKING as a mnemonic for observers who wish to undertake the study of culturally situated communication (Hymes, 1972: 59). This code word has nothing to do with the form of an eventual model or theory, but rather presupposes a set of descriptive questions to be answered with respect to particular events (e.g. 'What kind of event is it?'; 'What is it about?'; 'Who is taking part?'; 'What is said, and in what manner?' etc.). Since many of the third person responses are redolent of answers to questions of this type, these components were used to undertake initial classification of the commentaries.

It is perhaps worth keeping in mind, as Coulthard (1977: 47) argues, that the components have been artificially separated for the purpose of exposition. Coulthard goes on to state that:

> any detailed description of a speech event must include information on all components and the inter-relations between them, though Hymes suggests that the relative importance of particular components will vary from community to community. (Coulthard, 1977: 47)

From a *post hoc* perspective, it seems reasonable to assume that judges are unlikely to provide information about all the components, since they are not trained observers. I presume it is highly likely, however, that the relative importance of particular components will vary from person to person. The eight descriptive components enumerated by Hymes are outlined in brief as follows. Each component is accompanied by examples of third person comments, where these seem to provide the sorts of information that Hymes seeks to characterise. For ease of reference, the examples cited are all taken from Study 1.

(1) (S)etting and Scene

Setting refers to the physical circumstances in which communication takes place, and scene to the cultural definition of the occasion. Descriptive questions to be answered about this component include: 'What kind of communicative event is

taking place?; 'What is it about?'; 'Why is it happening?'; 'Where and when does it occur?'; 'What does the setting look like?' (cf. Saville-Troike, 1982: 139). Comments by judges' in this category include descriptive statements such as the following:

Study 1

Judge 2
it's a casual encounter
he's just called by
the business is to come after

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real stuff

Judge 8
it sounded like a school common room
with teachers discussing things

it's an occasion to go for coffee
and talk while you are making it

Judge 9
it's a friendly discussion between two people
in an office or at home
it's in their tea break

(2) (P)articipants

Participants are those individuals who take part in communicative events as first or second person speaker-hearers / addressor-addressees / sender-receivers. Answers to the question, 'Who is involved, and in what relations?' provide information about this component (cf. Saville-Troike, 1982: 141). Descriptive details may be given about the indexical or personal characteristics of the participants as individuals, as well as their interpersonal relations. Judges' comments that were coded in this category include statements such as:

Study 1

Judge 1
the first person was Ian
I recognise his manner
the other guy is a southerner
RP

Judge 2
I don't know the second man
the first person is Ian

Judge 9
they are intellectuals
who are not disassociated

Judge 10
it's a conversation between two males

Judge 13
they know each other

Judge 15
they sounded cultured
well educated

Judge 16
they know each other
they are acquainted

(3) (E)nds

Ends refer to the conventionally recognised and expected communicative outcomes of an exchange. They also refer to the personal goals of the participants in the course of communicating. The basic descriptive question to answer about ends is: 'What are the participants trying to do as communicators'? Judges' comments that provide information about 'ends' include statements like:

Study 1

Judge 2
there is an active attempt to converge in style and attitude

Judge 4
one was probing for advice
feeling his way along
he was sounding out

Judge 6
the speakers are feeling their way around
trying to establish a rapport

Judge 12
they didn't seem to want to go into deep detailed discussion
they are people filling in time
because they happen to be there
it wasn't for a purpose

(4) (A)ct sequence

This component includes information about the ordering of communicative acts within an event. It also includes information about the form and content of what is said, and the relationship of what is said to the subject matter or topic at issue. Descriptions in this category provide answers to questions such as: 'How is the event organised?', 'What was said?', 'What did the participants talk about?' Comments of this type include:

Study 1

Judge 3
there is a long embarrassed pause
a conversational lapse
he thinks about his words
there are gaps

Judge 4
they talk about a range of topics
black holes
how to teach, how to get money

Judge 5
they are talking about Jane

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real stuff
they move on to different things

Judge 7
they talk about a kid's language
they also talk about money
and life as a student

Judge 8
it sounded a school common room
with teachers discussing things
the switch of topics is indicative of relaxation
it's fairly well balanced

Judge 10
the talk is informal
come into the flat and have coffee
student-teacher relations are discussed

Judge 11
there is something about life insurance
and Christmas
and forking out one hundred and eighty five pounds
for something

Judge 13
one man is entertaining the other to coffee
he plays the role of host
and asks all the questions

Judge 14
the conversation doesn't follow a logical pattern
it switches
A tends to talk only when spoken to
but there is some overlapping
which shows that it isn't terribly formal

Judge 16
they talk about three subjects
painting
black holes
and teaching
they sort of linked together

(5) (K)ey

Key refers to the tone, manner or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed. I have used it not only to includes affectual orientation, but also the lack of fit between what someone is saying and the key that they use in the process.

Study 1

Judge 1
the other guy was not relaxed
he was cagey

Judge 2
Ian operates at a flippant level
yes marks understanding rather than agreement
really is ambiguous
it's not convincing
it had shades in it

Judge 4
the other speaker sounder eager
but hesitant
it came from the way he said things
may be his tone

Judge 6
the conversation is carried on in lackadaisical fashion
the interactants are not interested in what they are saying to each other
the tone is one of trying to feel each other out
trying to establish a rapport

Judge 7
they are kind of modest with each other

Judge 8
it's not intimate
but relaxed and friendly

Judge 9
it's all vaguely ironic
one guy is slightly paternal
but not obtrusive

Judge 12
there is a mild sort of modesty

Judge 13
the other man sounded a little bit uneasy
rather stilted in fact

(6) (I)nstrumentalities

Instrumentalities are characterised by the choice of language medium (written, spoken etc.), and the forms used in their linguistic realisation (language, dialect, register; code etc.). Given that the medium was held consistent, in the form of tape-recorded extracts, details such as the following were reported:

Study 1

Judge 2
they settled into a rhythm
there is lots of hesitancy
uhm uh and so on
Ian is slangy rather than colloquial

Judge 3
there are gaps
and uhms
Ian on the other hand isn't concerned about his realisations

Judge 4
there are plenty uhms
I means
and you knows
they talk fairly lucidly
but they still put things like that in

Judge 5
both talk well
in almost complete sentences

Judge 6
he said bona fide person
I didn't like it
it has underlying assumptions
there are symptoms of a superficial level of conversation
tossed away remarks and the like

tossed away remarks and the like
there is a lot of non-strict grammatical speech

Judge 7
they use words like bona fide and relationship
and use hip language like rip-offs

Judge 8
they didn't choose their words in terms of formal conversation
there is no formal language
words like rip-offs are used

Judge 9
the slang makes it easy to follow
the two people use the same language
one of them uses a foreign accent
it sounded more Indian than Iranian

Judge 10
there are polite comments
like oh that looks nice

Judge 12
cliches are used
words such as junk
and rip-offs are used
it's a thing people do

(7) (N)orms of interaction and interpretation

Interactional and interpretive norms refer to the specific behaviours and properties that attach to speaking. These are shared by members of the same speech community, but as Gumperz (1982a) points out are largely unspoken in everyday conversational exchange. However, evidence that such norms exist, and what is more can be viewed *post hoc*, is inherent in comments of the following kind:

Study 1

Judge 4
it just sounded normal like any conversation

yeah yeah grunt is an indication of his interest
most people do similar things

Judge 6
the whole conversation is a throwaway
like talking about what's for tea
and going to films
it reminds me of other conversations I've listened to

Judge 9
he must have know the other guy to use an accent like that

Judge 10
there are polite comments
like oh that looks nice

Judge 13
it's a common conversational thing
that when people talk about money
they talk about the tax man

(8) (G)enre

The final component, 'genre' refers to clearly demarcated types of utterance or speech event. While judges could presumably distinguish between different types of event vis-à-vis (lectures, interviews, sermons etc.), they were asked to listen to broadly similar kinds of talk, in the form of spontaneously occurring dialogues. Nonetheless, they were still able to make distinctions that indicate their ability to differentiate between marked instances of the activity involved. Compare:

Study 1

Judge 3
it sounded like a beginning of term interview

Judge 4
it just sounded normal like any conversation
it wasn't like a lecture or an argument

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation

Judge 7
it's a typical opening to a conversation

Judge 8
it's a discussion between colleagues

Judge 9
it's a friendly discussion between two people

Judge 10
it's easy chatty conversation
the talk is informal

Judge 14
it's not official conversation

Judge 16
it's not a conversation where they were particularly thinking
about what was coming

By beginning to categorise the response data in this way, I sought to derive an array of instances that would not only help to facilitate more detailed exploration of the different kinds of information that judges were able to recover *post hoc*, but which would also serve to guide hypotheses about how individuals arrived at their interpretations. However, one of the major shortcomings of Hymes's ethnographic categorisation is that it fails to make any connection between the information that some outside observer might provide about a communicative event, and how this information has been recovered.

As Gumperz (1982a: 154ff.) points out, the principal goal of ethnography is to show how social norms affect the use and distribution of communicative resources in speech communities, not to deal with *interpretation*. Since the descriptive categories were really developed for culturally situated work in the field, rather than for the kind of exploratory methods used here, these were revised and refined in order to accommodate the specific types of information that judges supplied with respect to the stimulus material. The response data was therefore

re-analysed not only to incorporate this information, but also to delineate the modes of interpretive work that were employed in the process.

6.2.2 Descriptive Domains

Subsequent analysis of the response data was based on a modified version of Hymes's ethnographic schema, which I reorganised into three macro-descriptive categories or domains. The domains are clearly interdependent, but help to distinguish between the different types of description that judges offered. These include descriptions about:

(1) textual features of the fragments;

(2) contextual features of the fragments;

(3) supratextual features of the fragments.

A features matrix was established to classify the different sorts of information that judges provided within each of these domains at various levels of abstraction. By taking a level-by-level approach to description, I was able to provide a much finer-grained analysis of the substance of judges remarks, as briefly outlined below.

First, the *textual domain* subsumes descriptions about communicative features or phenomena that are encoded by participants in the process of creating and organising what is said (cf. Hymes's 'instrumentalities' category). These features are generally recognised as having surface linguistic form (cf. Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Gumperz, 1982a; Fairclough, 1989), and can be subdivided into the components that are summarised in Figure 6.1.

Gumperz (1982a, Chapter 6) refers to such features as 'contextualisation cues', whose function in situated interpretation is to contribute to the signalling of contextual presuppositions. Contextualisation cues can be realised in a number of

ways, and are based on the historically given linguistic repertoire of conversational participants. These repertoires are not only verbal (morphological, syntactic, phonological, prosodic) and nonverbal (kinesic, proxemic), but also sequential and cohesive (suprasentential). They are not usually talked about in context, and can only be studied in process and *post hoc*.

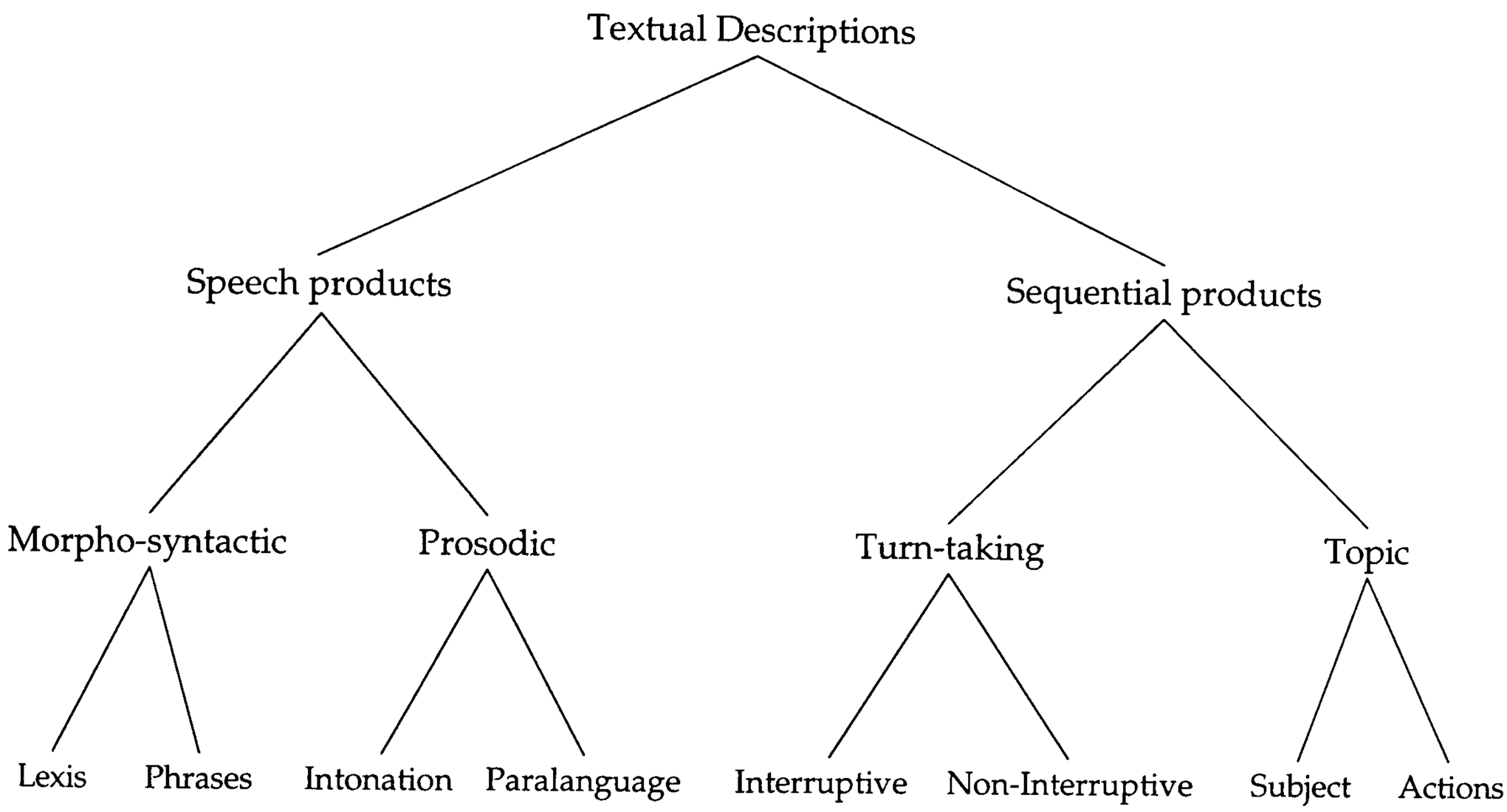

FIGURE 6.1

Components of the Textual Domain

In the absence of visual information, and therefore as one might expect, the third person descriptions were almost exclusively concerned with phenomena of the verbal and sequential kind. The response data was consequently inspected for two different types of vocabulary in the first instance - vocabularies that made direct reference to the verbal properties of speakers' utterances ('speech products') on the one hand, and vocabularies that made direct reference to the organising mechanisms or properties ('sequential products') emanating from the integration

of speaker utterances on the other. Both these categories were then gradually refined to incorporate more specific types of information, the details of which are presented in Chapter 7. Comments about the textual domain were strikingly few in number.

Second, the *contextual domain* subsumes descriptions that characterise what are often referred to as the 'extralinguistic' properties of verbal exchange. These properties are documented under the rubric of Hymes's categories of 'setting' and 'participants', and as such refer to those physical-biological characteristics of communication which have been the subject of analysis by both sociolinguists and social psychologists (cf. Argyle *et al.*, 1980).

Within the contextual domain, the response data was first coded in terms of vocabularies that could be ascribed to the general categories of 'scene' and 'participants'. These components were then gradually refined, as before, to incorporate more specific kinds of description. First under 'scene', information about 'setting' (including the 'locale' and 'time' of interaction) was distinguished from information about 'purpose' (whether this was 'specific' or 'non-specific'). Second, information about the participants was subdivided according to references concerning 'individuals' (including the 'individual qua individual', as opposed to the 'individual as a member of a social group'), and information concerning 'the relationship between participants' (including 'interpersonal relations' and 'role relations'), and so on. The main distinctions in this domain are summarised in Figure 6.2, which is adapted from Kreckel (1981: 17).

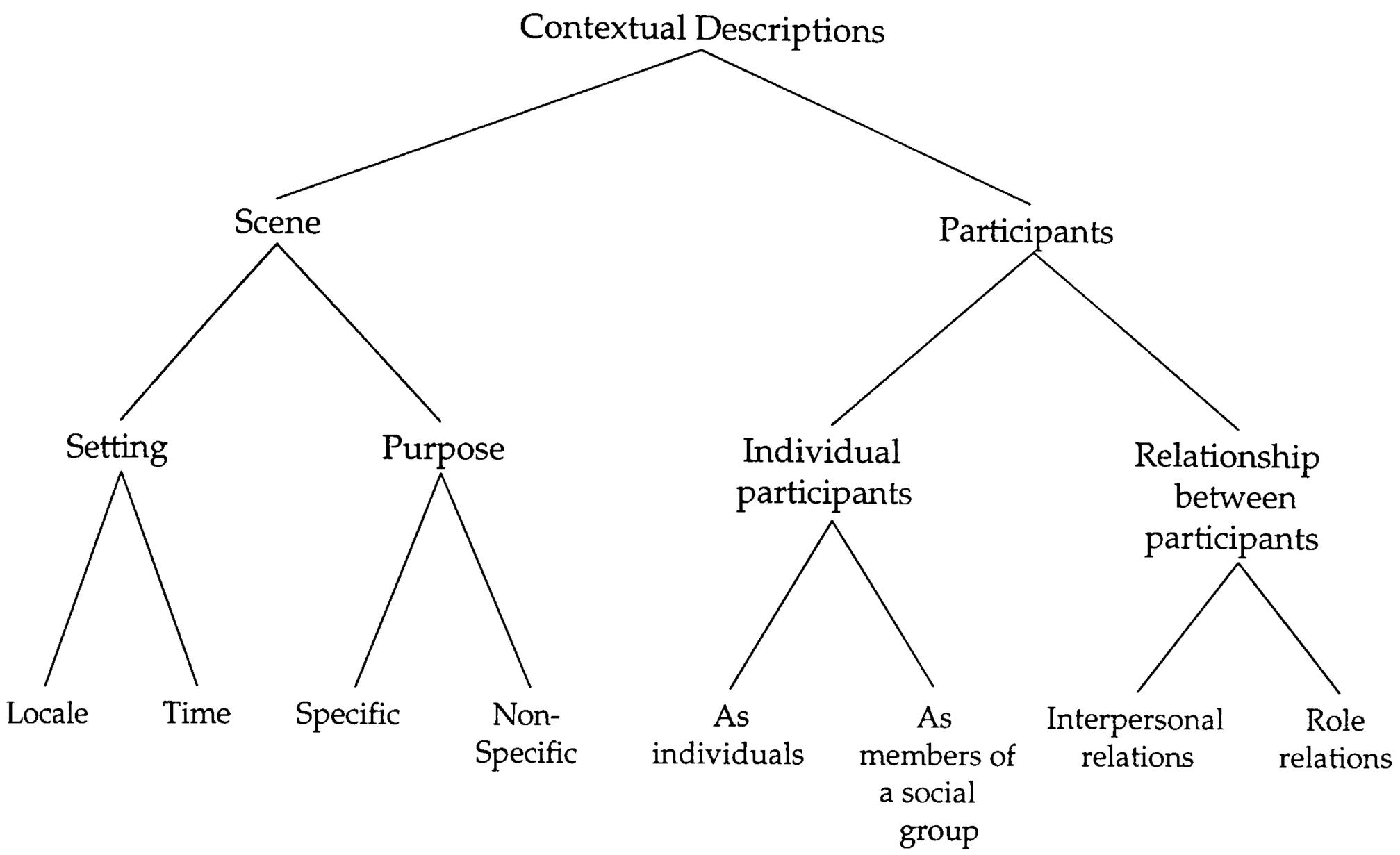

FIGURE 6.2

Components of the Contextual Domain

Chapter 8 provides details of the interpretive work undertaken by judges in this domain. A substantial number of comments were provided in this category, but it was the final category, the supratextual domain, that attracted by far the greatest proportion of remarks.

The *supratextual domain* subsumes descriptions that focus on the communicative process itself, including the sorts of information that are documented under the remaining components in Hymes's paradigm, namely: 'ends'; 'act sequence'; 'key'; 'genre'; and 'interactional norms'. I have re-organised these descriptions into two main categories, which are again subdivided for the purpose of exposition (see Figure 6.3). Details are presented in Chapter 9.

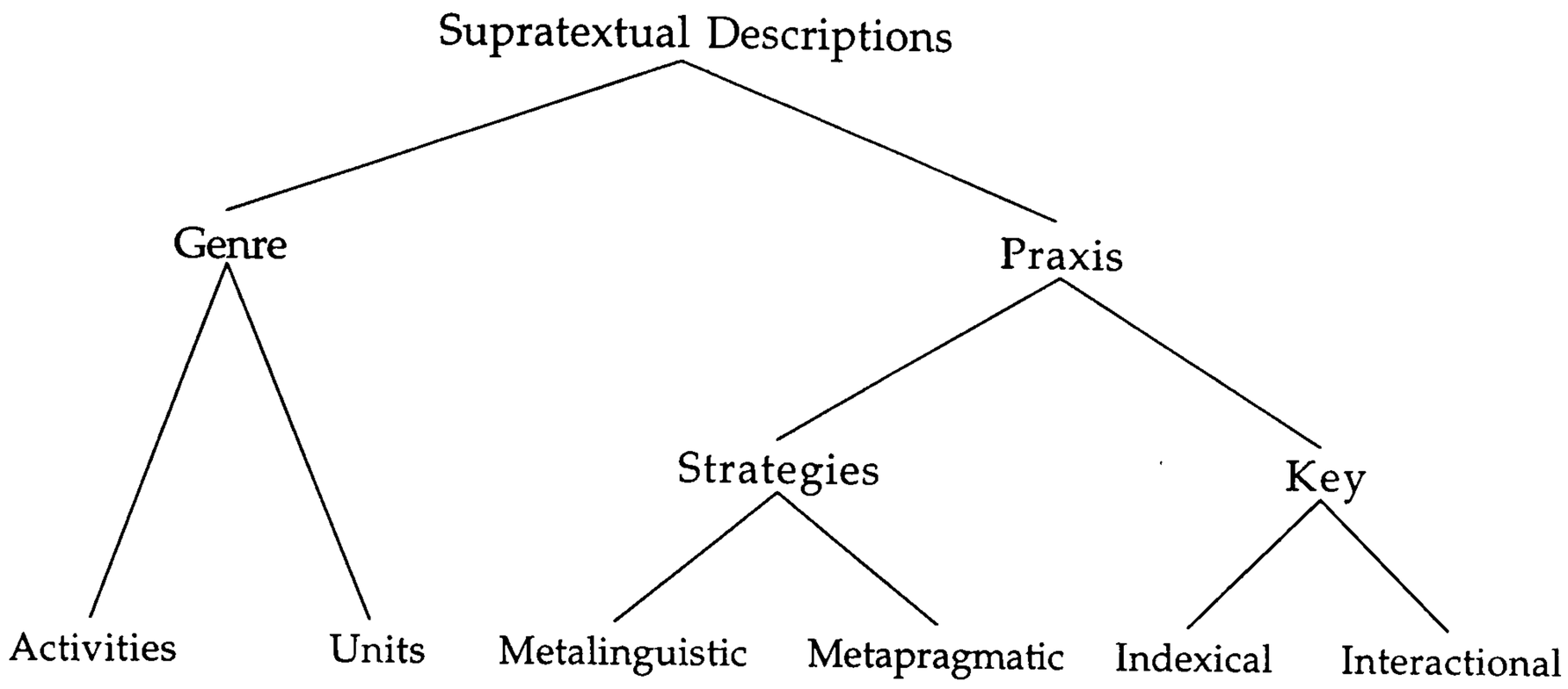

FIGURE 6.3

Components of the Supratextual Domain

The main categories and their subdivisions are:

(1) communicative 'genre' - subcategorised into 'activity' and 'unit' references. These references are associated with different kinds of speech 'activity' characterised by verbs such as 'talking', 'chatting', and 'discussing', and different kinds of speech event or 'units' characterised by noun phrases such as 'a conversation', 'a chat'; 'a discussion' and so on;

(2) communicative 'praxis' - subcategorised into 'strategy' and 'key' references. 'Strategy' references describe qualities and effects that are associated with non-surface content; these qualities may be directly or indirectly related to what is actually said. The references are characterised by metalinguistic or regulative verb phrases such as , 'breaking in', 'continuing'; 'cutting off', and metapragmatic or ostensive-inferential phrases such as 'prompting' 'sounding out', 'probing', 'trying for rapport' for example.
'Key' references, on the other hand, are characterised by adjectives and adjective phrases which evaluate the tone, manner or spirit in which the

exchanges took place; they include 'indexical' descriptors such as 'amused', 'earnest', 'indignant', and interactional or message related descriptors such as 'ambiguous', 'non-involved', and 'superficial'.

In sum, these categories are designed to cover responses about the types of interaction or event that is judged to have taken place; what is judged to have gone on, in terms of what has been said, or accomplished, or attempted by the participants; and what the tone, manner or spirit of the exchange is judged to have been.

As a result of characterising the response data in terms of the three descriptive domains that I have identified, I was able to initiate the higher level analytic process that would enable me to provide a sketch model of third person interpretive practices. This process involved working backwards from the kinds of information provided in each domain, and then trying to explicate how and what aspects of some members' resources may have been drawn upon in order to yield the interpretive comments it did (cf. Agar, 1980).

6.3 A Model of (*Post Hoc*) Interpretive Practice

The model which is outlined in this section stems from what may be considered as a rather unusual source, at least in sociolinguistic terms. However, I am not aware of any other analytical framework that could serve as a research tool for explaining the sorts of interpretive practice judges exhibit in the language of the response data. The source is Hayakawa's (1990) model categorisation of the linguistic means for exchanging information.

6.3.1 Exchanging Information

Hayakawa suggests that in order for human beings to exchange information:

> the basic symbolic act is the *report* of what we have seen, heard, or felt: "It is raining." " You can get those at the hardware store for $2.75." "The solution contains .02% iodine." "The gross profits for December were $253, 876.98". (Hayakawa, 1990: 23)

What makes these acts distinctive is that they can be verified in various ways. Thus, the price of the item at the store may have increased and can be verified by checking the shelves or contacting the owners; the percentage of iodine can be analysed by an independent laboratory; auditors can evaluate the accuracy of the company's book-keeping, and so on. Put another way, reports "require that we state things in such a way that everybody will agree with our formulation" (Hayakawa, 1990: 24). Distinct from 'reports' are what Hayakawa refers to as 'inferences' and 'judgements'. An 'inference' in Hayakawa's terms is "*a statement about the unknown based on the known* " (op. cit.). The difference between an inference and a report can be demonstrated by statements of the following type - "Our first child is afraid of the dark"; "Our second child blushes when he tells lies"; "Our third child never talks to strangers". These statements do not report as such, they are drawn from inferences about some observable set of data. Inferences can of course be drawn from reports, and as a result from what has been observed. Hayakawa gives the example of the inferences that a competent mechanic might make about the condition of engine by listening to the sounds it makes, compared to the inferences that an amateur might make. I suggest that the analogy is worth considering in the light of the sorts of third person (professional and lay) inferencing that I discussed in Chapter 3.

Inferences may be made, then, on the basis of a broad background of previous experience, or with no experience at all. What characterises them is that: "They are statements about matters that are nor directly known, made on the basis of what has been observed" (Hayakawa, 1990: 25). Hayakawa also makes the point that in general terms the quality of the inference is directly related to the quality of the

report or observation from which it stems, and from the abilities of the individual making the inference.

Apart from distinguishing reports and inferences, Hayakawa also points out that an important difference needs to be made between 'reports' and 'judgements'. He defines the latter as follows.

> By judgments we shall mean expressions of the speaker's approval or disapproval of the occurrences, persons or objects he is describing. To say, "It is a wonderful car" is not a report; to say, "It has been driven 50, 000 miles without requiring repairs" is a report. (Hayakawa, 1990: 25-26)

Judgements thus provide some kind of evaluative element or morally based assessment that is additional to what has been observed. A judgement in this sense is also a conclusion. However, the factual basis of the conclusion need not be stated and may prove to be unclear.

Given the nature of the third person accounts that were elicited, I suggest that the distinction that Hayakawa makes between 'reports', 'inferences' and 'judgements' has potential for elucidating the descriptive framework presented here. The potential lies in the quite different kinds of interpretive mode that are intrinsic to the information provided in each of the descriptive domains, as I hope to show in the following two sub-sections. I will refer to these modes as 'observations' and 'evaluations' respectively to distinguish them from the practices of actual participants. Bull and Roger (1989: 15 ff.) discuss the usefulness of this kind of analytic dichotomy (vis-à-vis separating 'description' from 'inferences') with respect to *The Facial Action Coding System* developed by Ekman and Friesan (1978).

6.3.2 Observations

As far as the textual domain is concerned, the descriptive statements are characteristically 'report-like' in quality, in so far as they can be checked or verified by others. In this sense, they are not unlike 'representatives' in speech act theory (assertions, claims, hypotheses, descriptions, suggestions etc.) which can also be generally characterised as being true or false. Thus it is possible to check the veracity of statements such as:

> they use words like bona fide and relationship
> there was lots of repetition
> there is lots of hesitancy
> uhm uh and so on
> there are plenty I means and you knows
> one is louder than the other
> she spoke very quickly
> her voice went up when she said however

Presumably, the participants can be directly adjudged to either use, or not use the words or phrases in question, or to speak, or not speak in the manner described. Judges could be asked if they did notice the use of the words 'bona fide and relationship', or whether one speaker was 'louder' than the other, or if the speakers voice did go 'up' when she said 'however', and so on. However, the process of verifying speech behaviour in this way seems to me to be relative; it is very much dependent on the degree to which 'others will agree with our formulation'. And this formulation can only be achieved by repeatedly listening to speech fragments in the manner of CA procedure, which seeks to 'observe' the verbal conduct of ordinary members without speculating about what was involved. In fact I prefer the term 'observation' to 'report', since the third person comments are not strictly reports in the sense in which Hayakawa uses the term. Recall also Harvey Sacks suggestion that the activities of everyday verbal interaction are 'observable' by ordinary members (Sacks, 1985).

CA procedure is not infallible or unproblematic, however, since it ultimately relies on the evidence of written records; records that cannot possibly 'look to the eye as they sound to the ear' as Coupland (1988: 10–12) argues. He writes: "The notion of a 'good' transcript is problematical: there are more or less useful transcripts but no 'correct' and ultimately verifiable transcripts" (Coupland, 1988: 10). Coupland also suggests that: "Linguists are likely to take refuge from such criticism in the technicality of their own systems - their notational accuracy and internal coherence" (Coupland, 1988: 11).

The problem with transcriptions in general is that they are highly conventionalised and, as I noted in section 2.1.2, inevitably impose a mode of theorising and analysis, which in Coupland's terms is already "packaged for a readership acculturated to its general form" (Coupland, 1988: 11). Transcriptions are also by definition impressionistic (cf. Kelly and Local, 1989), but surely this does not diminish their importance as an analytic tool? After all, they provide the only practical means of inspecting the dynamic properties of recorded speech events in terms of distributional and systematic regularities. In the circumstances, I can think of no reasonable argument for downgrading or dismissing third person observations about textual matters.

Observations, then, are modelled as third person responses which yield information of the textual kind. They are presumably based on members' resources that emanate from knowledge about the systematic properties of language, and knowledge about how these properties are realised in actual language use. To the extent that these properties are observable in a *post hoc* sense, and the subject of third person comment, they can be checked against other observations of a similar kind. They can also be checked, or at least compared, against professionally transcribed records of different kinds. In other words, judges' observations demonstrate their capacity to act as naive discourse analysts

and this capacity should be taken seriously, since it can be used to complement rather than supplant professional analyses. It is this capacity that is explored in Chapter 7.

As far as possible observations exclude evaluations, since evaluations involve interpretive work that is based on 'best-guessing', and this work cannot be checked or verified in the same way.

6.3.3 Evaluations

Evaluations are responses which provide both contextual and supratextual information. Comments of the evaluative kind often include morally based assessments ('judgements' in Hayakawa's terms), and consequently are broadly akin to 'verdictives'. Because the boundaries between them are often fuzzy, I will simply deal with 'judgements' and 'inferences' in the same category.

Contextual and supratextual information can only have been imposed on the data fragments by non-participant judges, since the actual interactional details are determined within the bounds of the participation framework, and by definition by the participants themselves. Nonetheless, non-participant judges demonstrated a capacity to recover situation from text, even when the text fragments involved relatively few tone units. Recall comments of the following kind which were assigned to the descriptive category of 'scene':

it's a casual encounter
he's just called by
the business is to come after
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real thing
sounded like a school common room
with teachers discussing things
it's an occasion to go for coffee and talk while you are making it
it's in their tea break
they are in an office or at home

Notice that these comments provide possible answers to the questions of where, when, how and why the exchange fragments took place. While it is anticipated that many of these answers are likely to be either inaccurate or wrong, because they are based on best-guessing (their accuracy can only be assessed in relation to contextual information provided by the participants themselves of course), they are nonetheless of interest here as distinct element of *post hoc* interpretive capacity - the capacity to provide evaluations of the temporal and spatial parameters of speech events that have not been previously seen.

In giving information within the 'participant' category, non-participant judges were able to evaluate who the interlocutors were, and what they were like, in comments such as:

> the first person was Ian
> I recognise his manner
> the other guy is a Southerner
> RP
> they are colleagues
> not intimate but relaxed
> they seem to have a lot in common
> and know each other quite well

Unless judges acknowledged that they recognised the participants, as was sometimes the case, statements of this type would again necessarily involve best-guessing, with all that implies in terms of judgemental accuracy. Nonetheless, evaluations of this type demonstrate yet another element of *post hoc* interpretive capacity - the capacity to make attributions about individuals and their relationships previously unknown.

Finally, comments about supratextual characteristics of the stimulus fragments are modelled as best-guesses about what the participants were doing in communicative terms. These include evaluations of different types of speech activities and the types of interaction that ensue as a consequence. Compare:

it's like any conversation
it's chatty conversation
it's a peculiar conversation
it's a toilet conversation
it's a filling-in-space conversation
it's not official conversation
it's quite a serious conversation

Comments of this kind seem to support Gumperz's claim that: "When events are named, such names are regularly employed in member's narrative reports in sentences such as 'We attended a lecture,' 'They were making a joke'" (Gumperz, 1982a: 165).

Gumperz also notes that:

> Events also serve as labels for the constellations of norms by which verbal behavior is evaluated, so that someone commenting on the helicopter announcement might say "They said it as part of a formal announcement and didn't mean it personally". (Gumperz, 1982a: 165)

I suggest that members' resources must include sensitivity to such norms, and that investigation of third person interpretation of the kind described here provides a methodology for bringing them to the surface in a form that becomes researchable.

Perhaps the most interesting types of evaluation that emerged in the response data, however, were those that focussed on, or made reference to various aspects of the content, organisation, and inferencing practices of the participants, as represented in the stimulus material. Much as Gumperz (1982a: 157) suggests, I found that: "When [members] report on actual verbal encounters, they tend to so by mentioning some item of content, or by referring to what people were getting at or were trying to do" (Gumperz, 1982a: 157). In the process of describing what was achieved by different interlocutors, judges made extensive use of what Kreckel (1981) refers to as 'metapragmatic categories' (see, this thesis, Chapter 4). These categories stand for communicative concepts or strategies that are expressed by judges in the form of verbs and verbal phrases such as 'advising'; 'prompting';

'encouraging'; 'contradicting'; 'sounding out'; 'trying to establish a rapport' etc.. The use of these categories is explored in Chapter 9, where they are also classified into different types, and then compared across the sample of comments. Judges interpretations of 'key', as expressed by their use of adjectives and adjective phrases such as 'ambiguous', 'non-involved', 'not convincing', 'not fully natural' etc., are examined in the same way. The evaluation of these sorts of communicative stratagem are comparable to those provided by Gumperz's judges. He notes, for example:

> Some judges identify the first utterance in (2) as a factual question, others as a request, others again suggest that it is ambiguous. The mother's remark in (3) is seen by some as an order to put on boots; others feel it could be a request or information [and so on]. (Gumperz, 1982a: 137)

Given the differences in interpretation here, it is important to stress that the main research goal behind this type of exploration is to "relate judges' interpretations to identifiable features of message form, to identify any resulting chains of inferences, not to judge the absolute truth value of particular assessments" (Gumperz, 1982a: 137). By investigating the interpretations that judges give in the supratextual domain, I hope to demonstrate something of the final element of *post hoc* interpretive capacity that is explored here - the capacity to recover and interpret participant goals from events previously unseen. Where these goals are differentially interpreted, I also want to explore the individual and social bases that underlie 'particular assessments'.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined a descriptive framework for describing, coding and modelling the interpretive practices of ordinary members' in their role as third person listener judges. Figure 6.4 is an attempt to summarise the kinds of input and interpretive factors that have been identified within this framework. It is

important to note that the diagram lays no claim to psychological reality and is not intended to describe the *actual* decision processes which judges may have invoked in offering the comments they did.

The relevant input to judges interpretive practices are presented in terms of the boxes on the left hand side of the flow chart. On the right hand side of the diagram, the boxes are used to represent:

(1) the possible interpretive resources that judges might employ in the process of commenting on the decontextualised, stimulus fragments. These resources may be based on real, imagined or stereotypical practices that enable judges to create their own contexts for establishing who the participants are and what they are perceived to be doing in different types of exchange;

(2) the possible interpretive modes that judges may employ to provide different kinds of information under experimental conditions, whether this is about characteristics of the texts themselves (observations), or about the situations or processes which they are adjudged to involve (evaluations);

(3) the possible interpretive responses that may be provided as a result of verbalising the information given under (2);

(4) the analytic mechanisms or procedures used for undertaking higher level interpretive work in order to describe these responses, and to model the capacities that they seem to imply.

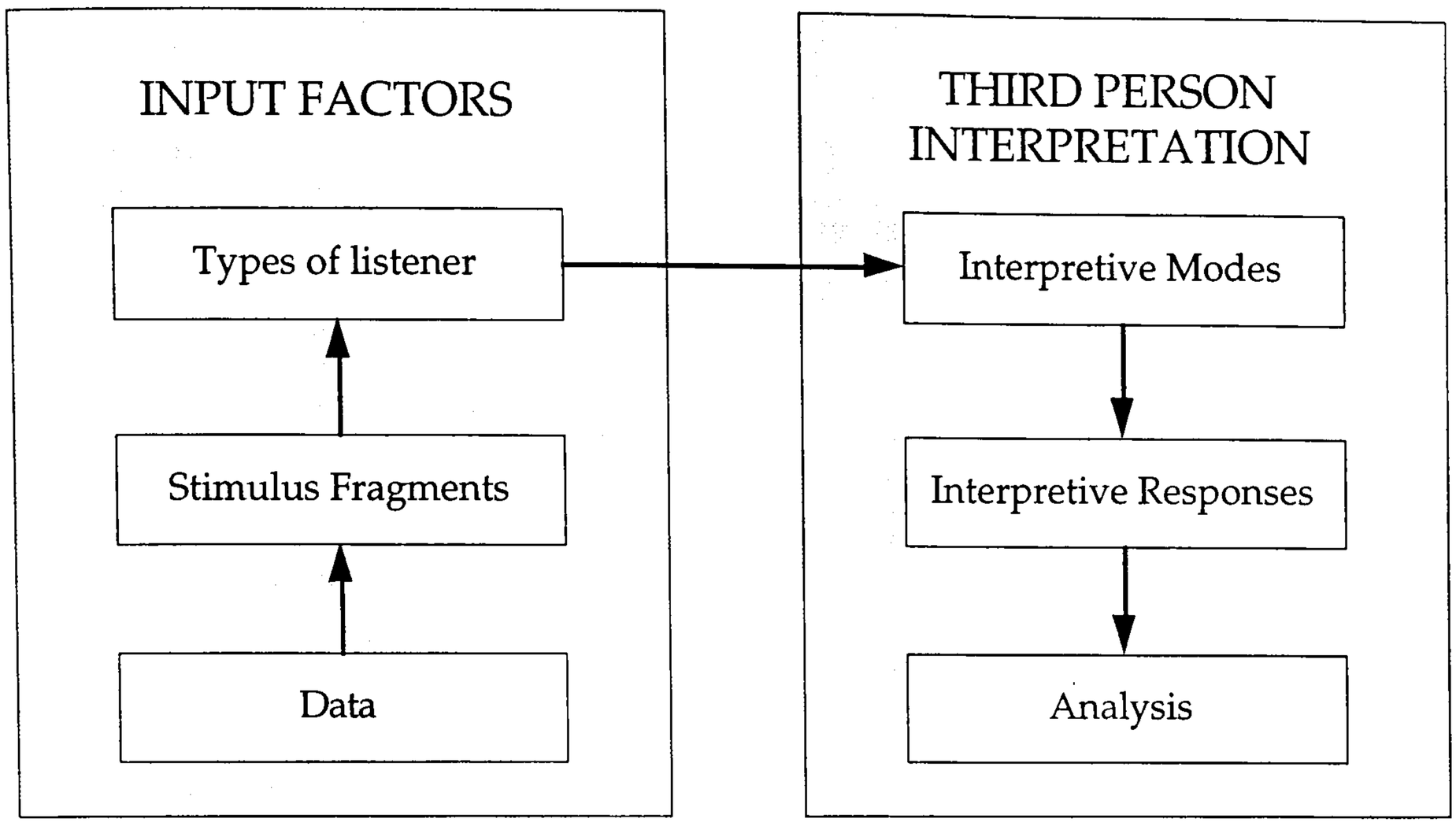

FIGURE 6.4

Input and Interpretive Factors

Following Fairclough (1989), I have argued that these practices are generated through a combination of what is in the 'text' that judges have listened to and what is in the 'interpreter', in the sense of the different kinds of resource that judges bring to the interpretive process. While there is every reason to suppose that these practices also play an important part in everyday verbal exchange as Gumperz (1982a; 1982b) suggests, they seem to be have been little explored from the perspective of ordinary participants. Having demonstrated that it is possible to elicit and identify interactional phenomena and processes not normally verbalised by participants in talk, by modelling third person perspectives in a systematic way, it is time to examine these perspectives in more detail.

This examination is pursued in the following three chapters, with particular reference to each of the descriptive domains that have been identified in this

chapter (textual, contextual, and supratextual), the different vocabularies they involve, and the interpretive capacities which these vocabularies imply.

CHAPTER 7

TEXTUAL RESPONSES

7.0 Surface Linguistic Characterisations

This chapter examines the nature of third person responses in the textual domain. These responses provide information about the encoding of surface linguistic forms in the stimulus fragments that judges observed directly.

Following the model presented in the previous chapter, a set of key terms was identified from the quasi-technical descriptions that judges used to characterise particular kinds of phenomena as a result of their observations. Two kinds of descriptive vocabulary were found to be of salience in the commentaries. These were categorised as vocabularies that gave details about (a) the products of speaking ('speech phenomena'), and (b) the products of interacting ('sequential phenomena'), as manifest in the stimulus fragments. Each of these categories was sub-divided further in order of frequency to enable a finer grained analysis of the comments (see Figure 6.1). It is this analysis that is pursued in this chapter.

7.1 Speech Products

Observations about the products of speaking were coded on the basis of any references in the response data to the surface properties of participants' utterances. Fairclough (1989) identifies 'surface of utterance' as the first level of text interpretation in his critical discourse analysis. He explains that 'surface of utterance':

> relates to the process by which interpreters convert strings of sounds or marks on paper into recognizable words, phrases and sentences. To do this they have to draw upon that aspect of their MR [members' resources] which is often referred to as their 'knowledge of the language'. (Fairclough, 1989: 143)

In order to recover such information from the stimulus fragments, I presume that third person judges must have performed some type of auditory analysis on the speech signal that they listened to. As in the case of real time auditory processing, I further presume that not everything that is present in this signal can be perceived by individuals in the process of decoding what they hear. Indeed, it is only by repeated (*post hoc*) listening that it becomes possible to provide an orthographic record of what has been said in the course of some previously recorded discourse (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2). This process is dependent on a number of factors, and not least the quality of the recordings as I noted earlier. However, the perception of surface properties in the texts must also be the result of how judges have utilised aural and linguistic cues, such that individuals were able to suggest that a particular speaker had produced a particular utterance, in a particular way, at a particular time (cf. Bladon (1986) for a review of the auditory processes involved in actual speech processing).

It is impossible to say what it is that might have caused individual judges to comment in precisely the way that they did, but two kinds of information must have been decoded in order to provide an available basis for the types of remark that were produced. This information presumably stems from the segmental and non-segmental concepts that give linguistic form to utterances (see Rost, 1990: Chapter 2). At the level of surface text interpretation, judges' demonstrated the ability to recover and report on these concepts by describing:

(1) the use of particular words and phrases ('morpho-syntactic text features');

(2) the use of different modes of expression ('prosodic text features').

I now want to move on to consider what it was judges had to say in both of these cases.

7.1.1 Morpho-Syntactic Features

In the case of morpho-syntactic features, the response data was inspected for any references to the speakers' use of particular words and phrases. Where such references occurred, I was able to identify a small set of nouns that were intrinsic to the language used in judges' descriptions. These are listed in Table 7.1 in descending order of number.

TABLE 7.1

Judges' Terms for Describing Lexis

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
word(s)	6	6	10	22
language	5	-	2	7
phrase(s)	2	-	1	3
term(s)	3	-	-	3
jargon	–	1	-	1
slang	-	1	-	1
Total	16	8	13	37

Thirty seven concordance strings were generated from this list, and examples of the kind of descriptions they involve are presented below. The strings are taken from all three studies, and include statements such as:

Study 1

Judge 7
they use terms like bona fide and relationship

Judge 8
words like rip offs are used

Judge 12
words such as junk and rip offs are used

Study 2

Judge 8
there is a kind of jargon in it
getting it knocked off
par for the course
and takes his cut

Study 3

Judge 6
the main speaker uses words
like shockingly and frighteningly

From an analytic perspective, the veracity of these statements can be checked by inspecting the transcription records produced for each of the stimulus fragments. Thus in Study 1, the relevant segment of record reveals that what the speakers actually said was as follows. The features referred to by the judges are highlighted in italics.

Record: (Study 1)

A
yeah eh
it's very interesting
but ultimately the whole thing
depends on the *social relations* you strike up with students
B
but I mean
really
all you gotta do
is convince them that you're a *bona fide* person
B
yeah
I think that what I need to do
is something to the colour of the paint really
but I'm slowly covering it up
with as much *junk* as I can find
A
and you know couple of swimming pools
and twenty five language labs

and at the other end of the scale
you get people who are really making *rip-offs*

It is clear from these records that the words and phrases reportedly used are in fact encoded features of the exchange, and can be verified accordingly. Notice, however, that the statements are not always a verbatim record of what was said.

Judge 7, for example, commented:

Judge 7
they use terms like *bona fide* and *relationship*

The locution that was realised in this instance was 'social relations':

the whole thing depends on the *social relations*
you strike up with students

Records from Studies 2 and 3, also help to confirm the veracity of the statements generated in this category. As Judge 8 notes in the former case, 'knocked off'; 'par for the course', and 'takes his cut' are locutions that are realised by one of the speakers; namely Speaker A. What A said was:

Record (Study 2, Extract 4)

A
by the time the tax man *takes his cut* you know
but its all right I get about a third *knocked off* in tax
which is about *par for the course* for a single man

Similarly in Study 3, Judge 6 reports the use of words such as 'shockingly' and 'frighteningly'.

Record (Study 3, Extract 1)

C
they started to shove
do you know it's quite *frightening*
carrying Justin
Stamford Bridge
where I went to see Chelsea play Leeds
and Leeds played *shockingly*

The record shows that the second word realised in this case was not 'frighteningly', but 'frightening':

do you know it's quite *frightening*

These differences in reporting seem rather slight, but what is worth noting is the occasions when this type of observation was overtly linked to contextual and supratextual evaluations.

Compare, in the first instance, statements about lexical uses that are linked to contextual information about the participants. In the following responses, individuals are evaluated in terms of 'educational background', 'socio-economic status', and 'occupation', for example:

Study 1

Judge 7
both sounded well educated
they use terms like bona fide and relationship

Study 2

Pair 4
the one who said shockingly
was definitely posh

Pair 5
I love his expression of the word shockingly though
sort of represented upper bourgeoisie middle class

Pair 7
I think she kind of gives herself away with however
she's either a teacher
or educated in someway

In the next set of examples, links are made to supratextual information of different kinds (see Chapter 9). The speaker's use of 'however' is evaluated as a 'regulative strategy' for maintaining the floor, or her turn, in the following responses for instance:

Study 3

Pair 2
whenever someone did interrupt her
she just said however
and then continued

Pair 4
she keeps saying however
she's just going to listen to him

On the other hand, the speaker's choice of particular words and phrases can also be interpreted in 'intentional' terms as the next comment shows. By choosing to refer to 'the tax man', 'Cambridge' and 'expenses', the participant in question uses the strategy of 'name dropping', presumably in order to 'try to impress' his interlocutor.

Study 2

Judge 6
the other guy always seems to be name dropping
and talks about the tax man
Cambridge
and expenses

A similar strategy is also presumed on the part of a quite different speaker. Rather than just the words themselves, notice that 'mode of expression' or 'key' (see Section 9.5) is suggested here as part of the speaker's 'intent' to 'try and impress people with her wit':

Study 3

Pair 7
again she was trying to impress people with her wit
by her way of expressing things
like her emphasis on the word mud and pig

References to the 'key' of specified utterances were extremely common in the response data (see Section 9.5), and included evaluations such as:

Study 1

Judge 6
one speaker is Hall
he said bona fide person
I didn't like it
it had underlying assumptions

Judge 13
he said bona fide person
it was a serious thing about being serious

Study 3

Pair 3
he said Leeds played shockingly
like he had an interest in it
he was quite vehement
when he said Leeds played shockingly

Pair 6
there is a great bawdy laugh in the background
when sex is mentioned

Apart from referring to what is said, these evaluations appear to be closely related to prosodic features that were realised in the exchange fragments.

7.1.2 Prosodic Features

A wide variety of prosodic and paralinguistic contrasts were observed in the response data. Descriptive terms used by judges to refer to these contrasts are listed in Table 7.2. The nouns involved are grouped in descending order of number, and in lexical sets that seem to be broadly synonymous.

TABLE 7.2

Judges' Terms for Describing Prosodic and Paralinguistic Contrasts

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
tone				
voice	-	16	23	39
tone	4	16	8	28
intonation	-	5	2	7
delivery	-	2	2	4
expression	-	1	3	4
inflection	-	2	2	4
pitch	-	-	3	3
stress				
emphasis	-	6	6	12
stress	-	1	2	3
pause				
pause	2	6	3	11
speed				
speed	-	3	3	6
pace	-	-	1	1
tempo	-	1	-	1
loudness				
volume	-	1	-	1
paralanguage				
laugh	-	5	11	16
Total	6	65	69	140

Each noun was processed using Hypercard as before, and 140 concordance strings were generated as a result. Notice that there is far greater use of prosodic terms in Studies 2 and 3. This could be a result of the fact that judges were given a series of smaller fragments to listen to in these studies. With less contextual information available in each of the fragments, it is possible that judges' were able to focus more of their attention on prosody. Examples of the relevant strings elicited in each of the three studies are listed below.

Study 1

Judge 14
he was very hesitant
a bit low
and mumbly at times

Judge 15
one seemed louder than the other

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
the girl is talking very quickly
that is emphasised
there is hesitation on got
it's fascinating seems higher

Judge 3
there is a big sort of breath at the end
she changes her tone quite often

Judge 6
there is a tremendous emphasis on that
her story is slow
and then increases in tempo

Judge 7
her voice goes up at the end
and it's overemphasised

Study 2 (Extract 5)

Judge 1
there is considerable variation in volume
B is quieter than A

Judge 3
it's in sort of low key
with very quiet tones

Judge 6
they talk very quickly

Judge 7
they are both giggling

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 1
she was talking quite fast
and it got faster

Pair 2
her voice pitch ranged very widely
she emphasised things
like it had been absolutely dead

Pair 4
her voice seemed a bit high at the beginning
then she started laughing
when she was talking about the dead pig

Pair 5
there is a kind of lightness in her voice
it sort of rose
and the speed of delivery was affected as well

Pair 6
I thought it was a racy
sort of exciting delivery
fastly said
bubbly

Pair 7
she uses different expression in her voice
emphasising some things
laughing kind of playfully

In order to examine the nature of the comments involved here, judges' descriptions were charted against a professional schema (see Table 7.3). The schema in this case was developed by Crystal and Davy (1969; 1975).

Judges' labels are not equivalent to those used by professional linguists in the sense that they are neither used consistently by different individuals, nor defined in a rigorous manner. Furthermore, the descriptions probably reflect conflations of different sets of cues, and may well overlap with categories that Crystal and Davy have designated as discrete. For example, the descriptor 'mumbly' may well include perceptions about 'loudness' and 'speed' as well as 'tension'. Nonetheless,

I offer the comparison because the observations are suggestive enough to warrant checking against a prosodic analysis of the syllables, or utterances to which they refer. The number of times a particular label or description occurs in the corpus of comments is indicated in brackets after each item.

TABLE 7.3

Comparison of Professional and Lay Labels for Describing Prosodic and Paralinguistic Contrasts

Crystal & Davy Labels		Judges' Labels
Tone types		
Simple	fall	fall(s); falling (3)
	rise	rise(s); rising; rose (6) goes up (3)
	level	flat (5)
Complex	rise-fall etc.	rise and fall (1) up and down (1)
Compound	fall+rise etc.	-
Stress	stressed	emphasise; emphasised (10) overemphasis (1) tremendous emphasis (1) stressed (2) really stressed (1)
	unstressed	-
Pitch range	normal	-
	widened	changes tone (1) singy-songy (1) a bit high (1) high (3) higher (4) very high (1) ranges very widely (1) incredible range (1) shrill (1)
	narrowed	-
	monotone	hardly changes (1) expressionless (2) flat in tone (1) monotonous rise and fall (1) neutral (1) no inflection (1) the same effect (1) the same tone (1) toneless (1)
Loudness	forte	-
	fortissimo	higher (3) louder (4)

	piano	a bit low (1) low (3) lower (1) low key (1) lower than usual (1) drops (1) quiet; quieter (10)
	pianissimo	rather quiet (1) very quiet (1) much quieter (1) hardly audible (4)
Speed	clipped (syllable)	-
	drawled (syllable)	long (1) drags out her vowels (1) drawn out (3)
	held (syllable)	-
	allegro	incredible speed (1) terrifically speedy (1) racy (1) quite rapidly (1) very quickly (1) very fast (3) fastly said (1) faster(2)
	allegrissimo	fast (2) quite fast (1) quick (2) quicker (1) increases in tempo (1) speeds up (1)
	lento	slows down (1) fairly slow (1) slower (1) deliberate (1)
	lentissimo	slow (4) more slowly (2) really slow (1)
Pause	silent	gap (9) long gap (1) lull (1) little pause (1) pause(s) (9) long pause (1)
	voiced	aahed (1) ahs (1) uhm(s) (11) uhmed (1)
Tension	precise (utterance)	very precise (2) quite precise (1)

	slurred (utterance)	babbled (1) garbled (4) mumbling (1) mumbly (1) virtually mumbling (1) long kind of mumble (1) runs words together (1) slurs words (1) stumbles over words (1)
Paralanguage	whispery	-
	breathy	breath (1) big sort of breath (1) lightness (1)
	husky	something stuck in throat (1)
	creaky	tired (1)
	falsetto	-
	resonant	-
	spread	-
	laugh	laugh; laughter; laughing (16) nervous laughter (1)
	giggle	giggle; giggling (4)
	tremulousness	whimpering (1) babyish (1)
	nasal/whine (not a C& D category)	talking through her nose (1) whining (1)

Third person descriptions involving labels of this type could be further investigated by controlled experimental work that required judges to respond to specific questions such as: 'Did the volume change in segment *x* ?'; 'Did the speakers emphasise or stress the word *y* ?'; 'Was there an increase in speed in utterance *z* ?' etc.. The descriptions can also be checked against a professional coding scheme of the kind presented above. However, the non-segmental analysis of speech is rather problematic as Labov and Fanshel (1977) among others have noted. There is not only a lack of agreement amongst analysts about how to transcribe prosodic phenomena, but also in how these phenomena might be interpreted (see Labov and Fanshel (1977: 42ff.), and Chapter 10 of this thesis). Nevertheless, by examining possible co-occurrences between judges' comments and detailed prosodic analysis of the fragments, I suggest that one can begin to evaluate implicit connections between particular sets of cues and what has been observed by different judges.

Consider, for instance, the following two utterances taken from Study 2, Extract 2. Both utterances are realised by the same speaker.

Utterance 1

| ALSO I mean I'm I " | reckon I'm FAIRLY sick of" "' being — broke"'—but |

'slurred' "rhythmic low" "'dimin slurred rhythmic"'

!if I HAD this " | GERMANY JOB" ——| 'you SEE' | "'six hours a [WEEK]

"rall low" 'precise' "'spiky high precise"'

NO [ADMIN] !NOTHING"' I | mean (its) a DREAM (I can't) | whose

'REALISATION (I can't)'

'creak'

Notice the co-occurrence of the features 'low' (pitch range), 'diminuendo' (loudness), 'rallentando' (speed), in conjunction with paralinguistic 'creak' in the analysis of this utterance. Now compare this analysis with the following set of judges' comments:

Study 2 (Extract 2)

Judge 1
he is virtually mumbling
towards the end of Germany job
he drops his voice
his voice goes up and down
and is much quieter

Judge 3
his voice sounds dreamy
as if he's living it
the voice falls after each thing
with a little pause in between

Judge 4
he sounded weary
tired
he sounded lower than usual

Judge 6
A seems to slur his words
he's searching for words
and runs words together

Judge 7
Ian sounded a bit pissed
there's a lot of false starts and errors
he's usually quite precise

First, I think it is clear that judges are responding to particular constellations of prosodic cues. Changes in pitch and loudness seem to be noted especially in this regard. Second, these cues seem to be variously interpreted by different individuals. However, these interpretations are the result of evaluative inferencing, rather than observation, and include such disparate labels as:

Judge 3
dreamy

Judge 4
weary

Judge 6
searching for words

Judge 7
a bit pissed

The issue of asynchronies in interpretation is taken up in Chapter 10. Similar types of response were also elicited with regard to the second utterance I wish to consider.

Utterance 2

| ‘DEAR old JANE | ‘‘y know the POSTMAN | ‘stuffed the STUFF through the’’’

‘laugh’ ‘‘low rhythmic’’ ‘creak’

— ‘she came | RUSHING to the | kitchen n SAID’ — ‘‘‘GREAT — —

‘monot’ ‘‘‘tense husky cresc’’’

on her [MAJESTY’S] | ‘SERVICE’’’’ | ‘‘‘‘she couldn’t UNDERSTAND my

‘high ‘ ‘‘‘‘lax nas alleg gliss’’’’

REACTION at | ALL’’’’

she said | ‘but : it’s not the QUEEN ‘who | takes your !tax AWAY : is [IT]’

‘nas’ ‘alleg’

Notice in this utterance that there is a change of speed from ‘rallentando’ to ‘allegro’, an increase in loudness from ‘diminuendo’ to ‘crescendo’, and the gradual loss of paralinguistic ‘creak’. The paralinguistic feature ‘laugh’ is also realised. Judges’ comments are very detailed in a number of cases (cf. Judge 1 and Judge 6). They include:

Judge 1
he gets more fluent
as he gets more confident
in the bit about Jane at the end
there’s amusement in the story about Jane
it starts off quietly
he captures her intonation by imitating
I doubt if the imitation is accurate
it’s his own interpretation of it
he was trying to capture the feeling
that OHMS is special
he emphasises great

there is a gap before the end of the laugh
it didn't follow immediately
perhaps he felt subconsciously he should laugh

Judge 2
he laughs on OHMS
there's unspoken agreement
that this is naive and amusing

Judge 3
it only livens up with Jane's story
the voice rises as he starts to laugh
it's not the Queen (intonation imitated by judge)

Judge 4
Ian about Jane is much more animated

Judge 6
in the story about Jane
something funny happened
it was if he had something stuck in his throat
there is a totally different attitude at this point
from the rest
totally informal humour
breaking the ice
we are good mates
let's have a laugh

Judge 7
dear old Jane
sounds awful kind of drunk
he really seems to be struggling with his pronunciation

In this set of comments, changes in pitch, tempo and paralanguage (especially 'laughter') are intimated. Compared to comments about the first utterance, the observations here seem to report a perceived change in the speaker's affective state and attitude which is marked intonationally. The prosodic analyses support this perception since the falling tones of the first utterance are replaced by a much more varied patterning of complex and compound tones in the second, as shown in Figure 7.1.

Utterance	\	/	—	∧	∨	∨∧	∧∨	\ + /	/ + \
1	7	1	1	–	–	–	1	1	–
2	4	2	1	5	–	–	–	1	–

FIGURE 7.1

Number and Types of Tone

It is the perceived change in the speaker's affective state and attitude that presumably leads the judges to respond with the following evaluations. Compare:

Judge 1
more confident

Judge 3
livens up

Judge 4
much more animated

Judge 6
different attitude

Judge 7
awful kind of drunk

It seems clear, on the basis of these and other examples (see Sections 9.5; 9.6, and Chapter 10), that non-segmental features of verbal exchange play an extremely important role in the interpretive process for third persons (see also Labov and Fanshel (1977), and Gumperz, 1982: Chapter 5). Compared to observations about lexical use, for example, references to prosody occur almost ten times as often across the corpus of comments as a whole. As a result, they also provide a correspondingly greater range of quasi-technical descriptors.

7.2 Sequential Products

Comments about organisational features were coded on the basis of references to specified properties of the surface interactional structure of the fragments. These properties are the product of cooperative achievement between participants, and hence are distinct from the linguistic conventions that constitute individual contributions to the conversational exchanges. In order to make observations about such achievements, judges must have had to draw on their knowledge of how verbal communication is structured. As evidenced by the comments that were offered, this knowledge includes the capacity to recover information about locally managed organisations related to speaker change on the one hand, and overall organisations related to larger scale structures over several turns on the other (cf. Sacks et al., 1974; Levinson, 1983: Chapter 6). Since Conversation Analysts have demonstrated that the organising features of verbal exchange are directly observable, the veracity of comments of this type can also be checked against professional analyses (cf. the approaches presented in Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Button and Lee, 1987; Roger and Bull, 1989).

7.2.1 Turn Taking

The organisations referred to by judges include comments about interactional phenomena that are produced by speakers in the process of determining who should speak and when (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). Following work in CA, the structure of verbal interaction is typically viewed as a more or less orderly exchange of speaker turns, punctuated by periods of simultaneous speech (cf. Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Roger and Bull, 1989).

Simultaneous speech is seen as having a disruptive effect on the interchange of utterances, particularly when second person addressees are perceived as attempting to take the floor by violating orderly turn-taking procedures. Third

person judges appear to be sensitive to these procedures to the extent that a number of comments refer to turn-talking or transition points in the exchanges, and particularly instances of simultaneous speech. The effects of simultaneity are conventionally classified into 'interruptive' and 'non-interruptive' speech (Roger, 1989), and this distinction was used to code the comments in this case. Tokens used to generate concordance strings are presented in Table 7.4. These are presented as before in broadly synonymous sets. A total of 47 strings were generated using these terms.

TABLE 7.4

Judges' Terms for Describing Local Organisations

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Interruptive:				
interruption	-	3	8	11
cut off	-	1	1	2
break in	-	-	1	1
get in	-	-	1	1
cut in	-	1	-	1
overlap	5	-	2	7
overrun	-	-	1	1
overspeak	1	-	-	1
Non-interruptive:				
pause	2	3	6	11
gap	4	1	2	7
lull	2	-	-	2
lapse	1	-	-	1
silence	1	-	-	1
Totals	16	9	22	47

1. Interruptive Speech

Interruptive speech behaviour was reported on 25 occasions across the corpus. The term used by judges for describing this behaviour was virtually always 'interruption' (11 references). However, interruptive utterances are difficult to classify as Roger (1989) argues. Successful and unsuccessful interruptions are usually distinguished as speakers compete for the floor, and at least one judge appears to overtly recognise this difference. He commented:

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 5
really oh you'll be
is cut off
but uhm
is an interruption
which doesn't quite come off

Interrupting has also been widely used as an index of dominance in verbal exchange, particularly in studies of family interaction (Roger, 1989; Huls, 1989). Judges' comments certainly seem to indicate that by interrupting, participants compete for who takes the floor, and that this competition serves to limit the verbal contribution of others. Compare statements such as:

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 1
there are quite a few interruptions
she didn't want her flow to be interrupted
she cuts him off
every time he tried to interrupt her
she sort of kept going
when he starts interrupting

Pair 2
whenever someone did interrupt her
she just said however
and then continued

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 1
there are quite a few interruptions
like however

Pair 2
the man kept trying to break in
and contradict her

Pair 7
her husband tries to get in four times
and is summarily dismissed

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 5
the other one is trying to interrupt
and he just talks straight over him

However, I thing it would wrong to claim that interruptions *per se* are always an expression or mark of dominance. Judge 6 (Study 2, Extract 5) noted for example:

Study 2 (Extract 5)

Judge 6
there are lots of interruptions
but it's not aggressive interrupting

The interruptions referred to here as 'non-aggressive interrupting' may simply be the result of 'animated', rather than 'competitive' conversational activity. Conversational overlap is one of the characteristics of the 'high-involvement style' exhibited by Tannen's (1984) New York friends (this style is also discussed by Fasold (1990: 71ff.), and further in this thesis in Section 9.1.2).

Another aspect of interruptive speech behaviour that judges referred to was the occurrence of 'overlapping', 'overrunning' or 'overspeaking' utterance sequences (9 references). Levinson (1983: 296) uses the term 'overlap' to account for two speakers speaking simultaneously. While overlaps are potentially disruptive, they may simply reflect lapses in turn-change synchrony of a kind that

is also common in relatively 'animated' as opposed to 'less animated' conversation. Thus judges comment on different degrees of overlapping; compare 'some' versus 'lots' as exemplified in the following sets of response:

Study 1

Judge 4
there is some overspeaking

Judge 9
it's interspersed with talking over each other

Judge 16
there is some overlapping
which shows that it isn't terribly formal

Study 2 (Extract 6)

Judge 6
there are lots of overlaps
which most people do most of the time in conversations

Judge 7
they keep talking on top of each other

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 1
there were lots of overlapping sequences

Pair 4
there were a good deal of overlapping sequences
which shows how keen they were to talk about it

Quantitatively based investigations of the kind conducted by Huls (1989) would of course be required to determine the extent to which these differences are communicatively significant. They would also help to define the relative symmetries and asymmetries that can hold in verbal exchange with respect to participants' turn-taking and speaking rights, and hence what constitutes different units or types of interaction.

Although overlapping may not cause the participants difficulty as talk is in progress, it can lead to problems in *post hoc* interpretation because recorded simultaneous production can make it very difficult to recover what was actually said, as the following comments suggest:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 4
I can't tell what the others are saying
because it is more or less her

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 3
at one point it was impossible to say what was going on
because they were all talking together

While good quality data can help to ameliorate the difficulty expressed here, multi-party interactions are perhaps best avoided in studies of third person interpretation for precisely the reasons that these two judges have cited.

2. Non-Interruptive Speech

The corpus yielded 22 references to non-interruptive speech phenomena. 'Pause' (11 references) and 'gap' (7 references) were the most commonly used terms for this purpose, and these seem to be employed as a general cover term for various kinds of periods of non-speech (cf. Levinson, 1983: 299). Levinson (1983) argues that the absence of vocalisation in talk is differentially assigned on the basis of turn construction. He designates three types of non-speech including: 'gap', 'lapse' and 'significant or attributable silence'. The terms 'pause', 'gap', 'lapse' and 'silence' all appear in the corpus and are used in statements such as:

Study 1

Judge 1
there are a number of pauses

Judge 3
there is a long pause
a conversational lapse

Judge 13
there are lulls in the conversation
gaps when nobody has anything to say

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
she pauses for too long
and gets lost
there are long gaps

Judge 6
there is a pause
and then I'm gonna ask you

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 1
there is a long gap after no
B continues to speak
probably because of the gap

Judge 4
he sounds as if he's not going to go on
and then does

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 4
he pauses
and then repeats frightening
just to fill in a gap in the conversation

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 1
there are quite a lot of pauses too

Pair 5
she paused several times
apparently waiting for somebody to nod

In order to provide some kind of objective measure of non-interrupting in talk, intervals between and within utterances may be timed in tenths of a second and then represented in parentheses during the process of transcription (cf. Atkinson and Heritage, 1984: x). Atkinson and Heritage also mark short untimed pauses within an utterance are by a dash, and untimed intervals within double parentheses. Analysis of pausing phenomena can emerge from close observation of the participants interactional behaviour (see Jefferson, 1989), and this behaviour can be checked against judges comments in the same way as comments about prosody.

Reported instances of non-interruptive simultaneous speech, which are often referred to as backchannel cues/signals or listener responses, were also noted. The use of verbal interjections such as 'yeah', 'mm', 'right' and so on, and non-verbal interjections such as 'nodding', are common organisational features of verbal exchange because they enable participants to continuously monitor the contributions of their interlocutors. (cf. Yngve, 1970; Duncan, 1973; Roger, 1989). Rost suggests that: "Without appropriate back-channelling, a conversation is likely to break down or simply stop, since the speaker is unsure that the listener is actively attending to and interpreting the discourse" (Rost, 1990: 100). However, while this may be generally true for languages such as English, there are exceptions in my experience; this fact is later acknowledged by Rost who points out that 'listenership cues' are likely to vary from culture to culture (Rost, 1990: 101). Eye contact and nodding, for example, are often avoided in conversational exchange by people of Māori ethnicity in New Zealand. Sustained eye contact in particular is taken to be both confrontational and rude. And unlike English, the absence of vocalisation is cherished, and can be maintained for long periods without discomfort. In short, for Māori the act of sharing one's presence with others is considered to be of far greater importance than the act of sharing speech.

Comments about the use of back-channelling cues were provided by a manual search of the corpus. This approach was taken due to the fact that very few descriptive terms were used to refer to the behaviour involved. Instead, judges referred to the realisation of such cues in the following way:

Study 1

Judge 3
he encourages him by saying uhm and yes all the time

Judge 4
he kept saying yes yes I see

Judge 5
it's Ian's way of jogging the conversation along
to say yeah yeah grunt

Judge 9
there are also agreement noises all the way through

Judge 12
they seem to say yes and uhm to everything

Judge 13
yeah yeah all the time is a kind of prompting

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 3
he answers with mms all the time

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 1
there were lots of uhms
and yeahs

Pair 7
the other guy's impatience came across
in the way he kept saying mm mm

These comments suggest that recipiency cues are viewed not only in terms of different strategies: 'encouraging'; 'agreeing'; 'jogging the conversation along';

'prompting', but also in terms of 'indexical key', in this case the key is designated as 'impatience'. Rost (1990: 101) points out that back-channelling itself does not necessarily indicate the listener is understanding the discourse at a transactional level, but rather tends to be used interactively to demonstrate that the listener is aligning with the presumed intent of the speaker. Judges' responses would appear to lend support to this claim.

Another organisational feature that was identified by manual searching was the use of discourse markers. These include locutions such as 'well'; 'I mean' and 'y'know' (cf. Schiffrin, 1987). Schiffrin defines such markers in both structural and functional terms. Structurally they are defined as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987: 31), and functionally in terms of participant and textual deixis (Schiffrin, 1987: 322-323). Very few observations were provided by judges in this category. These were as follows:

Study 1

Judge 4
there are plenty uhms
I means
and you knows
they aren't used for any particular reason

Judge 9
there are lots of uhms
yeahs
and wells

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 1
he uses conversational fillers
like you know

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 1
she's got a very high voice
and a habit of going

uh you know
she keeps doing that

Notice that the only descriptive term that is used in this set of comments is 'conversational filler'. Presumably, this term is intended to convey that the marker is semantically empty, since this also seems to be the thrust of the other additional comments that were provided, namely, that such locutions are 'not used for any particular reason ' (Judge 4, Study 1), or are 'habitual' (Pair 1, Study 3).

Recognition of regularity, order and continuity in turn-taking, and associated phenomena such as back-channelling and discourse markers have led to an extensive body of research. However, patterns of utterance sequences may be described in many ways, depending on the type of conversation examined and on the describer's interests. One of the most salient facets of sequential organisation for judges, and indeed one that seems to be widely used by ordinary members, is the notion of discourse 'topic'. I will treat references to 'topic' as a separate category.

7.2.2 Topic

From an analytic perspective, the concept of 'discourse topic' (as opposed to 'sentence topic) has proved difficult to define, despite its status as perhaps one of the most obvious sites for conversation analytic research. Something of the obstacles facing the analyst are summarised by Atkinson and Heritage (1984). They note:

> Not only is topical maintenance and shift an extremely complex and subtle matter, but also, as Jefferson's discussion of "stepwise transition" illustrates, there are no simple or straightforward routes to the examination of topical flow. Thus "topic" may well prove to be among the most complex conversational phenomena to be investigated and, correspondingly, the most recalcitrant to systematic analysis. (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984: 165)

Largely because of these difficulties, and nearly ten years later, Lesser and Milroy (1993) report a continuing lack of progress in showing how people move in and out of topics in conversation. Consequently, Lesser and Milroy use the term 'topic' in the sense of Schegloff (1979), that is, "rather loosely to refer to 'what is talked about' through some series of turns at talk" (Lesser and Milroy, 1993: 204). This a very useful working definition, because someone coming into everyday conversation and wanting to know about what has been talked about would tend to ask: 'What are you *talking about* "', rather than 'What is the *topic* of your conversation?', or 'What *topic* are you talking about?', as Bublitz (1988: 19) points out. This suggestion seems to be supported by the response data, where the terms 'topic' and 'subject' ('theme' is not listed at all) are seldom used about informal talk by ordinary members (see Table 7.5). I presume that the relative lack of use of these terms by judges is because they tend to be connected with more institutionalised types of discourse, such as panel discussions, or public lectures.

The statements that recur throughout the response data, therefore, are mainly of the form in which 'talk' is either used as noun - "the *talk* is about *y*", or as a verb - "they talked (are talking) about *x* ". The word 'talk', including its cognates, is used by judges on 98 occasions by the way. Examples of references of this type include:

Study 1

Judge 4
they talk about a range of topics
black holes
how to teach
how to get money

Judge 5
they are talking about Jane

Judge 7
they talk about a kid's language

Judge 16
they talk about three subjects
painting
black holes
and teaching
they talk about previous events

Study 2 (Extract 5)

Judge 5
I don't know what they are talking about

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 3
they talked about Stamford Bridge
they talk about the same topic
but not about the same thing
one guy is talking about gates
and the other guy is talking about a sea of bodies

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 3
she's talking about a pig dying
because it's been eating too much

The terms 'topic' and 'subject' tend to occur in object rather than subject position. Hence, 'they talk about a range of *topics*', 'they talk about three *subjects*' etc.

However, the term 'topic' is also used by judges to describe what Bublitz (1988: 40ff.) refers to as 'topical actions'. These actions describe 'what is done with the subject or topic by the participants'. Five main action patterns are identified by Bublitz. These are: 'introducing a topic'; 'changing a topic'; 'digressing from a topic'; 'shifting a topic'; and 'breaking off', or 'closing a topic' (Bublitz, 1988: 41). Since judges clearly made reference to topical actions in this sense, these were coded separately from references to 'topic', where the this term on its own was used in the sense of some unit of subject matter (see Table 7.5).

TABLE 7.5

Judges' Terms for Topical Organisations and Actions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
subject matter				
topic	8	1	1	10
subject	1	5	2	8
actions				
change	1	9	2	12
switch	4	1	-	5
move	2	5	-	7
Total	16	21	5	42

There was only one reference to the topical action of 'introducing a topic'. In Study 1, Judge 3 commented:

Study 1

Judge 3
Ian introduces topics he can talk about

The action of 'topic closure' was also reported only once. This occurred in Study 2, Extract 2, where the 'subject' is reported 'to fizzle out'.

Study 2 (Extract 2)

Judge 8
the conversation is split into two halves
the subject fizzles out
at the anecdote
about the tax claim

The remaining references involve observations about 'topic change' or 'topic shifts'. These are related to specific utterances or instances (cf. Bublitz's notion of 'local topic', 1988: 35) in examples such as:

Study 1

Judge 4
there is a topic switch with
do you want some sugar

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 5
there is an abrupt change of subject

Changes in topic are also related to activities that occur across a series of utterances (cf. Bublitz's notion of 'global topic', 1988: 35):

Study 1

Judge 4
they talk about a range of topics

Judge 6
they move on to different things

Judge 12
they switch from topic to topic

Judge 16
they talk about three subjects

Study 2 (Extract 5)

Judge 5
the conversation moves on
from pictures to work
and the topic changes completely

Bublitz argues that 'topic change' and 'topic shift' can overlap, but should be kept separate as far as possible since the latter "may be a more subtle and therefore effective means of controlling and guiding the topic and the conversation than a topic change" (1988: 64). Interpreting these types of action *post hoc* seems to me to be fraught with difficulty however, because the notion of 'topic' itself is so structurally evasive. What is talked about in terms of subject of matter, and how it is talked about can also be evaluated in quite different ways. Compare the

comments of Judge 6 and Judge 8 in Study 1, where the participants' topical actions are viewed as 'non-serious', on the one hand, and as 'indicative of relaxation' on the other. Judge 1 makes a similar statement about how the subject matter is treated in Study 2 (Extract 5), that is, it is treated 'semi-seriously'.

Study 1

Judge 6
they don't seriously consider the topics
under consideration

Judge 8
the switch of topics is indicative of relaxation

Study 2 (Extract 5)

Judge 1
they only treat the subject matter semi-seriously

The manipulation of topical actions is clearly a very important aspect of verbal communication, and although descriptively challenging is an area that deserves further attention from analysts of talk (cf. the work of Bublitz, 1988: Chapter 2). To introduce, change or abandon a topic is a powerful means of exerting one's influence on the direction of the ongoing conversation and thus push one's interests into the foreground. These interests may be achieved by using topic and topical actions to move certain facts, events, states, persons, attitudes and other speech subjects into the focus of the conversation. However, Bublitz (1988: 139) concludes from his studies that topic and topical actions are not usually asymmetrical or egocentric; they are the result of joint productions that help participants "to reach a compromise of interests, to create and maintain common ground, and to establish cooperation and agreement". The work of Jürgen Habermas is very much echoed here, and the kinds of actions mooted would perhaps benefit from controlled investigations of the kind advocated by social

psychologists who work on discourse phenomena (see, for example, the papers collected in Roger and Bull, 1989).

In terms of the present perspective, the relationship between judges' evaluations of topical actions and the ascription of participant goals will be pursued further in Chapter 9. Judges' observations about 'topic' also seem to help characterise different kinds of interactional exchange by designating different kinds of content, and I suggest that this aspect of third person interpretation merits further investigation too (see Chapter 9).

7.3 Summary

In this chapter, analysis of comments in the textual domain has shown that naive third person judges were able to provide information about the encoding of surface linguistic forms, in the stimulus fragments, to varying degrees of detail. Judges observations were characterised on the basis of a small, but significant, metalinguistic vocabulary which was used to refer to particular kinds of phenomena.

Apart from comparing this vocabulary against professional usage, its classification provides a basis for investigating interpretive capacity that are generated by what is in the text. Interpretations generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is in the interpreter. Interplay of text cues and members resources. Gumperz (1982a: 170) suggests that:

> by looking at systematic patterns in the relationship of perception of surface cues to interpretation, we can gather strong evidence for the social basis of contextualization conventions and for the signalling of communicative goals. (Gumperz, 1982a: 170)

These patterns are explored in the following two chapters, where the interplay of text cues and members resources is examined with respect to contextual

information about the participants (Chapter 8), and supratextual information about genre and praxis (Chapter 9).

CHAPTER 8

CONTEXTUAL RESPONSES

8.0 Situational Characteristics

This chapter considers the kinds of interpretive comment that judges provided about 'situational characteristics' of the stimulus fragments. While I will refer to such interpretations as 'contextual', the notion of context, as used here, is intended in the restricted sense of the physical-biological components of communicative events, as opposed to the notion of 'context' or 'context of situation', which is used by scholars as a theoretical and a cognitive abstraction necessary for understanding verbal interaction.

A variety of conceptual frameworks have emerged over the years for investigating 'context', and these are usefully reviewed by Giles and Coupland (1991). Giles and Coupland point out that: "Many approaches have recognised the importance of social context even to the extent of claiming that language use is prescribed and proscribed by the situation in which it is spoken, including the characteristics of the speakers involved" (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 3). Since it is such a huge issue, the debate about whether language is either determined by or as itself determines the nature of 'context' is not pursued here (see Pellowe, 1990; Giles and Coupland, 1991; Duranti and Goodwin, 1992 for further discussion). From a sociolinguistic perspective, I take it as axiomatic that language use cannot be adequately conceived without reference to the context in which it is encoded. In other words, language and situation must be viewed as conceptual autonomies

which are interdependent and operate simultaneously, as Giles and Coupland (1991) argue.

Because their descriptive categories were closest to the types of comment that judges provided, I used the frameworks established by Hymes (1972; 1974), and thereafter developed by Brown and Fraser (1979) for coding contextual interpretations (see Section 6.2). The responses were subsequently categorised in terms of two broad statement types:

(1) statements giving information about the physical location of the 'scene';

(2) statements giving information about the personal attributes or characteristics of the 'participants'.

Interpretive differences in respect of this information will be taken into account, since there are likely to be different perceptions of what is involved for different individuals as Giles and Coupland (1991) point out. They note:

> different individuals *may* use different dimensions for construing the same situation. In addition, the dimensions used by different people vary in complexity and even when different individual do use common dimensions different weights may be placed upon them, and the same episode may be seen at the opposite poles of the same dimension. (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 15)

A major difference, of course, is bound to lie in the different types of information that are available to participant as opposed to non-participant judges. However, this difference is not systematically explored here, since I did not set out to investigate the influence of contextual determinants on third person interpretation *per se*. Something of judges' shared knowledge, organising concepts and practices with respect to family and outside observers interpretations of the same exchange is explored in the work of Kreckel (1981). Kreckel expected that family members would come to very similar interpretations as a group, while outside members would arrive at very different interpretations. However, her

findings produced 'unexpected results' in terms of the amount of agreement between outside observers as a group in their own right (Kreckel, 1981: 259). The problem for the analyst of course, to recall Labov and Fanshel's (1977: 351) axiom , is that "we can never recover all the information that the participants shared" (see Section 3.3).

Detweiler (1986) argues that one should not be surprised to find that similar individuals, given exactly the same information, sometimes make different categorisation judgements. He reviews a number of approaches that have attempted to explain why these differences may occur, and suggests that one of the most promising is the idea of 'category width'. The idea of category width is that "the world more often than not provides a person with stimulation that does not clearly fit the definition, or prototype, of any one class or label" (Detweiler, 1986: 67). This notion seems to provide an extremely plausible and powerful way of explaining why there should be interpretive differences across and between judges who have listened to the same stimulus material.

The issue of interpretive multiplexity across and between judges is explored further in Chapter 10. However, as far as the provision of contextual information is concerned, I can only suggest that a much more substantive psycho-ethnographic study of different individuals and different types of judge is needed in order to determine the kinds of dimension and effect that Giles and Coupland (1991) allude to.

8.1 The Scene

Following the model of Brown and Fraser (1979), comments about 'scene' were first categorised into information about 'the setting' and information about 'the purpose' of the fragments. Judges' terms for referring to 'scene' are limited to just two nouns. These are 'situation' and 'place'. A Hypercard search using these

terms only produced eleven references in the corpus. Consequently, a further manual search was undertaken to identify other types of reference in this category, where these included information about the locale and time of interaction.

8.2 Setting

The majority of references about 'setting' concern the 'locale' rather than 'time' of interaction and occurred in Study 1. Only one of the participant judges involved in this study provided information about the setting, and this involved a single reference to when the exchange took place. Participant B commented:

> Participant B
> I can remember the situation
> it was a Saturday morning

Non-participant references to setting in the same study were provided by eight judges. Ten references were identified, and these specify four different environments. The environments are:

(1) the room or office of one of the participants—5 references;

(2) the home or flat of one of the participants—3 references;

(3) a kitchen—1 reference;

(4) a school common room—1 reference.

Three of the judges correctly guessed that the exchange took place in the office of the participant who was named, though individuals were not actually informed where the recordings took place. These guesses were presumably based on knowledge about the participant concerned, since he was widely known to undertake tape-recording in his room. The remaining guesses are presumably based on some inferred set of possible environments that judges consider as plausible settings for the type of exchange that took place. A salient cue in this

regard may have been the sound of the kettle boiling, which was noted by six of the sixteen judges. This cue may also have led to the only comment about the time of the interaction, which was described by Judge 9 as being 'in their tea break'.

Studies 2 and 3 yielded very few comments about setting at all. Only five references were elicited across the six fragments used in Study 2. These occur in response to Extract 3, where the fragment was adjudged to have taken place in 'a vehicle' (Judge 4), 'a boiler room' (Judge 6), and 'a toilet' (Judge 7) respectively.

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 4
they were in some kind of vehicle

Judge 6
a boiler room

Judge 7
a toilet

In Extract 6, Judge 6 suggests that the fragment occurred in a 'gent's washing room', and also described the participants as 'washing their hands'. Since all the recordings were made in the same office, these guesses are incorrect.

Only two fragments in Study 3 yielded comments about the situation. Pairs 1 and 2 (Extract 1) said that the exchange may have taken place in a 'pub' or 'bar'. While Pair 7 (Extract 2) said that 'it sounds like a middle aged farmer's wife at tea talking to another farmer's wife'.

Non-participant statements about setting often seem to be drawn on the basis of analogy; 'it's like' and 'it sounds like' are the most common usages. Since analogy is also widely used to describe the participants as well as their communicative behaviour (as we shall see in Section 8.4 below, and in Chapter 9), it seems likely that a general principle of analogy is an important interpretive

resource for third person judges. Indeed, just such a principle is suggested by Rost (1990) to explain listener understanding of single utterances as well as larger texts. This principle is paraphrased by Rost as follows:

> 'I've been in a situation something like this before, so what is happening here will be similar to what happened before'. (Rost, 1990: 72)

Rost (op. cit. 72-73) goes on to explain that the principle can be applied to people ('this person usually says things like that'), to places ('that's the kind of conversation you often hear in places like that') and to text types ('that's what usually happen in happens in stories like that').

It would seem that by using the principle of analogy (I presume that the analogies can be real, imagined or stereotypical), third person non-participant judges can also provide descriptions of people, places and text types previously unseen (cf. Sacks, 1985). In other words, they are able to construct reasonable hypotheses or guesses about 'who is involved and what is going on in the exchange fragments'. While these hypotheses may be wrong, they provide evidence of judges' tendency and willingness to create contexts that are readily associated with their own communicative experience.

The extent to which setting influences the nature of everyday speech activities is a moot point, and would require systematic investigation in its own right. Brown and Fraser note: "The physical setting in which interaction takes place generally has little determining power over linguistic characteristics of the speech used in that setting; it appears to be rare that speech choice is actually determined by the setting *per se*." (Brown and Fraser, 1979: 44). However, while speech choice or style may be more a reflection of 'audience design' (Bell, 1984; 1990) than setting, I think it is clear from the following comments that individual affective states and attitudes can be influenced by situational factors.

In Study 1, for example, Participant 1 commented:

Study 1

Participant A
I was conscious of the situation
we were not meeting as mates
it was very much a student supervisor chat

Interestingly, his reported sense of the relative formality of the proceedings is echoed in the comments of several of the non-participating judges. Judge 10, for example, states that 'the situation isn't very relaxed', as does Judge 16 who suggests that the participants 'are not quite at ease'. Participant 1 is also variously described as 'not relaxed' (Judge 1); 'having a complex about being a student (Judge 3); 'sounding eager but hesitant', and being 'uncertain' (Judge 4); 'sounding a little bit uneasy' and 'rather stilted' (Judge 13); and finally as 'very hesitant' and 'passive' (Judge 14).

I presume that these judgements emanate from interpretive work that is based on contextualisation conventions of various kinds. 'Uncertainty', 'hesitancy', and 'unease' may be being attributed as a result of prosodic cues such as 'tone', 'pause' and 'loudness'. 'Passivity' may be marked by the participant's 'non-interruptive speech' patterns and the relative lack of 'overlapping sequences', and so on (see Chapter 7). The putative relationship between contextualisation cues of this type and the evaluation of some individual's discourse behaviour will be explored more fully in Chapter 9.

Brown and Fraser (1979: 39) argue that one of the most important factors in motivating the analysis of interactional situations comes from the notion of communicative 'purpose', and since a number comments indicate that the exchanges are viewed as purposeful by third person judges, it is this notion that I want to consider next.

8.3 Purpose

Brown and Fraser (1979) suggest that there are different levels which can be used to describe scopes of purpose. The first of these are designated as 'maxi-purposes', and it is these that are of immediate concern in this section. Maxi-purposes provide participants with 'a rough and ready guide through a whole series of different or distinguishable situations', such as 'visiting the doctor' (Brown and Fraser, 1979: 39ff.). More than one situation may of course be involved in the process of attempting to fulfil this purpose from the point of view of a prospective patient. For example, one might first talk to the receptionist in the reception area, before moving on to the waiting area, and then finally into the doctor's room itself to begin the process of consultation. In this latter context, one may pursue various 'mini-purposes', which Brown and Fraser define as 'the moment-by-moment changes in participants' intentions' (1979: 40). It is these moment-moment-changes, as perceived from outside the participation framework, that are the subject of discussion in Chapters 9.

Maxi-purposes were coded on the basis of generalised statements about the communicative situation. These were mostly elicited in the course of Study 1, where there were 26 references in the response data. While there may be certain overarching purposes for participants in talk, these can include specific purposes which are not sustained across the talk as a whole. This kind of embedding of purpose, with larger purposes containing smaller ones, is exemplified in the comments of Participant 1, Study 1 who said:

Study 1

Participant A
I was conscious of the situation
we were not meeting as mates
it was very much a student supervisor chat
I wanted to reprocess my application
as a research student

Ian was trying to make sure of my motives

If we now consider the comments of his interlocutor, it would appear that he held a rather negative sense of what was considered to be going on. Participant B responded:

Study 1

Participant B
I can remember the situation
it was a Saturday morning
it's all preliminary crap
it was basically a waste of time

Non-participant judges seem to be sensitive to both these interpretive positions as evidenced by the comments of Judges 6 and 9 in the same study. Compare, for example:

Study 1

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real stuff
it's a way of filling in silence
it's exploratory
it's a linguistic shaking of hands

Judge 9
its not so much an interrogation
but a chance for the younger guy to explain things

However, four other judges considered that the exchange was perhaps rather more spontaneous and phatic in purpose than either of the participants had intimated. The comments of these judges included:

Study 1

Judge 2
it's a casual encounter
he's just called round

Judge 4
it's kind of come on over
and tell me what's going on
and how I can help

Judge 8
it's an occasion to go for coffee
and talk while you are making it

Judge 12
it wasn't for a purpose

While references to this kind of situated purpose were relatively sparse in the remainder of the corpus, a very substantial body of comments was identified in which the goal-oriented nature of the interactions, in terms of mini-purposes, or participant 'conversational inferencing' (Gumperz, 1982a: Chapter 7), seemed to attract non-participant judges' attention. Before considering interpretive work involving evaluations of this type, that is, where the focus of judgemental response was concerned with what the participants were trying to achieve as interlocutors, I want to discuss the other major element of contextual commentary, wherein judges provided various kinds of information about the participants themselves.

8.4 The Participants

The basic descriptive question to answer about participants is 'Who is taking part in the event?' According to Saville-Troike (1982), descriptions of this kind should include:

> not only observable traits, but background information on the composition and role-relationships within the family and other social institutions, distinguishing features in the life cycle, and differentiation within the group according to sex and social status. (Saville-Troike, 1982: 141)

It is a well recognised facet of verbal communication that as actors in a social world, we interact with people by virtue of an exchange of information on many

different levels. In this regard, Laver (1972) suggests that: "Any given utterance contains not only a great deal of linguistic information but also a great deal of information for the listener about the characteristics of the speaker himself" (Laver, 1972: 189). Lyons (1977a) makes a similar point in arguing the need to include social and expressive information in modelling the communicative process, because language not only serves to express speaker intent for the purposes of signalling factual and propositional information, but also serves to (a) establish and maintain social relations, and (b) express our attitudes and personality. The extent and willingness of judges to provide social and expressive information about the participants, as a consequence of *post hoc* inferencing, is examined in this section.

It is well established that our perception of other people is not a passive process. Giles and Powesland (1971) argue, for example, that:

> When we meet someone for the first time we immediately begin to make judgements and inferences about him on the basis of what we see and hear. The nature of these inferences and the significance which we attach to them will depend on our conscious or unconscious assumptions and beliefs. Whether we are aware of it or not we each have our own "implicit personality theories" which enable us, with varying degrees of validity, to construct impressions of people from whatever information about them is available. (Giles and Powesland, 1975: 1)

In order to determine 'what sort of person we are dealing with', in face-to-face interaction, Giles and Powesland suggest that individuals make use of certain visual clues; the 'appearance' of the person or persons concerned, their 'facial expressions', gestures', and so on. Obviously, visual clues are simply not available in audio recordings of verbal exchange. Nevertheless, this did not appear to inhibit third persons from making judgements and inferences on the basis of the data fragments they listened to, many of which were of course previously unseen or unknown. The evaluative work that is considered in this section is certainly not passive either, and is often remarkable in its detail. But the clues or processes that

may have triggered the evaluations in question are much less transparent than the nature of someone's dress or aesthetic biological qualities, since judges had to work from verbal (textual) content alone. The process may be akin to our attempts to construct accurate visual portraits of individuals on the end of a telephone. I know from my own experience that the disparity between the image I have constructed and the person I eventually confront can be markedly different. Indeed, guesses about what someone looks like are often a source of comment, amusement, or embarrassment, because of their inaccuracy.

It is the nature and quality of evaluations about the participants as individuals, as opposed to those used in the description of the participants as interlocutors, that I want to consider here. The reference vocabularies used by judges in this regard essentially provide what Abercrombie (1967: 6) refers to as 'indexical information', that is, information about the personal characteristics of speakers. These characteristics are categorised by Laver and Trudgill (1979: 3) into 'group markers', 'individual markers' and 'affective markers' respectively. Group markers are essentially social and indicate affiliation to particular regional or social groups. Individual markers include biological or physical characteristics. And affective markers involve characteristics of personality and affective state. This kind of information, has of course, been the subject of a great deal of discussion within social psychological research of the kind developed by Howard Giles and his associates, and the work of attribution theorists, which shows peoples ' willingness to infer social and personal characteristics from voice (see, for example, Giles and Powesland, 1975; Scherer and Giles, 1979; Giles, Robinson and Smith, 1980; Fraser and Scherer, 1982; Ryan and Giles, 1982, Hewstone, 1983; 1984; Giles and St Clair, 1985; Gudykunst, 1986; Giles and Robinson, 1990).

Judges' comments were considered in the light of two main types of information provided in the response data (cf. Brown and Fraser, 1979 and Kreckel 1981):

(1) information about the personal attributes of individual speakers;
(2) information about the relational attributes that are held between speakers.

8.5 Personal Attributes

Brown and Fraser (1979: 50) suggest that the characteristics of individuals, as manifest in their speech, may be divided into those which seem to characterise the individual as an individual, and those which characterise the individual as a member of a social group. They further divide individualistic characteristics into those relatively stable aspects of personal identity, as opposed to temporary states and attitudes which evolve and change in the process of conversing. These temporary features are not a primary focus of this chapter, since they appear to be more obviously related to the interactional behaviour of the participants (see the discussion of 'affectual' and 'textual key' as discussed in the following chapter, Section 9.5). Consequently, the ability of judges to name and identify particular individuals is considered first, followed by discussion of characterisations that place these individuals as members within some social grouping.

8.5.1 The Individual Qua Individual

Where an individual participant was described by the judges, the references concerned were coded in terms of whether the person in question was said to be either known or recognised by name. References to stable characteristics of personal identity were then charted according to statements about the 'age' and 'sex'. Although there is persistent debate as to whether personality traits are stable across time and consistent over situations in the same way as 'age' and 'sex', I

have also included judges' evaluations of 'personality' traits in this section. The most frequently cited marker of social identity is 'sex of speaker', and I shall consider this first.

1. Sex

Sex of speaker proved to be the most common way for judges to refer to the participants, with judges providing 115 explicit references using masculine and feminine terms (see Tables 8.1 and 8. 2 below). Smith (1979: 128) notes:

> the recognition of speaker sex is not a problem, for there is obviously some little combination of elementary speech features that cues our recognition of sex before almost anything else about the speaker's social identity, except perhaps age.

My data would seem to support Smith's claim, since there were 529 implicit references to the gender of the participants in the exchange fragments, where these involved the use of the various third person masculine and feminine pronoun forms:

'he', 'him', 'himself'; 'his'; - 284 references

'she'; 'her'; 'herself'; 'hers' - 245 references

The use of pronouns in the expression of various social relations and attitudes is explored in some detail in Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990).

I will turn to the issue of 'age' presently, since contrary to Smith's comment, there were relatively few comments about the social identity of the participants in this regard. Personally, I think that the attribution of age based on responses to tape recorded is likely to be problematic, since it is impossible to determine how old someone is with any degree of accuracy. Having said that, some judges did attempt to guess the age of particular participants beyond using broad comparators such as 'younger' as opposed to 'older' as we shall see.

Other references to gender are presented in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 below, where a small set of terms are used to mark identity in each case (the figures include plural and possessive forms).

TABLE 8.1

Judges' Use of Masculine Terms

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
bloke	5	14	7	26
guy	10	9	7	26
man	5	9	12	26
fella	2	-	1	3
fellow	-	-	1	1
Total	22	32	28	82

Notice, in the male set, the relatively large number of colloquial noun usages ('bloke'; 'guy'; 'fella'), as opposed to the more restricted set of feminine terms, where only 3 terms were used.

TABLE 8.2

Judges' Use of Feminine Terms

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
woman	-	-	18	18
girl	-	6	2	8
lady	-	1	1	2
Total	–	7	21	28

It is not so much the actual number of references that is at issue here, since the stimulus fragments were not selected on the basis of equal numbers of female and male participants, but rather the choice of terms themselves. The term 'girl', for

example, tends to be used in a negatively stereotypical way by male as opposed female judges. Compare the comments of the following two judges in Study 2, Extract 1. Judge 1, who is female, uses the term to make the observation that:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
the girl is talking very quickly

Judge 6 (male), on the other hand, uses the term 'girl' to make the following judgements:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 6
it sounds like a girl
who has got a crush on teacher
there is a little girl lost sort of attitude

It is perhaps worth comparing the nature of these comments with the evaluations produced by the other female judges in the same study.

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
she seems to be acting in some way
even at the end she isn't fully natural

Judge 7
it sounds false
the girl sounds self-conscious

The male judges do seem to be more inclined to make judgemental statements with respect to female participants as further evidenced in Study 3. Compare the positive comments of the female judges, with the negative ones of the males in the following set.

Female Judges: Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 1
she's a very nice lady

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 2
interesting woman wasn't she

Male Judges: Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 2
she was trying to put on an 'I am being recorded' voice

Pair 5
it sounded to me like a woman with an audience

Pair 6
one woman seems to be doing all the talking
it's a very immature kind of speech

Pair 7
the way she uses language just doesn't ring true

Study (Extract 4)

Pair 6
she seems a bit kind of dopey

Pair 7
she was a bit kind of woman's lib
in that women aren't afraid of mice

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 5
it's the same dratted woman though
have we got her all the way through

Pair 7
they sound like they were girls at school together

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 6
when the woman were speaking
they didn't know the story
and the audience were indulgent
whereas the men were speaking about matters
that everyone cared about

This is not to say that female judges did not make any stereotypical judgements about the male speakers as the following comments indicate, but these are relatively few in number.

Female Judges: Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 2
they talked a lot of bland cliches
compared to the women speakers

Pair 3
the laughter was very cheap
it was a very male conversation

Kramarae (1982) suggests that women's speech or men's speech cannot be defined apart from discussion of attitudes, and it may be the case that judges' comments need to be more systematically explored in this light. The question is whether or not the mere recognition of gender precludes a way of listening that is likely to lead to a particular assessment of the way some individual speaks or behaves in verbal exchange. If women's language and men's language is different, and all the evidence assembled to date suggests that is (Coates, 1986; Coates and Cameron, 1988; Kramarae, 1990), then the evaluation of gender associated speech style or interactional behaviour in everyday verbal exchange certainly warrants further exploration.

2. *Naming*

The second most frequent means of describing speaker identity in the response data is by naming. Naming practices vary according to speaker recognition patterns, and the knowledge that judges have regarding different individuals. When individuals are referred to by personal names, judges use either first name alone (e.g. 'Ian'; 'Malcolm'; 'Holly'), last name alone (e.g. 'Hall'; 'the Palaces'), or first name plus last name (e.g. 'Neville Carson'; 'Chris Davidson').

Naming in itself does not indicate the degree of familiarity that judges might have with respect to the individual who is named, since this information would have to be gleaned by direct questioning, or by requiring judges to rate familiarity on some pre-established scale. However, I assume that knowledge of the participants may very well affect not only the nature of attributions about individuals, but also the nature of their interactional behaviour (cf. Kreckel's (1981) work on family and outsider interpretations of family discourse). Where individuals are not named, on the other hand, it is likely that judges are not familiar with the individuals in question. Consequently, references to the participants by non-participant judges tend to be couched either in terms of impersonal noun phrases of the type - 'the man'; 'the girl'; 'the guy'; 'two people' etc. or pronominal references such as 'she'; 'he'; 'one'; 'they' as I pointed out in the previous section. Another common form of reference is by the designation of interactional roles 'the main speaker'; 'the guy who was trying to hog the conversation'; 'the other bloke was very quiet'; 'person A' and 'person B' etc.

In Study 1, seven of the judges identified one of the participants by name. First name references were used on 16 occasions by six of the non-participant judges; the remaining judge identified the participant in question by his last name on 4 occasions. Speaker recognition is presumably based on the situational and parametric probabilities that were applied on this occasion; the kinds of factor affecting speaker recognition in experimental contexts are presented in Brown (1979; 1980). These probabilities include the range of possible circumstances in which such a voice may have been heard by a judge, and/or the vocal characteristics that may identify a particular individual from the set of reference voices with which judges are familiar as a result of some kind of social contact. Six judges were able to identify one of the speakers by naming as follows:

Study 1

Judge 1
the first person is Ian

Judge 2
the first speaker is Ian

Judge 3
I recognise Ian

Judge 4
Ian had control all along

Judge 5
it's in Ian's room

Judge 7
one of them is Ian

A seventh judge also identified this speaker by name, but used his surname instead. Thus:

Study 1

Judge 6
one speaker is Hall

Where personal identification by naming was not provided, presumably because the other speaker was either not recognised or known to judges, non-familiar reference labels were employed. These labels came in a variety of forms. Judge 1, or example, identified the second speaker by place of origin ('the other guy is a Southerner'). Judge 2, on the other hand, referred to his sex ('I don't know the second man'). Judge 3 referred to sex and occupation ('the other guy may be a former student'), and Judge 4 referred to his affective state ('the other speaker sounded eager but hesitant). Judge 5 used a familiar in-group marker ('he is talking with another bloke'), while Judge 6 stated that speaker recognition was not possible in this particular case ('I can't really make out one speaker'). Finally, Judge 7 referred to the sex and interactional behaviour of the participant in

question ('the other bloke has to be encouraged to talk'). Other referents included labels such as 'the interactants'; 'the speaker(s)', and 'the participants'.

Where neither of the participants were named, nor presumably recognised, they tended to be identified in terms of both their social and discourse relations as follows:

Study 1

Judge 8
it's a discussion between colleagues

Judge 9
it's a friendly discussion between two people

Judge 10
it's a conversation between two males

Judge 13
one man is entertaining the other to coffee

The nature of these relational attributions are discussed in Section 8.3.

Inspection of the references in Study 2 reveals that six judges were able to name the participants. First names were cited in the vast majority cases. These were: 'Ian' (48 references - six judges across all the extracts); 'Malcolm' (5 references - Judge 7, Extract 4) and 'Keith' (4 references -Judge 1 and Judge 7, Extract 2). A family name ('Hall) was used by Judge 6 in Study 1 on 4 occasions). Only two judges commented on the extent of their familiarity with the participants, and these occurred in relation to Extract 2.

Study 2 (Extract 2)

Judge 7
I know these people so well

Judge 8
knowing both people makes it difficult for me
to comment on any peculiarities

The comments of Judge 8 suggest that the process of third person interpretation may be problematic for some individuals because of their knowledge of those involved in the stimulus fragments. In this case, the problem seems to be related to the nature of the interpretive task judges were asked to undertake. For Judge 8, this task is presumed to be an opportunity 'to comment on any peculiarities'. I expected that as a result of recognising the participants, non-participant judges would have much to say about participant identity. However, there proved to be relatively few comments of this type.

In the event that knowledge of the participants may have been skewing what judges had to say, the stimulus fragments for Study 3 were chosen from material that I considered would minimise the possibility of speaker recognition. None of the participants were named in Study 3 by the non-participant pairs, however, and hence the only information about speaker identity was provided by the participant judges (see Appendix G).

The other objective measure of speaker identity is 'age'. Given the importance of age in terms of secular sociolinguistic research, I expected that judges' comments would perhaps focus on this variable as much as any other. Again this supposition proved to be somewhat misguided as the relative paucity of references to age shows.

3. Age

Like Helfrich (1979) I assumed that age would be an important category for social interaction and organisation. Helfrich writes:

> Among other things, age is associated with the role structure in the family and in social groups, with the assignment of authority and status, and with the attribution of different levels of competence. Since a large part of social interaction consists of verbal communication, it is highly likely that the social category age is also reflected in speech behaviour. (Helfrich, 1979: 63)

Yet, only ten judges were to make references to age in the corpus of responses. The references included fourteen statements where age was either evaluated in chronological terms (e.g. 'eighteen'; 'middle aged'; 'early to mid-thirties'), or by comparatives such as 'younger'; 'older' etc. References to chronological age included:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 7
they are both in their forties I'd say

This is an accurate evaluation in terms of the information provided by Crystal and Davy (1975: 19) who note that the extract used "was taken from a long conversation between two men ... aged around 40".

In Study 3, Extract 2 there seems to be less certainty about the age of the participants. Comments included:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 4
I thought she was very young
but she's not she's middle aged

Pair 5
I've got a picture of her early to mid thirties

Pair 7
an eighteen year old girl
who has gone to work on a farm
she's got to be about eighteen

I think that it sounds like a middle aged farmer's wife

Crystal and Davy (1975: 39) report that the exchange used in the stimulus fragment "takes place between two women in their thirties (A and B) and their husbands also in their thirties". Nevertheless, the same judge involved in correctly

identifying the age of the speakers in Study 3, Extract 1 was again able to offer an accurate evaluation. He said:

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 7
I think that it's a couple in their thirties

In the final comment of this type, the same judge was able to make a reasonable guess at the age of the speaker concerned; she is described by Crystal and Davy as being in her 'thirties'. The judge commented:

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 7
the one that commented sounded very Southern
in her late twenties

Accurate age guessing must be very difficult in the so called 'middle age range' of speakers who were recorded by Crystal and Davy. This difficulty may help to explain why age was sometimes judged comparatively on the basis of a 'junior/senior' hierarchy. Compare:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 6
she is much younger than the person
who she is talking to

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 4
one seemed older than the other
I think the older one had a more pronounced accent
than the younger one

These evaluations can only be checked by questioning the participants directly of course.

Whether 'age' is salient for the participants themselves is another matter. In this connection, it may be worth pointing out the need to distinguish between tasks of 'identification' from tasks of 'evaluation' in experimental work that involves lay attributions. Brown (1979) cites the work of Bricker and Pruzansky (1976) in this regard, who note:

> We classify as an *identification* task any in which some or all of the available responses denote an individual speaker. The term *evaluation* is applied to tasks that require the listener to judge the value of the stimulus-voice on some attribute, dimension or characteristic. The accuracy criterion intrinsic to identification tasks (i.e. the scorability of identifications as to correctness) generally does not obtain for evaluation tasks. (Brown, 1979: 729)

The same kind of accuracy generally does not obtain for evaluations, however. This is because identification tasks involve reference voice patterns; evaluation tasks do not, since they are based on subjective measures.

Other references to age tended to be implicitly rather than explicitly stated, for example, in the semantics of person deixis. Hence judges talked about 'the girl' as opposed to 'the man' (Judge 1, Study 2, Extract 1); 'a student' as opposed to 'a lecturer' (Judge 4, Study 2, Extract 1); 'a girl' as opposed to 'teacher' (Judge 6, Study 2, Extract 1). Implicit or indirect references to age were also made in relation to different kinds of contextualised information, and particularly the gender and status of the participants.

The following statements not only refer indirectly to age but also provide gender evaluations related to affectual key for example (see Section 9.5.1):

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 6
there is a little girl lost sort of attitude

Judge 7
the girl sounds self conscious

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 6
it was a very immature kind of speech

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 4
she's got a whimpering babyish sort of voice

Judges 6 and 7 in Study 2, and Pairs 6 and 4 in Study 3, are male and female respectively. The most negatively stereotypical of the comments is provided by one of the male judges, Judge 6 (Study 2, Extract 1), who refers to 'a little girl lost sort of attitude'.

Indeed, Judge 6 goes further than this and suggests that age is not the only salient factor here, but that there is also a status differential between the participants. It is notable that he also describes this differential in gender stereotypical terms, and with regard to the younger participant's interactional behaviour.

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 6
it sounds like a girl who has a crush on teacher
and is trying to impress

The interaction of age with gender stereotyping is also inherent in other comments. Compare the following statements elicited in Study 3 (Extract 2):

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 5
I've got a picture of her
early to mid thirties
with blond hair on top

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 7
an eighteen year old girl
who has gone to work on a farm
she's got to be about eighteen

I think that it sounds like a middle aged farmer's wife

The type of description offered by the female judge of Pair 5 is clearly imposed on the data as the judge concerned presumably tries to construct some kind of visual sense of who is involved. Pair 7, on the other hand, are both males who suggest that the participant comes from a farming environment, but belongs to a very different age grouping. The participant concerned is judged to be an eighteen year old farm girl, and a middle aged farmer's wife respectively. In fact, it is only the latter reference to age that is a reasonable guess, since the person concerned is described by Crystal and Davy (1975) as a school teacher in her thirties.

A small number of references in the age category also seem to reflect an indirect cultural alignment between age and status that judges are perhaps picking up or are sensitive to in formulating their responses. Two judges referred to the speech variety of the participants in this connection. Compare:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 4
I think the older one
had a more pronounced accent
than the younger one

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 7
the one that commented sounded very Southern
and was in her late twenties

Another judge commented on the effect of age and status on the sequential symmetry of the exchange in question. He said:

Study 1

Judge 9
one guy is slightly paternal
but not obtrusive
he acts as a kind of springboard for the other guy
the question-answer format
is not so much an interrogation
but a chance for the younger guy to explain things

This comment seems to be echoed in Study 3, Extract 1 where Judge 4 said:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 4
one seemed older than the other
and seemed more impressed by him

Presumably, if there are effects on sequential symmetry in talk due to age and status, this would be reflected not only in turn-taking behaviour , but also in the kind of interactional strategies that are invoked by the participants. It is possible that it something of these effects that may have prompted judges to comment as follows in Study 2, Extract 2:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 4
it's a conversation between a student and Ian
a lecturer you know that you can talk to

Judge 6
it sounds like a girl who has a crush on teacher
and is trying to impress

Further work on age and status would be required to ascertain whether these evaluations were shared by others with respect to different kinds of participant and different kinds of talk, and of course to determine what kinds of

contextualisation cues might trigger judgemental responses of this nature. There is simply not room to undertake such an investigation here, and I now want to move on and consider evaluations that were made with respect to 'personality'.

4. Personality

The attribution of personality from voice is a highly subjective process which has proved difficult to research in any systematic way. Despite the volume of work in this area, answers to questions such as the following remain elusive. 'How are personality and individual difference features marked linguistically?', 'How do personality dimensions mediate social evaluations of linguistic performances?' 'Are individual differences shaped or moulded by language input?' (Furnham, 1990: 73). Unfortunately, there is no clear definition of personality, nor scholarly agreement about its dimensions or determinants. However, established research has demonstrated that personality traits and psychological states affect speech behaviour quite strongly, and that listeners use speech markers related to these traits and states to infer or attribute a wide variety of speaker characteristics (see Scherer, 1979; Furham, 1990; Semin, 1990 for reviews of the research to date).

Thirteen non-participant judges made evaluative comments about individual personalities or personality traits as a result of listening to the stimulus tapes. These comments suggest that judges either felt they could provide personality evaluations, or at least were prepared to attempt to do so. In coding the responses, I have excluded references to what I assume are temporary affective states and attitudes in examples such as:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
he's trying to be gentle
keeping his voice low
he gets louder as he gets firmer

Study 2 (Extract 2)

Judge 4
he sounded weary
tired
he sounded lower than usual

Judge 7
I know these people so well
Ian sounded a bit pissed

Notice in the second set of comments that some knowledge of the participant in question is intimated, hence, 'he sounded lower than usual'; 'Ian sounded a bit pissed'. These comments indicate that judges have some available basis for comparing the states involved, in terms of how the speaker 'normally' behaves ('he is less tired'; 'he is sober' etc.). I presume that they are also closely related to some perceived constellation of prosodic cues (see Section 7.1.2), where the speaker manifests changes in 'loudness', 'tempo', 'tension', 'rhythmicality' and so on.

Where the references concern more 'stable' personality characteristics, the linguistic basis of the evaluations becomes much less obvious. For example, in Study 1, one of the speakers is judged to be 'himself'.

Study 1

Judge 1
Ian was himself

This evaluation is presumably based on knowledge of the speaker's usual interactional as well as linguistic behaviour, that is, the speaker is perceived to be speaking and behaving in a relatively 'normal' or 'natural' way for him. I have little idea of how the linguistic correlates of this behaviour might be measured, since what may be perceived as 'normal' and 'natural' for one judge may not be perceived in that way by another. Compare in this respect the comments of Judges 4 and 7 above which are clearly very different in kind.

Furthermore, the cues that might trigger comments about particular personality states, where these states are essentially psychological, are equally difficult to ascertain. Consider the following descriptions of the other speaker in Study 1 who is considered 'to refer to himself in a self-effacing way' by one judge, and to have 'a complex about being student' by another.

Study 1

Judge 2
the second bloke has a tendency to refer to himself
in a slightly self-effacing way
it's slightly depersonalising

Judge 3
the other guy has a complex about being a student

Interestingly, the same speaker is also the subject of a number of highly negative comments in the context of his participation in Study 2, Extract 4 where he is variously described as 'pompous', 'middle class', 'abstracted', 'unpleasant', 'self-opinionated', and once again as having 'an inferiority complex'.

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 1
he is a pompous person
and thinks of himself as middle class

Judge 4
the other guy is an abstracted kind of person

Judge 6
the one who is trying to impress is an unpleasant fellow
he is self-opinionated
and over self-confident
I think he must suffer from an inferiority complex

Again, I can only suggest that controlled investigative work of the kind developed in social psychology be used as a means for exploring the basis of such evaluations. Apart from personality ratings themselves, judges could be required

to indicate and perhaps rank the importance of the various kinds of contextualisation cues that were identified in the previous chapter, and whether these were mainly of the individual production type, or the mainly interactional type, or an admixture of both. In other words, one might try to ascertain whether the judgements were based on the use of particular lexical, segmental, or non-segmental phenomena, and/or interactional phenomena such as interruptive or non-interruptive turn-taking behaviour, and so on.

In Study 3, the evaluations about personality also tend to be rather negative, with the following exceptions. These are:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 1
she's a very nice lady

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 7
she sounded a lot more confident
than the woman before

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 4
seem like solid citizens

The criteria for these evaluations are not made explicit. They are, however, very different in tone from the remaining comments:

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 6
she is a very scatty sort of person

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 7
the bloke was reactionary but carefree
they're not the sort of person I'd like
I get the impression that he's not shy about anything

he's not shy about expressing his opinion any way
very facile
very platitudinous
he is the kind of bloke who has a great theory of the world and human behaviour
he's the sort of bloke who has a monologue rather than a conversation

This type of comment is clearly based on highly personal judgements about the speaker or speakers in question, and hence cannot be ratified in any objective sense.

8.5.2 The Individual as a Member of a Social Group

A rather different type of response connected with speaker identity involves the attribution of social or group affiliations. These affiliations are of course much explored by social psychologists such as Howard Giles and his associates (see, for example, Giles and Powesland, 1975; Scherer and Giles, 1979; Giles, Robinson and Smith, 1980; Fraser and Scherer, 1982; Ryan and Giles, 1982, Giles and St Clair 1985; Gudykunst, 1986; Giles and Robinson, 1990).

Evaluations about the social, rather than biological, identity of the participants were coded according to references concerning their linguistic distinctiveness as speakers, including region of origin, and their educational and cultural background. While references were made to socio-economic groupings ('she sounds middle class' etc.), I have avoided using 'class' as a descriptive category because of the different ways in which the term can be used and/or understood (see Robinson (1979); Milroy (1987: 5.3); Milroy and Milroy, 1992).

1. Speech variety

Participant identity in terms of regional or social speech varieties was cited in 33 references. The labels used to nominate these varieties are presented in Table 8.3.

While sociolinguistics has been increasingly concerned with social variation in language, rather than regional variation, the study of dialects and dialect boundaries in Britain has of course a very long history (see, for example, Wakelin, 1977; Chambers and Trudgill, 1980; Wells, 1982; Trudgill, 1984).

TABLE 8.3

Judges' Labels for Regional Accents/Origins

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Australian	-	-	1	1
Bristol	-	-	1	1
Geordie	-	2	-	2
Lincolnshire	-	-	1	1
North	-	-	2	2
Northern	-	-	1	1
Northerner	-	-	1	1
North Country	-	-	1	1
RP	1	-	2	3
South	-	2	3	5
Southern	-	1	2	3
Southerner	1	-	1	2
Midlands	-	1	3	4
South Midlands	-	1	-	1
S E Midlands	-	1	-	1
Yorkshire	-	-	3	3
Total	2	8	22	32

It is perhaps because of the linguistic diversity in the British Isles that many lay people consider themselves to be dialect 'experts', who often take considerable pride in their ability to identify where other speakers come from. Indeed, the nature of this ability was raised on a number of occasions with one of the judges in Study 3, as a result of his attempts to say where particular participants came from. Since he was often wrong, he sought to justify his responses by commenting in the following way:

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 7
I'm usually quite good at spotting accents
don't seem to be doing too well today
may be the tape's a bit hazy

My own conversational experience in Britain is that the question, 'Where are you from?', arises quite frequently in initial encounters. This kind of linguistic awareness or sensitivity may help to explain why judges sought to locate different speakers in terms of regional origin. Fifteen different regions or regional labels were used by judges, the majority of which were elicited in Study 3 (22 references). The labels themselves were mostly of the rather broad type, based on the widely held distinction between 'Northern' and 'Southern' varieties of British English. Hence comments such as:

Study 1

Judge 1
the other guy is a Southerner

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 4
I thought he was a Northerner

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 5
I thought it was Southern

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 6
her husband I think is from the South

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 7
well when he said trouble
I thought that this man's from the South
perhaps it's somebody who was born in the North

but who now lives in the South

More specific or localised evaluations of the varieties involved were also offered as follows.

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 6
Person B is a Geordie

I was a little surprised to find that only one judge referred to the participant, who was a speaker of strongly accented Tyneside English, as a 'Geordie', since his variety was markedly different from that of his interlocutor (a generalised RP speaker) as Judge 6 pointed out. There is also evidence to suggest a degree of speech accommodation on the part of A, as the comments of Judge 6 also indicate.

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 6
there are tremendous differences
between the two kinds of speech
person A
starts to acquire some of the speech patterns
of person B
and there is a hint of Geordie
and sometimes his [A's] inflection is very singy songy
like in what even in Southampton

It may be worth noting that Judge 6 was from Aston, near Birmingham, and this may account for his ability to discriminate between 'South East and South Midlands' in his comments with respect to Study 2, Extract 4.

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 6
I think the accent is South East to South Midlands

In Study 3, the following evaluations were elicited with respect to three of the six extracts.

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 2
one sounded as if he were from Bristol

Pair 6
it sounds a completely different language
I'd try to place it as Yorkshire
Yorkshire Lincolnshire or thereabouts

The speakers in Extract 1 are described Crystal and Davy thus:

> B, an accountant, is from Ireland, but has been living in Berkshire for some years, and his accent displays a mixture of the regional characteristics of both these areas. C is a primary school teacher who has also lived in Berkshire for many years, but whose accent has remained predominantly that of his county of origin, Yorkshire. (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 19)

The guesses on this occasion seem reasonable in the light of this information.

In Study 3, it was the judge from Pair 7 who considered himself to be 'quite good at spotting accents', who seemed to comment most. This judge originated from Macclesfield in Cheshire, which may account for his willingness to make the following guesses about the speech varieties named; varieties that he would not be unfamiliar with given his background, and with which he seemed to associate on a number of occasions.

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 7
she's got a very north country type accent

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 7
it sounded pretty middle class
Midlands
middle of the road

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 7
the one that was hogging the conversation

sounded very Midlands or Northern

The participants referred to here involved the same couples. They are described by Crystal and Davy as follows: "A and C are from Liverpool, B and D are from the Midlands, and though they live in the South of England, they display degrees of regional pronunciation" (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 39-40). Some discussion of the nature of this regionalism was undertaken by the participant judges with respect to B in the course of Study 3, Extract 5. Although having recognised the speaker in question, Participant A evaluates her variety as having a 'hint of Welsh'. This is further localised by Participant B as 'Liverpool North Welsh'.

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Participant A
there was a hint of Welsh there
wasn't there
was there a hint of Welsh in her
which I'd never noticed before

Participant B
well I don't know
possibly
she was um Liverpool North Welsh

The guesses offered by the non-participant judges are presumably based on textual information, though no indication is given as to what this might be, apart from how the speakers 'sounded'. Where these associations were perhaps more difficult to establish in terms of locale, general labels of the 'North/South' kind appear to be used.

In three instances, judges described the speech variety that is used as 'RP' (received pronunciation). This accent is socially marked in terms of both prestige and status, and can be either negatively (cf. adjectives such as 'posh' and 'fruity') or positively stereotyped (cf. adjectives such as 'genteel' and 'intellectual') as the following judges' comments from Study 3, Extracts 3 and 4 indicate:

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 5
she's got a very fruity kind of voice
of well sort of actressy
as if she was putting on a show
it reminds me of JP's I've met
when they are pronouncing sentencing on juveniles
I get that middle class aura about it all

Pair 6
it's a sort of more genteel speech than the other two
there is very little almost no dialect at all
no inflection

Pair 7
this is the aspiring middle class I think

oh I like that

they've got traces of background
the blokes laughing sounded a very middle class laugh
there is intellectual status

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 1
the woman has a very funny voice
his accent is very contrastive
hers sounded quite unmarked
more RP
posh

Pair 6
I think she gives herself away with however
she's either a teacher
or educated in someway
again its the same middle class thing

Notice that in the comments of Pair 6 (Study 3, Extract 3), and Pair 1 (Study 3, Extract 4), that the popular perception of RP as a 'neutral' or 'unmarked' variety of English is reiterated. The notion of a standardised way of speaking is also evident:

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 6
it's a sort of more genteel speech than the other two
there is very little almost no dialect at all
no inflection

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 1
the woman has a very funny voice
his accent is very contrastive
hers sounded quite unmarked
more RP

Various social evaluations are clearly intimated in this type of comment, including the educational background, occupation and socio-economic status of the individuals involved (cf. the discussion of 'age' in 8.5.1 above). These assignations were coded separately under the rubric of evaluations about the social group characteristics of different speakers. The issue of linguistic value judgements about Tok Pisin, as discussed in Mühlhäusler (1982), is worth noting here for purposes of comparison with judges' comments about English speech varieties.

2. Social characteristics

Information about the social group characteristics attributed to individual speakers seems to be based on interpretive responses to at least three kinds of textual information (see Chapter 7). These include the participants' realisation of lexical, varietal, and speech style options as evidenced in the following comments from Study 1, which focus on the educational and occupational background of the speakers.

Study 1

Judge 3
both participants are well educated

Judge 5
both talk well
in almost complete sentences
they are pretty articulate

Judge 6
both sounded well educated
they use word like bone fide and relationship
the speakers are in the same business

Judge 9:
they have an intellectual background
both speakers have the same job
they are intellectuals
they have teaching and education in common

Judge 15
they sounded cultured
well educated

One of the speakers was a university teacher and the other a graduate language school teacher, so the attributions in this case are very accurate. Similar comments of this nature were also elicited in Studies 2 and 3, where the association with speech style, educational background and socio-economic status appears to be of particular salience for the judges in question (see Giles and Sassoon (1983) for an empirical investigation of the effect of speaker's accent, social class background and message style on listeners' social judgements). The language school teacher in Study 1, was also a participant in Study 2, Extract 4, and it is worth noting that his educational background warrants similar kinds of comment:

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 6
it's an educated kind of accent
the bloke has been through the right schools

Socio-economic status is mentioned a number of times. Comments include:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 5
I loved his expression of the word shockingly though
sort of represented upper bourgeoisie middle class

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 7
this is the aspiring middle class I think
they've got traces of background
the bloke's laughing sounded a very middle class laugh

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 6
I think she gives herself away with however
she's either a teacher
or educated in someway
again it's the same middle class thing

Trying to establish the distinguishing features of the speech and writing of each social class in a society that could be or are used by members of that society to identify who belongs to that class is a very difficult exercise. Judges' comments indicate that ordinary members are prepared to categorise themselves as well as others into particular social groupings. These groupings are presumably chosen to fit their speech, or the speech of others with respect to the norms of a preferred or imposed identity. Recovering this identity *post hoc* raises some interesting questions, and not least the extent to which the way we might hear ourselves has influence over the kinds of judgement that we make. These judgements indicate a strong sensitivity to underlying class and status differentials as well as the kind of more individual differentials that I discussed earlier in the chapter (see Section 8.5.1), even where such judgements may have negative connotations. An example of precisely this kind was produced in Study 3, Extract 2, where the female judge of the pairing commented:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 5
she's got a very fruity kind of voice
sort of actressy
as if she was putting on a show
it reminds me of JP's I've met
when they are pronouncing sentencing on juveniles
I get that middle class aura about it all
actually it reminds me of my own voice on tape to be truthful
it's pretty awful

Furthermore, individual preferences may well lead to different assessments of social class stereotypes. Thus although the attribution 'middle class' was made on a number of occasions, judges did not always agree about their evaluations of the identity set that might be involved with respect to this label. Compare the following extracts of dialogue generated in the same study (Study 3) for instance.

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 5
I get that middle class aura about it all

I wouldn't have said that
I thought it was Southern

Pair 7
this is the aspiring middle class I think

oh I like that

they've got traces of background
the blokes laughing sounded a very middle class laugh

I don't necessarily go along with you about the elitist
quality of it
I don't think that at all it's middle class
but Midlands middle class
middle of the road

Finally in this section, I want to consider evaluations that describe occupational status. Where the participants were recognised, descriptions of their social identity would obviously emanate from existing resources of information

about the individuals concerned. However, from a non-participant perspective, social information of this or any other type, which is derived *post hoc*, must emanate from an inferential process; a process which ultimately results in some categorisation of the behaviour, or personal or group characteristics of the speaker in question.

References to 'occupation' were coded on the basis of named speaker prototypes as listed in Table 8.4. Forty one reference statements were identified in this category and these produced thirteen occupational groups as listed (see Table 8.4). Again the majority of references in this category (30 in total) were elicited in Study 3. In Extracts 1 and 6, Crystal and Davy report that the speakers include 'an accountant', 'a primary school teacher', and 'a university teacher'. There were no comments about occupation with respect to Study 1, and only Pair 6 and 7 commented with respect to Extract 6. One of the judges from Pair 6 said:

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 6
he seemed to be trying to project an image
citizen
or cinema critic

TABLE 8.4

List of Named Occupations

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
banker	-	-	1	1
cinema critic	-	-	1	1
citizen	-	-	2	2
farmer	-	-	3	3
farmer's wife	-	-	2	2
insurance man	-	-	1	1
JP	-	-	1	1
lecturer	-	1	1	2
salesman	-	-	1	1
shop manager	-	-	1	1
stockbroker	-	-	3	3
student	-	2	7	9
teacher	4	4	6	14
Total	4	7	30	41

Pair 7, on the other hand made the issue of occupation a matter of some discussion. However, as on a number of other occasions, they found it difficult to agree about their assessments.

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 7
it sounds like two bankers
or insurance brokers

I don't go along with the stockbroker idea
may be they are down to earth blokes
they didn't sound very educated
stockbrokers tend to be Harlequins Twickenham

we've got an insurance man at home
who sounds just like that
perhaps he's a salesman
he could be a shop manager couldn't he

In Extracts 2 and 3, the participants are identified by Crystal and Davy as two husband and wife couples. The women are described as 'housewives', one of whom 'also does some primary school teaching'. The men, on the other hand, are identified as 'university teachers'. One of the judges in Pair 6 noted:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 6
she did talk very clearly though
a bit like a lecturer

The same individual was also a participant in Extracts 4 and 5, where similar judgements about her teaching status are also made.

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 6
she's either a teacher
or educated in some way
perhaps a nature study teacher or something

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 2
she must be a teacher

The point I wish to make about these types of evaluation, and others like them, is that they are elicited without requiring judges to make choices of the kind that are used in matched-guise studies. Such studies have been criticised on the grounds that observers and investigators who use this method may distort facets of reality through the instruments and procedures they use to collect their data. The danger with *post hoc* interpretive work, which is based on such instruments and procedures, is that the answers that respondents give within the categories established for them may not reveal how those respondents behave, how they think, or what they say in their everyday activities.

8.6 Social Network Relations

The study of language and interpersonal relations is a complex but burgeoning area of research as Giles and Coupland (1991: 9) point out. Like characteristics of participants, these social network relations can also be analysed at an individual (or interpersonal) level and at a social-institutional one. For the purposes of exposition, I will distinguish between judges' responses which seem to be based on evaluations of the nature and quality of individual relations between participants, in terms of their knowledge and/or liking of each other, and responses which are based on some evaluation of their social and interactional roles.

8.6.1 Individual Social Network Relations

Descriptions of individual social network relations are based on a small set of terms used across the three studies as presented in Table 8.5. These terms suggest a cline of participant ties ranging from 'close' or 'intimate' knowledge (e.g. 'husband and wife') relationships to 'less close' or 'distant' knowledge (e.g. 'acquaintances').

TABLE 8.5

Judges' Use of Social Relational Terms

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
acquaintances	2	-	-	2
colleagues	1	-	-	1
friends	2	-	5	7
mates	1	1	-	2
neighbours	-	-	2	2
pals	1	-	-	1
husband	-	-	2	2
wife	-	-	5	5
Total	7	1	14	22

Judges' seemed particularly sensitive to the nature of interpersonal knowledge shared between the participants in Study 1, and tend to express their comments in terms of social distance. Compare:

Study 1

Judge 1
they don't know each other very well
they're not on intimate terms
not bosom pals
but acquainted
there is a distance yet they know each other

Judge 3
they know each other
but not too well

Judge 6
the speakers are feeling their way around
there is a sense in which they didn't know each other

Judge 8
it's a discussion between colleagues
it's not intimate
but relaxed
the speakers are in the same business

Judge 9
they are friends
yet its all vaguely ironic
he must have known the other guy
to use an accent like that

Judge 10
they seem to have a lot in common
and know each other quite well
it's a visitor visiting a friend's flat
the situation isn't very relaxed

Judge 12
they are people who know each other

Judge 13
they know each other

Judge 16
they know each other
they are acquainted

The sense of social distance, or even social awkwardness that is judged to exist between the participants seems to be shared by Participant A, who commented as follows:

Study 1

Participant A
there is a role relationship
student stroke supervisor
it's important
I was conscious of the situation
we were not meeting as mates
it was very much a student supervisor chat

Brown and Levinson (1979: 317) argue that there seem to be two basic ways in which the social relationship obtaining between speaker and addressee is marked in speech. One is through the direct encoding of social deixis. The other is the particular choice of linguistic expression, governed by interactional strategies. Participant A seems to be sensitive to this latter possibility in explaining why the

situation is 'formal' from his perspective, and also what effect his sense of relational asymmetry had on his interactional behaviour. He commented:

Study 1

Participant A
there are a few formal words
like have a cup of coffee
it tells you something
about the formality of the situation
I felt someone else was in command
it wasn't like talking to a close friend
where you say hey it's good to see you
how are you doing
let's go for a pint
I felt I had to be more formal
on my best linguistic behaviour

The sense of interactional asymmetry is also shared by a number of the non-participant judges and are again consistent with the comments about age and status in this study (see Section 8.5.1). Compare, for example, the comments of Judge 6 who suggests that from a strategic point of view, 'the speakers are feeling their way around':

Study 1

Judge 6
the speakers are feeling their way around
there is a sense in which they didn't know each other

Even where the participants are evaluated as being 'friends', there appears to be a caveat about the relationship, where this is expressed in terms of a certain ambiguity in communicative key as in the following sets of comment:

Study 1

Judge 8
it's a discussion between colleagues
it's not intimate
but relaxed
the speakers are in the same business

Judge 9
they are friends
yet its all vaguely ironic

Judge 10
it's a visitor visiting a friend's flat
the situation isn't very relaxed

In Study 3, judges made several other comments about the quality of participant relations in connection with the use of particular interactional strategies. For example, one judge was uncertain if the participants were friends in Extract 1, because of their apparent unwillingness 'to listen to each other'. She said:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Pair 2
I was wondering whether they actually knew each other
because they didn't seem to listen to each other at all
he also tended to speak while his friend was speaking

The same participants were involved in Extract 6. Crystal and Davy describe their relationship as 'friends of long-standing'. They note:

> This extract was taken from a long conversation between two men ... aged around 40, at the home of one of the authors ... All three participants had been friends for years. The two men had been invited to have a drink one evening - a regular event - and were unaware that they had been recorded ... The situation was very relaxed. (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 19)

Non-participant judges did not always agree about the familiar status of the speakers' relationship. Compare the comments of Pair 6 and Pair 7 below:

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 6
they are obviously friends
and basically agree with each other

Pair 7
they didn't know each other very well

they didn't sound like people who knew each other

One small methodological point that may be worth raising here is the report that the recording of this exchange was made without the participants' knowledge. The authors note that when the participants were informed they had been recorded, 'it cost many rounds of drinks!' (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 19). Participant B (Study 3) also commented on various effects that surreptitious recording had on the interactions. With regard to Extract 1, for example, he responded to his co-judge's remark that one of the participants "doesn't take an active part" as follows:

Study 3 (Extract 1)

Participant B
well he was trying to keep out of it
because he knows the recording's taking place
and the other two don't

A lack of conversational involvement on the part of two of the participants, for exactly the same reason, is also reported in Participant B's comments about Extract 2.

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Participant B
I've got the feeling that we'd set you up
and you didn't know it was being recorded
and were just being stool pigeons again

In Extracts 3 and 5, one of the participants is judged to be "natural and unaffected" and "very natural" by this pair of judges. Participant B suggests that this affective state is likely in both instances because:

Participant B
she'd been set up and didn't realise

Participant B
I don't think she could have been aware

that she was being recorded

I draw attention to these comments because surreptitious recording is not only unethical, but also possibly illegal. At the present time in New Zealand universities, for example, research involving human subjects has to be ratified by an established ethics committee before any kind of fieldwork can be undertaken.

In Extracts 2 and 3, the conversation takes place between two married couples who have not seen each other for some time, and consequently have been brought together to be re-acquainted (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 40). Again judges' comments are not entirely in accord regarding the nature of the interpersonal relations involved in the two separate fragments. Compare the comments of Pair 7 and Pair 2 below:

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 7 .
I think it sounded like a middle aged farmer's wife
at tea
talking to another farmer's wife or some friends

Study 3 (Extract 3)

Pair 2
she seemed to know who she was talking to
perhaps they were neighbours or something

I think she knew who she was talking to quite well
because she didn't need to explain things
may be they weren't very close neighbours

Finally, Extracts 4 and 5 were recorded during an informal supper party involving another two couples. In Study 3, Extract 4, one of the participants is assumed to be the 'husband' of the speaker who is named, though quite how this information is derived is unclear.

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 7
her husband tries to get in four times
her husband is from the South

In Extract 5, the participants are judged to be 'a close group' on the one hand, and the two women, 'girls at school together' on the other.

Study 3 (Extract 5)

Pair 2
I thought it was quite a close group of people

Pair 7
they sound like they were girls at school together

The nature of the relations evaluated here could be explored empirically by inductive inspection of the data records that one might produce. Giles and Coupland, for instance, report that: "Participants who like each other display more verbal productivity and self-disclosures but less silent pausing than those who are not mutually attracted" (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 9). Presumably, the distribution of turn taking and communicative or speaking rights in talk could be investigated for pattern in the same way (see Wiemann, 1985), which brings me to evaluations that focussed on discoursal rather than interpersonal roles.

8.6.2 Interactional Relations

The unrehearsed and unscripted taking of turns by interactants is what creates the process of verbal exchange in everyday conversation. As Merrit (1976: 317), amongst others, has pointed out:

> Any property of the discourse *per se* is a product of the effort of ... two (or more) individuals ... Each must be engaged in interpreting the meaning and intent of the other's talk in order to decide what to say next. Even when to say what must often be negotiated. In a word, the discourse of dialog is inherently interactional in character.

Speaker change is the perceptible sign of turn-taking and turn-yielding as individuals adopt the discoursal roles of first and second person interlocutor; it provides the mechanism for conversational management. But how speaker change is achieved is also closely tied to individual perceptions of speaking rights, where these are associated with status and power differentials in interpersonal relations. Hence, when there is a relative degree of conversational balance in the distribution of speaking rights, the type of talk that ensues is less likely to manifest a pattern of 'control' by one or other of the parties involved. Where there is a relative degree of imbalance, 'control' may be consciously or unconsciously exerted by one of the parties in question.

The notion of 'control' is defined by Weimann (1985: 86) as:

> the constellation of constraints people place on one another by the manipulation of both interactional structure and content, which limit the options available subsequently to each relational partner and the relational system as whole ... That is, the doing or saying of something has the potential to prescribe or proscribe next possible actions or statements.

While asymmetrical status and power roles are often found cross-culturally in address terms, and in non-verbal distancing patterns (Braun, 1988), the focus of third person comments tends to involve certain situational and strategic aspects of relational-control between speaker and addressee. A large number of comments of this type were elicited in Study 1, where the issue of control appears to be of considerable salience for both the participant and non-participant judges. Again this type of comment is obviously closely related to earlier references about asymmetrical conversational behaviour that seems to be linked to age and status (see Section 8.5.1). Participant 1, for instance, explained:

Study 1

Participant A
there is a role relationship
student stroke supervisor

we were not meeting as mates
it was very much a student supervisor chat
it wasn't like talking to a friend
I felt that somebody else was in command

It is remarkable that eight of the non-participant judges were also to provide comments in keeping with the spirit of this explanation. One judge describes Participant A as 'eager but hesitant', and suggests that his interlocutor is in 'control'.

Study 1

Judge 4
Ian had control all along
the other speaker sounded eager
but hesitant
I'm conscious that he was being put at ease

The other judges considered that Participant B was 'dominant'. This dominance is attributed to the situation on the one hand. Compare:

Study 1

Judge 7
Ian is more dominant
perhaps because it's in his office

And to the different interactional roles displayed by the participants, where one is seen as taking the initiative as 'host', while the other is more conversationally reticent or 'passive'. Compare:

Study 1

Judge 8
the host leads the conversation

Judge 9
one guy is slightly paternal

Judge 11
one was pretty relaxed

the other just tended to sit there and think

Judge 12
the one who initiates all the questions
seems more dominant

Judge 13
he plays the role of host
and asks all the questions

Judge 14
one of the participants only talked when asked to
it sounded to me as if he were talking down to him
though not consciously
the other guy was passive
it wasn't easy for him
the more dominant one
tends to support the other's conversation

Two judges, however, considered the exchange to be more symmetrically structured. They said:

Study 1

Judge 9
it's a friendly discussion between two people
nobody is posturing
trying to score over anybody else

Judge 10
they are colleagues
the speakers are in the same business

It would appear from these comments that both structural and non-structural features of talk are used to display and/or negotiate control in verbal communication. Apart from turn-taking, judges remarks suggest that time spent holding the floor and topic control are interactional phenomena which help to regulate conversations and establish control in relationships. Obviously, the relational history of the participants, the reasons for the current conversation, and the physical setting are important factors too. Wiemann (1985) puts forward a resource model to facilitate the interpretation of conversational events so that they

can be seen as an integral means by which people accomplish relational goals. Given its importance for the communicative process, this model will be considered further in the discussion of participant goals which is presented in Chapter 9.

8.7 Summary and Conclusions

The comments that I have considered in this chapter provide evidence of judges tendency and willingness to create contextual frameworks for interpreting and/or making sense of what was going on in the stimulus fragments. These frameworks not only include the ability to recover situation from text, on the basis of events previously unseen, but also to attribute personal details of various kinds about the participants.

Language attitude research is based on the idea that language can trigger an evaluative reaction, and the response data that I have considered in this chapter would certainly seem to support this claim. However, Giles and Coupland (1991: 49ff.) suggest that the area of language attitudes research has been over-represented by "one-off studies in widely varying cultures, sociolinguistic conditions, situational and procedural domains". They also suggest that to date these models have not been critically reviewed. Consequently, they raise five over-arching questions relating to issues that need to be addressed in this area. These include:

(1) Are there generative mechanisms operating beyond the original theoretical conception of language leading to social categorization leading to trait influences?
(2) Are language cues hierarchically perceived and evaluated?
(3) Can language attitudes be organized meaningfully in terms of large-scale social forces?
(4) Are there different language attitude profiles, and if so, are they a function of perceptions of the intergroup forces prevailing, and the nature of the immediate situations?

> (5) Are language attitudes meaningfully related to other levels of analysis and/or forms of communicative behaviour? (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 49–52)

These questions require a programme of research that is based on innovative developments, and Giles and Coupland suggest that this might be driven by what they describe as a 'discursive perspective':

> By this is meant a perspective where social meanings (and, in this case, language attitudes) are assumed to be inferred by means of *constructive*, *interpretive* processes drawing upon social actors' reservoirs of contextual and textual knowledge. (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 53)

This perspective has to recognise that texts themselves can never be neutral, "they are interpreted and subsequent actions accounted for on the basis of pre-existing social schemata" (op. cit.: 55). Hence, Giles and Coupland also suggest that a task for the future will be to explore the kind of cognitive responding that ensues when listeners process others' language performances. The work presented here is an attempt to respond to the spirit of this perspective.

In this regard, something of the social identity profiles that emerge from the response data may provide a glimpse of how different speakers influence listener-judges own conceptions of *themselves*. But these profiles are only a part of the interpretive processes manifest in the commentaries, and perhaps only a small part at that. This is not to say that social identity is not an important facet of everyday verbal exchange, but rather that it may be less important in communicative terms than scholars have suggested to date. As Giles and Coupland intimate: "The relationships existing between participants, whether they be personal, role-based or category-based relationships, also affect verbal communicative behaviour" (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 9).

In terms of attitudes towards language users and usage, research has tended to promote the view of the human social animal as one who is constantly

evaluating self and others for purpose of social comparison (Bradac, 1990: 403). While the evidence considered in this chapter certainly helps to substantiate this claim, the social evaluation of others provides only one strand in a much more complex scenario. This is a scenario in which perceptual and evaluative constructs about social stereotypes, person prototypes, and relational and situational factors are inextricably linked to the interactional goals of the participants as Street and Cappella (1985) argue.

> Inherent in any social encounter are the *interactant goals*; that is, his or her desires, objectives and purposes for the interaction. These goals may be influenced by, and influence *perceptual and evaluative processes* which include perceptions of the situation, affective responses to others, perceptions of others, and conceptions of self. Evaluative and attributional processes and the interactant's goals mutually activate relevant *cognitive-behaviour production operations* which in turn produce behaviours presumably directed toward achieving the goal(s) given the salient social information. (Street and Cappella, 1985: 252)

I consider the tendency and willingness of judges to comment on such goals in the chapter which follows.

CHAPTER 9

SUPRATEXTUAL RESPONSES

9.0 *Post Hoc* Interpretation of Communicative Activity

This chapter considers the third and arguably the most interesting and productive of the interpretive domains which were identified from the corpus of descriptive statements. I have called this the *supratextual domain* because it is designed to incorporate comments which describe or refer to characteristics of the stimulus fragments at a level of abstraction altogether different from those considered in Chapters 8 and 9. These characteristics extend beyond the types of surface linguistic and extralinguistic detail discussed there to encompass information that is associated with purposeful communicative activity (see the discussion of talk as an inferential and goal-directed process in Section 2.2ff.). Like textual and contextual information, however, supratextual information is rarely articulated as talk is in progress, since it 'lies beneath the surface of discourse' as Stubbs (1983: Chapter 8) puts it. Supratextual information is nevertheless empirically researchable from a *post hoc* perspective as Gumperz has shown (1982a–1992).

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the qualities and types of information that judges provided in this domain, and also to use the analytic categories that are established as a mechanism for linking judges' interpretations to the goal-orientation(s) of the individuals concerned. The vocabularies used by judges in this regard proved to be much in keeping with those identified by Gumperz, who states that when ordinary participants report on actual verbal encounters: "they

tend to do so by mentioning some item of content, or by referring to what people were getting at or trying to do" (Gumperz, 1982a: 157).

In order to provide such comments, I suggested earlier that third person judges must have a highly developed model of the kinds of thing that speakers can say, that is, they must possess inferential or metapragmatic abilities (see Section 3.2.3). These abilities, as applied in a *post hoc* sense, are explored in this chapter by using the framework first sketched in Section 6.2.2, where comments about different interactional 'attitudes, goals, strategies and outcomes' were coded with the aid of a features matrix, and then subdivided into different types of descriptive statement. Two broad types of statement were identified in this way:

(i) statements about the types of communicative activity or genre that are considered to have taken place;

(ii) statements about the types of communicative praxis that are considered to be going on as the exchanges are in progress;

Each of these categories, and the interpretive frames they imply, are considered in the sections which follow.

9.1 References to Genre

In the 'genre' category, judges' comments are characterised by descriptive phrases that seem to answer two questions about the stimulus fragments. These are:

(i) 'What kinds of activity are taking place?';

(ii) 'What kinds of unit are accomplished?' (cf. Levinson, 1979; Gumperz, 1982a).

The distinction that is drawn here is based on Levinson (1983: 318), and involves vocabularies that are intrinsically related. On the one hand, the descriptors judges use are expressed as predicates which include meta-actions such as 'chatting'; 'discussing'; 'story telling' etc. (cf. the activities listed by Gumperz, 1982a: 166). On

the other, they are expressed as noun phrases, which seem to suggest bounded or distinctive accomplishments, for example, 'a chat', 'a discussion', 'a story' etc. (cf. the events listed by Gumperz, 1982a: 165). Different meta-actions can of course be realised in different types of event or unit. Hence, the activity of 'chatting over a match', for example, can be part of the unit which constitutes 'a discussion', 'discussing' can be part of the unit that constitutes 'a chat' and so on. Wardhaugh (1992) makes something of the same point when he suggests that:

> While particular genres seem more appropriate on certain occasions than on others, e.g., sermons inserted into church services, they can be independent: we can ask someone to stop 'sermonizing'; that is, we can recognize a genre of sermons when an instance of it, or something closely resembling an instance, occurs outside its usual setting. (Wardhaugh, 1992: 247)

However, attempts to establish the linguistic features of different kinds of speech event presuppose the availability of a contrastive set of features for determining the contextual status of particular instances of the phenomenon. Giles and Coupland (1991), for example, suggest that different large-scale activity types can be associated with different stylistic qualities. They note:

> The activity type of casual chatting ... has a more 'verbal style', evident in short, syntactically simple utterances, and the very frequent use of verbs, pronouns and adverbs. The activity type of lecturing ... is characteristically more nominal. (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 8)

The problem here is not so much with describing these qualities, as work in both DA and CA has shown, but rather with categorising and labelling the types of activity that are involved. For instance, the term 'conversation' itself is widely used by analysts, but is seldom clearly defined (see McGregor, 1984; Wilson, 1989). Crystal and Davy (1969: 95), for example, suggest that 'conversation' is without doubt the most commonly used kind of English, because it is the least 'marked' kind of situationally influenced English. Although a clear central area of distinctiveness can be defined, according to Crystal and Davy, the boundaries of conversational activity can be rather fuzzy since "what is intuitively labelled

'conversation' can blend imperceptibly into other varieties that are labelled differently, such as 'discussion', 'talking shop', etc." (Crystal and Davy, 1969: 97) The question that arises is whether these labels simply answer to subdivisions of the more general phenomenon of 'conversation', or to recognisably separate kinds of verbal exchange? Since there is no simple answer to this question, I tend to agree with Gumperz (1982a: 167) who suggests that speech activities are not precisely listable, but rather show certain general similarities which vary from instance to instance. In other words, activities such as 'chatting', 'discussing' and 'story telling' reflect "Wittgensteinian family resemblances rather than analytic categories" (op. cit.).

A framework that could be used to explore these resemblances in more detail is 'the model of speech as a reflection of situational representations' put forward by Giles and Coupland (1991: 18ff.). The model is multidimensional and integrates notions of interpersonal and intergroup interactions with various subjective characteristics of speech situations. Hence, for example, (i) the situational characteristics of 'friends chatting during a coffee break' are charted alongside (ii) possible interpersonal relationships recognised by participants (eg. 'cooperative'; 'informal'; 'relaxed'), and (iii) potential speech patterns that are realised in the process (eg. 'verbal style'; 'non-standard pronunciation'; 'first name and informal address forms'); for full details, see Table 1.2, Giles and Coupland (1991: 19). The authors' caveat that "there is as yet no empirical research following this conceptual framework" (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 18) seems to provide a valuable opportunity, because the response data gathered in the course of this study contains descriptive phrases which are redolent of the characteristics, structures and patterns that are exemplified in each of the above categories. It is this type of response data that I want to consider in the following sections.

9.1.1 Activity Predicates

When judges use predicates to describe speech activities, they do so by employing phrases that function as a general guide to what the participants are considered to be doing in terms of verbal interaction ('talking about what's for tea'; 'chatting over a football match'; 'discussing the potential of increasing salary' etc.). Gumperz (1982a: 166) cites similar examples and suggests that phrases of this type "imply certain expectations about thematic progression, turn-taking rules, form, and outcome of the interaction, as well as constraints on content".

Inspection of the non-participant data responses which were coded in this category reveal that only 5 predicates were used across the sample of judges. For ease of reference, I have presented these in their infinitive form in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1

Activity Predicates

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
predicates				
chat	–	1	1	2
discuss	3	1	1	5
report back	–	–	1	1
talk	15	13	23	51
tell (a joke)	–	–	1	1
tell (a story)	–	–	11	11
Total	19	15	37	71

Concordance listings were generated for each predicate in turn. As can be seen from the table, a total of 71 concordances were produced across the three studies, including: 19 references in Study 1; 15 references in Study 2; and 37 references in Study 3.

With 51 references, the most commonly cited verbal activity was 'talking'. Indeed, it occurs nearly five times more often than its nearest rival 'tell', used in the sense of 'telling a story'. Since the use of 'talk' on its own, or for that matter any of the other verbs used in isolation, would provide little information (cf. 'they are talking'; 'they are chatting', etc.), they are usually accompanied by prepositional phrases that designate judges' sense of 'what is talked about', as Gumperz (1982a:166) also notes:

> the descriptive phrases we use for speech activities contain both a verb and a noun which suggests constraints on content. Verbs alone, or single nouns such as "discussion" or "lecture" are not sufficient.

Hence, the proliferation of phrases such as:

talking about Jane
talking about what's for tea
talking about the sea of bodies

Notice, however, that when 'talk' is used in phrases which describe either the overall subject matter or particular topics in this way (see Section 7.2.2), it seems to be semantically neutral; that is, it tends to be used in a general sense to refer to the activity of verbal exchange *per se*, rather than to some marked or specific genre (see Bublitz, 1988:21ff. for further discussion about the use of 'talk' as a semantically neutral predicate). In contrast, when 'talk' is used as a noun in phrases such as 'shop talk'; 'man's talk'; 'coffee talk' and so on, there appear to be constraints on participants as well as style and content (cf. Labov and Fanshel's, (1977) 'therapeutic discourse', and Tannen's (1984) 'talk among friends').

Compared to the frequent use of 'talk', the predicates 'chatting', and 'discussing' produced surprisingly few references. In the case of 'chatting', the activity is delimited with regard to guesses about the communicative situation. For example:

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 6
chatting in a boiler room

'Discussing' on the other hand is used in conjunction with noun phrases that identify the subject of what is 'discussed' (see Bublitz, 1988: Chapter 2). In the examples given, the subjects suggested include: 'the surroundings', 'things', and 'the potential of increasing salary'. Compare:

Study 1

Judge 4
discussing the surroundings

Judge 8
discussing things

Study 2 (Extract 2)

Judge 2
discussing the potential of increasing their salary

The activity of 'telling a story', on the other hand, was referred to on 11 occasions by non-participants, and is also frequently referred to by the participant judges, especially with regard to the second and third extracts that were used in Study 3. A wide range of comments were also associated with this activity. These comments not only designate the subject matter of 'the story', but also narrative strategies that are used in the process, including textual features and effects (mainly prosodic) that are associated with 'a story telling voice'. Compare, for instance, the following references taken from Study 3 (Extract 2):

Study 3 (Extract 2)

Pair 1
she got really carried away with the story

Pair 2
she was just telling a story

Pair 3
I wouldn't say it was a straight coherent narrative
it was caught up with emotional things

Pair 4
she was getting very excited as it went on
and she gets more wrapped up in what she was saying
the other person involved got sort of left behind
and started listening to the story

Pair 5
it sounded like a nun's joke to me
a bad holiday recollection

Pair 6
one woman seemed to be doing all the talking
and the other is listening

Pair 7
I think she's got an audience
and is trying to impress them with her percipience
there is amusement
interested amusement
as if she's inside the situation
I think she's seeing it from the outside
and she's sort of reporting it back

There is of course a substantial body of sociolinguistic and discourse research based on narrative analysis, much of which stems from the ideas put forward by Labov (1972). More recently, Schiffrin's (1987) analysis of discourse markers is largely based on the activity of telling stories (see, for example, Schiffrin, 1987: 14–17). Goodwin (1984) identifies various interactional phenomena that are invoked and realised by participants as they organise the telling of a story in talk. These include: (i) specific participant roles (such as teller, addressed recipient, non-addressed recipient, and principal character); (ii) distinguishable components of the story itself; (iii) kinesic and non-kinesic orientations within different sub-components; (iv) participant attentional shifts and involvement. It is remarkable that judges' comments should be sensitive to at least some of these phenomena, as I think their responses demonstrate.

Notice, however, that there are a number of interpretive differences inherent in the comments. Gumperz (1982a: 160ff.) argues that even within a culture there are likely to be quite different interpretations of the kind of activities that are carried out and signalled between interlocutors. Hence, he suggests that what one person would identify as 'lecturing' , another might interpret as 'chatting with a child', and so on (I presume that Gumperz is using the term 'lecture' to refer to scolding a child in this instance, rather than referring to the academic activity of teaching). The question here is how can we be certain that our interpretation of what activity is being signalled from outside the participation framework is the same as the interlocutor has in mind? The answer is that we cannot be certain, and consequently care has to be taken about the interpretive claims we make. Nevertheless, when speech activities are named in this way, I presume that they serve as labels for the constellation of norms by which different kinds of verbal behaviour are evaluated. I now want to move on and consider the nature of these labels in statements where different kinds of genre were delimited by judges as units in their own right.

9.1.2 Unit Names

Gumperz (1982a: 165) writes that:

> When communicative events are named, such names are regularly employed in members narrative reports in sentences such as "We attended a lecture," "They were making a joke".

A number of statements of this kind appear in the response data, and it these that are discussed in this section.

A search of the corpus of responses produced 11 nouns that were used to describe different units of interactional activity. The nouns in question are listed in Table 9.2. Concordance strings were generated for each noun in turn, and the

resulting listings produced a total of 41 references across the three studies. Examples of the strings that were produced include the following, which are taken from the comments of non-participant judges who took part in Study 1:

Study 1

conversation
it's a conversation between two males
it's a coffee making interim conversation
it's a typical opening to a conversation
it's easy chatty conversation
it's not official conversation

discussion
it's a discussion between colleagues
it's a friendly discussion between two people

interview
it sounded like a beginning of term interview

Table 9.2

Unit Names

Key Terms	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
nouns				
anecdote	-	-	1	1
argument	1	-	1	2
chat/conversation	-	1	-	1
conversation	9	11	5	25
discussion	2	-	1	3
exchange	-	1	-	1
fragment	-	2	-	2
interview	1	-	-	1
monologue	-	2	1	3
narrative	-	-	1	1
story	-	-	1	1
Total	13	17	11	41

These examples suggest that at least three different kinds of communicative unit are recognised. The units are:

(i) 'a conversation';

(ii) 'a discussion';

(iii) 'an interview'.

However, within each unit it is clear that finer distinctions can be and are drawn by judges in order to particularise the type of exchange that is considered to be going on. These distinctions are provided in two ways. First, by contextual evaluations involving both 'the setting' and 'the participants' (cf. the interpretive work that is discussed in Chapter 8). Compare:

Study 1

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation

Judge 8
it's a discussion between colleagues

Judge 9
it's a friendly discussion between two people

Judge 10
it's a conversation between two males

Second, by making analogies with either contrasting or similar kinds of genre (see discussion of 'the principal of analogy' in Section 8.1). Compare:

Study 1

Judge 3
it sounded like a beginning of term interview

Judge 4
it sounded just normal like any conversation
it wasn't like a lecture or an argument

Judge 6
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real stuff

it reminds me other conversations I've listened to
it's a way of filling in silence
its exploratory
it's a linguistic shaking of hands

Judge 7
it's a typical opening to a conversation

Judge 10
it's easy chatty conversation

Judge 11
it's not official conversation

As far as the information about genre is concerned, the comments seem to revolve around opinions about the possible cognitive status of the situation, the dimensions or indices of which can be represented as a continuum (cf. the model proposed by Giles and Coupland (1992) as discussed in Section 9.1 above). Giles and Coupland, for example, suggest the following sets of interactional continua along which participants may operate:

> 'cooperative – competitive'; 'informal – formal'; 'relaxed – tense', 'equal – unequal'; 'task related – not task related'. (Giles and Coupland, 1992: 19)

By using these labels, and others like them, to construct semantic differential scales, more controlled interpretive work might be undertaken in order to compare the social and linguistic bases of different evaluations (for useful summaries of this type of work see Fasold, 1984: Chapter 6; Giles and Coupland, 1992: Chapter 2). Judges' comments in Study 1, for instance, suggest that some kind of 'formality' index is of salience in the stimulus fragment. The comments range from evaluations of the unit as a relatively 'informal' exchange (e.g. 'a coffee making interim conversation'; 'easy chatty conversation'; 'not official conversation'; 'a friendly discussion between two people') to evaluations that are relatively 'formal' (eg. 'a discussion between colleagues', 'a beginning of term interview'; 'a linguistic shaking of hands'). It is noteworthy that one of the

participant judges (Participant A) should express his own sense of the event in something of these terms. He commented:

Study 1

Participant A
I was conscious of the situation
we were not meeting as mates
it was a very much a student/supervisor chat

Figure 9.1 presents a typical seven point differential scale that could be used in follow-up work to rate the degree of 'formality' that is judged to be operant in the exchange fragment from both participant and non-participant perspectives.

formal — — — — — — — informal
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Figure 9.1

Typical Seven-Point Semantic Differential Scale

Other salient characteristics can also be explored in the same way of course. For instance, judges' comments about Study 2 (Extract 4), suggest that 'phaticity' may be worth further analytic consideration (see Coupland, Coupland and Robinson (1992) for a useful discussion of this notion). Comments of this type included:

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 3
the conversation is incidental to coffee
they are just filling in time

Judge 6
that wasn't a conversation

Judge 7
it's a filling in space conversation

In Study 3 (Extract 6), the characteristics of 'humour' and 'sex stereotypes' appear to be salient for judges and thus also worth further exploration. Compare:

Study 3 (Extract 6)

Pair 2
they'd got together for some dirty laughs

Pair 3
the laughter was very cheap
it's a very male conversation

Pair 6
the whole thing is humourless
they are trying to make an educated conversation

Pair 7
there definitely seemed to be a pub type thing
pub type humour
take the piss out of your friends

The kind of work I am thinking of here is very much in the mould of Tannen (1984) where a combination of professional textual analyses and *post hoc* evaluations are used to identify a particular style of interaction. In the case of Tannen's data, the style is designated as one of 'high-involvement' among friends of East European Jewish background from New York. One of the main characteristics of this style is what Tannen refers to as 'pacing', which includes interactional phenomena that are most directly related to the textual category of turn-taking. These phenomena include:

(1) a faster rate of speech;

(2) faster turn taking;

(3) avoiding interturn pauses;

(4) cooperative overlap;

(5) participatory leadership.

A summary of this and other contextualising devices that characterise 'high involvement' can be found in Tannen (1984: Chapter 7).

The range of terms that judges used to describe the activities and units named is quite limited however. Perhaps this is because judges were asked to listen to broadly similar kinds of talk, rather than an array of different styles (cf. Crystal and Davy, 1969; Tannen, 1984; Coupland, 1988). Presumably, the greater the range of interactions that are used as stimulus material, the greater the range of possible descriptors that one might expect to elicit. One way of expanding the types of interaction that judges might be asked to listen to is by widening the scope of the stimulus material to include events that are based on cross-cultural exchanges for example. Gumperz (1982a) argues that since speech activities are realised in action and since their identification is a function of ethnic and communicative background special problems arise in a modern society where people have widely differing communicative and cultural backgrounds (cf. Metge and Kinloch, 1978; Knapp et al., 1987; Davies and Jupp, 1992). These problems seem to be amenable to exploration using the sort of approach that is developed here, because different interactional and interpretive issues can be identified and related to members' own cultural and linguistic perspectives. A programme of research which attended to this last issue might also serve to ameliorate the kinds of criticism levelled at interactional sociolinguistics by scholars such as Singh and Lele (1989), for example, since it would help to redress the very serious charge of ethnocentric interpretive bias.

Although there are clearly physical limits on the number of different kinds of talk that individuals, or pairs for that matter, might be required to respond to on any single occasion, as well as physiological limits on their energy and/or

willingness to act as informants as I intimated in Chapter 4, judges demonstrated that they were not only able to evaluate and distinguish between different kinds of verbal exchange, but could also provide interpretations relating to the 'communicative content' of the exchanges at different levels of abstraction. These interpretations involve descriptive statements which answer questions about 'what is going on' in the exchanges from a third person perspective (cf. Fairclough, 1989: 146-148). A striking range of vocabulary was used by judges in this regard, including references to specific ends, strategies and outcomes which the participants were said to employ or pursue or negotiate or achieve in the course of the exchange fragments. In other words, these responses are concerned with the praxis of verbal exchange as 'goal-oriented' behaviour (see Section 2.2.2). It is this type of response that I want to consider next.

9.2 References to Praxis

References to praxis were coded in terms of statements about qualities and effects that judges associated with different types of non-surface contribution to the exchange fragments (see Section 6.2). These statements appear to be based around two main types of vocabulary:

(i) verb phrases that provide interpretations of 'what is going on' in the exchanges at the level of 'strategy' (cf. the use of phrases such as 'seeking reassurances'; 'encourage'; 'probe'; 'advise'; 'try to impress'; 'support' etc.);

(ii) adjective phrases that provide interpretations of 'what is going on' at the level of 'key' (cf. the use of phrases such as 'boring'; 'earnest', 'indignant'; 'ambiguous'; 'non-involved'; 'unnatural' etc.).

The notion of 'strategy' is understood here in the general sense used by Brown and Levinson (1987: 8) "in which people can be seen to be doing something before doing, in order to do, something else" (see Section 2.2.3 for further discussion). It

is also the term that "has come to be a preferred explanatory heuristic for discourse studies" (Tracy and Coupland, 1991). Judges' comments on the use of 'strategy' are couched in vocabularies that describe various participant attempts to 'try to do something' and/or the effects of their 'having done something' as communicators (cf. the data elicited by Kreckel (1981) as reported in Section 4.2.3).

The notion of 'key' is understood in the Hymesian sense (1972; 1974). It includes evaluative interpretations of what the participants were considered to communicate as a result of the tone, manner or spirit in which the exchanges had taken place. Judges' comments not only describe participant affectual and attitudinal orientations, but also different discourse or goal related effects.

Before considering these vocabularies in detail, it is perhaps worth recalling that the data responses to be considered were not elicited by direct questioning, but rather emerged as part of a deliberate research ploy not to draw attention to particular features or qualities of the stimulus fragments (see Section 5.1, and compare the methods of Tannen, 1988). I make this point because of the significantly large number of comments that were produced in this as opposed to the other interpretive domains.

9.2.1 Praxis and Goals

References to both 'strategy' and 'key' were often associated with what was said by the participants at the level of locutionary content or surface form (see Chapter 7). Hence judges not only cited the use of particular words and phrases (morpho-syntactic text features), the use of different modes of expression (prosodic text features), and the use of different organising phenomena (turn-taking and topical text features) in the course of their interpretive responses, but also linked these to evaluations of individual and/or conjoint communicative behaviour. It is the

nature of these links that are of particular interest in this chapter, since as Gumperz (1982a: 170) argues:

> by looking at systematic patterns in the relationship of perception of surface cues to interpretation, we can gather strong evidence for the social basis of contextualization conventions and for the signalling of communicative goals. (Gumperz (1982a: 170)

Apart from being able to describe and codify the qualities and types of reference that judges were able to provide in this respect, I have two further ends in mind. These are to:

(i) evaluate the evidence for warranting claims about the goal-orientation(s) of interlocutor behaviour on the basis of judges' use of particular vocabularies;

(ii) model the resources that judges must have utilised in order to be able provide the links and/or interpretations they did.

Concordance strings were consequently produced for all verb and adjective phrases referring to praxis. Close inspection of these strings suggests that different tokens form the basis of judges' comments. As a result, I was able to list and categorise the various types of token involved. Two types of strategy token were identified as a result of this procedure. I have called these 'metalinguistic' tokens and 'metapragmatic' tokens respectively; the vocabularies concerned are discussed in Section 9.3 and 9.4 below. Different types of token were further identified in the references to 'key'; these are designated as 'indexical' tokens and 'interactional' tokens respectively, and discussion of them is presented in Section 9.5.

9.3 Metalinguistic Tokens

Judges use metalinguistic tokens to describe strategies that are principally concerned with participant attempts to manage and regulate the exchanges. Goffman (1981) refers to these strategies as 'the system of constraints of talk'.

System constraints provide "a two-way capability for transmitting acoustically adequate and readily interpretable messages, feedback capabilities, turnover signals, preemption signals, framing capabilities, such as rekeying signals" Goffman (1981: 14–15). Tokens identified in the corpus of responses seem to be akin to the first sub-set of 'interactional terms' that Labov and Fanshel (1977) use as part of their comprehensive discourse analysis (cf. the group of speech acts that Habermas (1984) calls 'communicatives').

Four groups of 'speech actions' or 'verbal interactions' are identified by Labov and Fanshel, and it is the first of these that I am presently interested in (see Labov and Fanshel (1977: 60–65). These are designated as a set of "meta"-actions which are defined as follows:

> metalinguistic actions ... have to with the regulation of speech itself. They describe the behavior of the speaker when he is doing something else besides "taking his turn." (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 60)

Three types of 'metalinguistic-action' are specified by Labov and Fanshel under the generic headings of 'initiate', 'continue', and 'end'. These actions are all reasonably transparent and relate to the behaviour of a single person. They are used to describe:

(i) verbal initiatives, where some participant is the first actual speaker, or the speaker who begins a new topic or speech event, or who decides to interrupt;

(ii) verbal continuations, where the participant is the speaker who maintains control of the floor or the turn slot, or who uses repetition, or who offers backchannel cues as a means of encouraging an interlocutor to continue;

(iii) verbal completions, where the participant is the speaker who ends what they have to say, or who terminates a speech event, or who withdraws from an exchange by lapsing into silence.

The dialogic aspect of verbal exchange is characterised by Labov and Fanshel by a small set of terms under each of these heads, as represented in Table 9.3 (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 62). These terms are intended to deal with the sequential organisation of speaker turns along conversation analytic lines (see Section 7.2). Since similar lexis is used by judges in the response data that was collected, I have used Labov and Fanshel's table of metalinguistic verbs as a basis for undertaking the analysis which follows (see Appendix I).

Table 9.3

Labov and Fanshel's List of Metalinguistic Terms

initiate interrupt redirect	continue respond repeat reinforce	end signal completion withdraw

Before pursuing this analysis, it is important to reiterate that the tokens provided by lay judges are not equivalent to those used by professional analysts (cf. the use of prosody terms by judges as reported in 7.1.2). However, they do seem productive enough to compare with professional analysis, and may have an important role to play as part of the warranting process for determining participant goals as I suggested at the outset of the research. Weimann (1985: 85), for example, argues that turn taking strategies are among "the fundamental resources available to interactants to establish a definition of their relationships, especially in terms of control distribution". The 'resource model' of turn taking put forward by Weimann seeks to facilitate the interpretation of conversational events so that they can be seen as resources by which people accomplish relational goals. Since this a theoretical rather than empirically derived model , evidence for these goals is neither sought nor provided. However, this is not to say that the model is without merit. I think its basic hypothesis is quite sound; turn taking

strategies are an important resource for accomplishing relational goals as work in CA has shown (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Button and Lee, 1987; Roger and Bull, 1989).

The issue I want to confront is not so much the types of mechanism that are involved in accomplishing such goals, but rather their salience from a third person perspective. What strategies are seen to be employed by participants in organising and controlling talk, and what if anything, can they provide in the way of evidence about the goal-orientations of the people concerned? These questions are addressed in the discussion which follows, where the first stage in analysis involves an account of how the reference tokens judges used were listed and categorised.

9.3.1 Listing and Categorising the Tokens

The work reported in this section is based on the metalinguistic tokens derived from non-participant judges. Concordance strings were generated from these tokens and resulted in descriptive phrases of the following kind:

Study 1

Judge 3
Ian *introduces* topics
he can talk about

Judge 12
the one who *initiates* all the questions
seems more dominant

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 4
he lets things *continue*

Judge 8
they are typically laconic *replies* Ian would give

Study 2 (Extract 3)

Judge 1
he *follows on* from what Ian is saying
rather than *initiating* anything himself

Judge 3
he sounds as if he's going to *launch into* a tale
and *begins* to talk about Southampton

Judge 4
he sounds as if he's *not going to go on*
and then does

Study 2 (Extract 6)

Judge 7
Ian has to *try and keep the conversation going*

Study 3 (Extract 4)

Pair 1
however is *reiterated*

Pair 2
the man kept trying to *break in*
and contradict her
she just *went straight on*
she just said however
and then *continued*

Pair 5
I guess in the middle she was just *ploughing on*

Pair 7
her husband *tries to get in* four times
and is summarily dismissed

Eighty nine tokens of this type were identified and these were categorised according to the three generic types of metalinguistic action defined by Labov and Fanshel (1977). I suggest that such actions are evaluated *post hoc* , in so far as some individual is viewed as fulfilling, or at least attempting to fulfil, the participant role(s) of first and second person interlocutor (see Chapter 2). These roles are

distinguished by the ways in which individuals make use of any or all of the following regulative strategies:

(i) initiate a contribution;

(ii) continue a contribution;

(iii) end a contribution.

9.3.2. Initiating Contributions

Judges describe the behaviour of participants who are interpreted as making 1st Person 'initiating contributions' by using the tokens listed in Table 9.4. For the sake of consistency, all tokens are presented in their infinitive form.

TABLE 9.4

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Initiating Contributions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
begin to talk	–	1	–	1
bring in	1	–	–	1
change	1	9	2	12
initiate questions	1	–	–	1
introduce the thing	1	–	–	1
introduce topics	1	–	–	1
launch into	–	1	–	1
move	2	5	–	7
provoke	1	–	–	1
set out to ask	–	1	–	1
sidetrack	–	–	1	1
start	–	1	–	1
start off	–	1	1	2
start the conversation	1	–	–	1
start to talk	1	–	1	2
switch	4	1	–	5
try to get the bloke saying things	–	1	–	1
try to get to speak	–	1	–	1
try to get to talk	–	1	–	1
try to make conversation	1	–	–	1
Totals	15	23	5	43

A total of 20 different 'initiating' tokens and 43 references were produced across the three studies. On closer inspection, it is apparent that many of these tokens are closely related, if not synonymous. Hence, taking the speaking 'initiative', for example, presumably includes the first person behaviours: 'begin to talk'; 'introduce'; 'launch into'; and 'start to talk'. The action 'initiate' also seems to be used by judges in the sense of goal-oriented strategies that are used to create or stimulate dialogue. Examples include: 'initiate questions'; 'set out to ask'; 'try to get the bloke saying things'; 'try to get to speak'; 'try to get to talk'; 'try to make conversation'. The relative frequency of initiatives of this kind can of course be

checked against the local and global organisation of turn-taking in a fragment or whole episode of talk (see Section 7.2).

The other first person strategy that judges seem to be sensitive to is the notion of 'redirect'. In Section 7.2.2, I discussed the notion of changes in subject matter or 'topical actions'. These actions involve the three most commonly cited initiating verbs, including 'change', 'move' and 'switch'. The other two tokens of this type include 'bring in' and 'sidetrack'.

I have categorised 'interrupt' as a second person initiative because, one must presume that the primary or first person role is already taken; one can only 'interrupt' oneself in the circumstances of a media broadcast, for example, and this is usually done by using third person deixis (cf. "*We* interrupt this bulletin to bring you news of the Whitbread Fleet"). In other words, this kind of initiative is what Bublitz (1988, Chapter 3) describes as a 'recipient action'. The 9 tokens identified in this category are listed Table 9.5, and these produced a total of 23 references.

TABLE 9.5

Tokens for Describing 2nd Person Initiating Contributions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
break in	–	–	1	1
cut off	–	1	1	2
cut in	–	1	–	1
interrupt	–	3	8	11
take over the content	–	1	1	2
talk over	1	–	1	2
talk through	–	–	2	2
try to break in	–	–	1	1
try to get in	–	–	1	1
Totals	1	6	16	23

I presume that the use and extent of interrupting contributions in verbal exchange is a reflection of interactional spontaneity or involvement (I think of the kind of interaction where one friends who have not seen each other for some time meet and have much to share by way of "news"), or lack of such spontaneity or involvement (as in say a formal interview or between strangers on first meeting), or of dominance and control (where speaker rights and turns are regulated as a consequence of asymmetrical social roles as in a court of law). The strategic use of interruption has of course been extensively researched, and is also amenable to direct observation (see Section 7.2.1).

9.3.3. Continuing Contributions

Another way of dominating the turn slot is to ensure that one 'continues' in the role of first person rather than second person interlocutor. The strategy here seems to be to actively 'maintain the initiative' and hence forestall attempts to 'interrupt'. Taking a more passive or perhaps subordinate role, as second person interlocutor, may be an indication that one has less or little to say by way of verbal

contributions to the exchange for whatever reason this might involve. It could also be that one is more actively concerned to 'listen' rather than 'speak', but this is an issue that I will deal with under the different kinds of 'metapragmatic' strategies that I discuss later (see Section 9.4).

Table 9.6 presents a list of the 26 tokens that judges used to describe strategies for 'continuing' or 'maintaining' the role of first person interlocutor (see Wells, Maclure and Montgomery (1981) for a discussion of strategies for sustaining talk). These tokens produced a total of 41 references.

The notion of 'continue' seems to be particularly salient for judges, since 15 of the 24 tokens refer to ways in which the speaker is seen to maintain control of the turn slot. Where such control is achieved, by the relative exclusion of the other party, speaking rights seem to be judged as asymmetrical. Compare for instance the following tokens which suggest that speaking rights are unlikely to be evenly shared or distributed:

'carry on'; 'dictate'; 'do all the talking'; 'hog the conversation'; 'hold court'; 'keep going'; 'not prepared to give in'; 'not wanting flow to be interrupted'; 'plough on'.

However, the primary speaking role need not only presume predominance, since it can also be used to nurture and sustain talk. Compare strategies such as 'letting things continue' and 'trying to keep the conversation going'. How things 'continue' are a matter for negotiation of course, and this is where the management of secondary speaker or second person strategies are of interactional significance.

TABLE 9.6

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Continuing Contributions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
carry on	–	–	1	1
continue	–	5	1	6
dictate	–	–	1	1
do all the talking	–	–	1	1
go on	–	1	–	1
go straight on	–	–	1	1
hog the conversation	–	–	1	1
hold court	–	–	1	1
keep going	–	–	1	1
keep the conversation going	2	–	–	2
keep referring	–	–	1	1
keep repeating	–	–	1	1
keep saying	2	–	3	5
let things continue	–	1	–	1
not prepared to give in	–	–	1	1
not wanting flow to be interrupted	–	–	1	1
pick up remarks	–	1	–	1
plough on	–	–	1	1
produce a more extended answer	–	1	–	1
reinforce	–	1	1	2
reiterate	–	–	1	1
repeat	1	–	5	6
try to fill it all in	–	–	1	1
try to get the point over	–	–	1	1
try to keep the conversation going	–	2	–	2
Totals	5	12	25	42

A much smaller number of tokens is used to describe the continuing contributions of second person interlocutors. The tokens identified from the corpus are presented in Table 9.7.

A small number of second person strategies are described which seem to 'encourage the other person to continue' to use Labov and Fanshel's phrase (1977:

62). These strategies are presumably related to the kind of backchannelling behaviours that were discussed in 7.1, and play an important part in supporting and sustaining talk. Compare the use of tokens such as 'encourage the flow of conversation', and 'help'. Backchannel cues can also be used for purposes of maintaining control of course, as tokens such as 'jog the conversation along', 'play along' and 'prompt' suggest. Notice that no references of this type were cited in Study 3. I am uncertain why this should be.

TABLE 9.7

Tokens for Describing 2nd Person Continuing Contributions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
encourage	3	–	–	3
encourage the flow of conversation	–	1	–	1
follow on	–	2	–	2
help	–	1	–	1
jog the conversation along	1	–	–	1
pick up remarks	–	1	–	1
play along	–	1	–	1
prompt	1	–	1	1
reply	–	4	–	4
just respond	–	1	–	1
respond automatically	–	1	–	1
Totals	5	12	–	17

9.3.4 Ending Contributions

Contributions that are used to close or complete one's turn, the topic, or the discourse can be invoked in the role of either first or second person interlocutor. In any event, the result of ending one's contribution as a speaker is to become silent. The extent of a speaker's silence presumably marks the degree of 'involvement' or 'withdrawal' from an exchange, and this withdrawal can obviously be intermittent

(i.e. 'paused'), sustained, or complete. Only 12 tokens of this type were recorded, and these are listed in Table 9.8. These tokens produced 32 references in all.

TABLE 9.8

Tokens for Describing 1st or 2nd Person Ending Contributions

Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
cut off	–	1	1	2
end	–	8	2	10
give in	–	–	1	1
loose the thread	1	–	–	1
not go on	–	1	–	1
not exploring questions	1	–	–	1
not imparting information easily	–	1	–	1
not knowing what to say	–	1	–	1
not picking the conversation up	–	1	–	1
not really saying anything	–	–	1	1
saying as little as possible	–	1	–	1
pause	2	6	3	11
Totals	4	20	8	32

The most commonly cited tokens are 'end' and 'pause'. These tokens, and especially 'pause' are discussed in relation to the observation of surface linguistic forms in 7.2.1.

9.3.5 Metalinguistic Tokens and Goal Orientation

The verbs considered in this section provide evidence of the tendency and willingness of judges to describe participant strategies for initiating, maintaining and closing verbal communication. I suggest that these verbs are akin to those used by professional analysts such as Labov and Fanshel (1977) and Habermas

(1984) for the purpose of designating 'metalinguistic' or 'communicative' acts. These acts are generally viewed in terms of interactional goals that are defined by the analysing observer in functional terms, and are predominantly used in structuring discourse (see Craig, 1986).

To the extent that judges' use similar metalinguistic tokens to describe how participants organise and regulate their exchanges suggests that they are sensitive such goals (cf. Weimann's (1985) resource model of turn taking). Indeed, the communicative effects of these goals are also presumably manifest in the kind of status and role differentials that are described by judges in their comments about the participants (see Section 8.4). The type of goal that seems to be at issue here are what Street and Capella (1985) describe as 'global' or 'cross-situational' goals in that they are operative in most social encounters. However, judges' comments reveal that they are also sensitive to goals that are 'situation specific' to use Street and Capella's term (cf. Brown and Fraser's (1979) notion of 'mini-purposes'), that is, "they become individually operable given situational exigencies" (Street and Capella, 1985: 252). Vocabularies associated with these exigencies, and what is said to be communicated by the participants as a consequence, are considered in the following section. These vocabularies suggest third person interpretive abilities that (Kreckel, 1981) defines as 'metapragmatic' (see 4.2.3).

9.4 Metapragmatic Tokens

Judges' use metapragmatic tokens in the course of describing what Gumperz (1982a: 153) calls 'conversational inferencing', that is, "the situated or context bound process of interpretation, by means of which participants in an exchange assess others' intentions, and on which they base their responses". Recall from Chapter 3 of the present work that Gumperz explores this process by asking different third person judges 'to explain what they thought different speakers

were trying to convey in speaking as they did', and then 'to evaluate the effectiveness of their verbal strategies' (Gumperz, 1982a: 31). In the responses he elicited, Gumperz discovered that his judges used similar types of expression ('the speaker is still in control', 'he is playing the game' etc.), and suggests that in so doing they were providing "conventionalised labels or vocabularies of motives", for what they recognised as "a familiar strategy or strategies" (op. cit.). It is labels and vocabularies of this type, as used by the judges in this study, that I am concerned with here.

9.4.1 Listing and Categorising the Tokens

Descriptive phrases of similar kinds were coded by inspecting the corpus of responses as before. Examples of the 119 tokens that were identified are listed below from Study 1; the relevant tokens are italicised for ease of reference.

Study 1 (Participants)

Participant A
I was *trying to explain*
why I wanted to come back to University
Ian was *trying to make sure of my motives*

Participant B
it's an *attempt to convince* the other bloke
they *weren't attending* to each other
he was *seeking reassurances*

Study 1 (Non-Participants)

Judge 2
there is an active *attempt to converge*
in style and attitude

Judge 4
one was *probing for advice*
feeling his way along
he was *sounding out*

Judge 6
the speakers are *feeling their way around*
trying to establish a rapport

Judge 8
they *come to the same conclusions*

Judge 9
nobody is posturing
trying to score over anybody else
he *gives advice*

Judge 12
there is a slight element of *trying to impress*

Judge 14
he *tried to put* the other guy *at ease*

These statements, and many other like them, describe a range of communicative strategies that are attributed to individual speakers (cf. 'he was sounding out'; 'he tried to put the other guy at ease' etc.) on the one hand, and to the products of conjoint interactional behaviour on the other (cf. 'they weren't attending to each other'; 'they come to the same conclusions' etc.).

In order to try and categorise the kinds of strategy that are suggested, all the verb tokens were first listed separately and then sorted into sets according to semantic relatedness and opposition following the ethnomic procedure adopted by Kreckel (1981: 144ff., and discussed in Section 4.2.1). Examples of the kind of sets identified by Kreckel (1981: 145) include:

agreeing	disagreeing
acknowledging	objecting
consenting	contradicting
confirming	denying
affirming	
accepting	
stating	questioning
declaring	doubting
describing	disbelieving
reporting	
predicting	

A complete list of the 210 metapragmatic categories that Kreckel identified is presented in Kreckel (1981; 827-292); a subset of the verbs involved is presented in Appendix J of this thesis.

In order to examine the similarities and differences between these verbs on a more abstract level, Kreckel develops her own analytic schema (see Kreckel, 1981: Chapter 11). This schema is a synthesis of various approaches to the classification of speech acts by four different scholars, namely Austin, Searle, Campbell and Wünderlich. Since Kreckel argues that a classificatory scheme can never embrace all possible illocutionary acts, she restricts her own work to "face to face interaction of a relationship-regulating kind" (Kreckel, 1981: 185). Six basic elements or 'interacts' emerge from a combination of the various approaches she considers. These interacts are based on three pragmatic dimensions used to classify the verbs in question. These are:

(1) the temporal dimension - in which participants are oriented more towards the future, the past, or the present, or whether the acts are temporally neutral;

(ii) the social dimension - in which participants negotiate relevant or appropriate sequential obligations;

(iii) the content dimension - in which the thematic centre of gravity lies.

While this schema has the advantage of providing "a guideline for ethnolinguistic and sociolinguistic descriptive systems", it has the disadvantage of "relinquishing the intuitive evidence of classifications that link up with semantic analyses and take account of the elementary functions of language" as Habermas (1985: 322) suggests. A further limitation is that the interacts pertain to only illocutionary rather than perlocutionary force. The schemas put forward by Labov and Fanshel (1977), Leech (1983) and of course Habermas himself seem to address

this criticism, but of course these do not take into account the range or types of interpretive vocabulary that Kreckel's, or indeed my own, data involves.

The problems of classification notwithstanding, the social-relational dimension that Kreckel develops seems to me to provide an extremely useful tool for beginning analyses of the tokens I collected. As Kreckel (1981: 189) explains, this dimension is largely inspired by von Wiese's (1941) theory of social relations. The theory is not only very simple (social relations are conceived of as processes or occurrences "which bring men closer together or place them further apart", Kreckel, 1981:189), but also has affinities with:

(a) the work of Howard Giles and his associates on the 'convergent' and 'divergent' behaviours that underpin *Speech Accommodation Theory* (SAT), and its later development into *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT) - see Giles and Coupland (1991: Chapter 3) for a useful synopsis of this work;

(b) the model of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987), and as applied to the illocutionary functions of politeness in speech acts by Leech (1983).

Leech (1983: 104) states that at the most general level illocutionary functions may be classified into the four following types, according to the social goal of 'establishing and maintaining comity'.

(a) COMPETITIVE: The illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; *eg* ordering, asking, demanding, begging, etc.

(b) CONVIVIAL: The illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal; *eg* offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating.

(c) COLLABORATIVE: The illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal; *eg* asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing

(d) CONFLICTIVE: The illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal; eg threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding

These functions seem to me to be intrinsic to the basic relational dimensions that are identified by Kreckel (1981: 189), with the refinement that the social goal may also be 'ambivalent'. Three dimensions are thus proposed by Kreckel, and these are:

association (= bringing interactors closer together, e.g. appeasing)

dissociation (= placing them further apart, e.g. insulting)

ambivalence (= where direction can go either way, e.g. defending, teasing).

The different sets of verbs that I identified were grouped according to these dimensions, and then considered in the light of different types of strategic behaviour that judges seemed to attribute to the participants as first and second person interlocutors. Like Gumperz (1982a; 1982b), I assume that this behaviour is goal-oriented, though the complex nature of the link between goals and discourse is not explored here (see, Tracy and Coupland, 1990; Tracy, 1991). While a relatively small set of communicative goals tend to be identified by theorists, I will also follow the general thesis of Tracy and Coupland (1990: 2) and assume that these goals are inextricably intertwined and that participants will typically have more than one goal when they talk to others.

Tracy and Coupland (1990: 5) point out that while the labels used by scholars vary; two communicator goals are repeatedly identified as basic:

> The first type of goal is the task or instrumental goal; in general, task goals are seen as the purpose of interaction. In addition to the 'task' however, are the concerns people have about how they are presenting themselves and their concerns for the relationship. Sometimes, this non-task goal is taken as a single cluster, 'the face goals of interaction'...and other times it is split in two: identity goals and relational goals.

These broad typologies seem to me to accord very well with the ideas of Habermas (1985) which I discussed in Chapter 2 (see in particular Section 2.3.1).

Recall that Habermas suggests an integrated two-tiered characterisation of socially coordinated, communicative actions that are intrinsically goal-oriented. These are a system based paradigm in which individuals search for normative agreement and understanding, and a lifeworld paradigm that seeks the gratification of personal interest positions. For the purpose of discussion, I propose that judges' metapragmatic descriptions can be usefully subsumed under each of these paradigms. Hence, in the sections which follow, I consider two types of interpretive vocabulary:

(i) vocabularies that describe task-oriented strategies and goals;

(ii) vocabularies that describe non-task or face-oriented strategies and goals.

9.4.2 Task-Oriented Strategies and Goals

Vocabularies that describe task-oriented strategies and goals appear to be sensitive to the process of ostensive-inferential communication that I outlined in Section 2.2.2. Recall that this process involves a view of communication in which participants produce and interpret evidence of different kinds in order to find relevant links. Judges seem to be sensitive to this process in so far as their comments include statements about the strategies used by participants for communicative purposes. These strategies not only include what it is that first person participants have had to say in terms of the production of ostensive signals, but also how second persons have contextualised and/or responded to what has been said. In describing and naming these strategies, I presume that judges utilise linguistic and metapragmatic resources to achieve their interpretations. The interpretive resources in question are presumably related to some model of language understanding that judges have recourse to as conversational participants themselves. Such a model is advanced by Rost (1990: Chapter 3).

Rost proposes a number of editing strategies that second persons addressees must employ in order to draw appropriate inferences from what a speaker has said, with the presumed aim of their trying to achieve 'acceptable' or 'targeted' understandings. Rost (1990: 63) explains:

> Acceptable understanding refers to inferences drawn by a listener that are satisfactory to both speaker and listener. Targeted understanding refers to a specific interpretation that was intended by the speaker.

Failure to achieve either of these outcomes results in 'non-understanding' or 'misunderstanding', of course, as Rost refers to them. To be successful as listeners, individuals are modelled as having three different levels of interpretive ability. These are:

(1) The ability to infer meaning by supplying links between lexical items.

(2) The ability to formulate a base, or conceptual meaning that links utterances together.

(3) The ability to formulate plausible intention (s) for the speaker in making an utterance. (Rost, 1990: 83–84)

The following sections examine interpretive work that demonstrates how these abilities are utilised *post hoc* in order to derive 'acceptable understandings' in a weaker sense; that is, for third person judges to supply 'plausible interpretations' of communicative behaviour previously unseen. Plausible, of course, does not imply 'correct', but rather that the interpretations are likely to be based on some principle of analogy (Rost, 1990: 74), that is, akin to real, imagined or stereotypical instances of communicative behaviour which 'make sense' for the judge in question. Rost comments:

> A listener with adequate knowledge of a language and adequate experience with the conventions of language use (e.g. rhetorical genres) can construct an acceptable understanding of the discourse. However, even experienced listeners will regularly experience understanding problems, as not all understanding problems can be resolved through reliance on conventional linguistic knowledge. (Rost, 1990: 74)

In order to try and provide a more discrete account of the behaviours or strategies that judges described, I followed the procedure outlined in 9.4.1 above. Hence, I first collected together all verbs and verb groups from the corpus of interpretive statements, and then allocated them to sets on the basis of their semantic relatedness and opposition. Second, and as far as possible, I grouped these sets into the taxonomy of speech actions established by Labov and Fanshel (1977: 61). Finally, each group was analysed along the relational dimensions established by Kreckel (1981).

Three main types of task-oriented tokens were identified in this way. The tokens evaluate and describe communicative strategies (cf. the categories and lists provided by Labov and Fanshel in Appendix I) that are said to be employed by participants for:

(1) representing and responding to states of affairs;

(2) coordinating and negotiating outcomes;

(3) initiating and responding to requests.

1. Representing and Responding to States of Affairs

Descriptions of how participants express states of affairs, including information about themselves and events, are provided by tokens that are presented in Table 9.9. These tokens are akin to the speech actions that Labov and Fanshel (1977: 62) call 'representations', and are used to describe the strategies of first person speakers.

Seventeen different tokens of this type were identified in the response data and these generated a total of 52 references. I have classified the tokens as relationally ambivalent, since it seems to me that the terms are semantically neutral for politeness. Leech (1983: 105) makes the same point about the "locutionary function of Searle's 'representative' speech acts (sometimes labelled

as 'assertives'). The illocutionary force of representatives is to commit the speaker to the truth of an expressed proposition. Its perlocutionary effect is to induce the hearer to believe that S's representation is valid. Labov and Fanshel (1977: 62) argue that where the truth of the proposition cannot be assumed by the participants, they will act in a way that is liable to cause 'dispute'; I will return to tokens that seem to describe what is 'disputable' shortly.

Table 9.9

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Representational Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+/–				
comment	1	1	4	6
describe	1	–	–	1
explain	1	–	1	2
express an opinion	–	–	1	1
give an account	–	1	1	2
give details	–	2	2	4
give ideas	–	2	–	2
give information	–	1	–	1
impose an opinion	–	–	1	1
make free with an opinion	–	–	1	1
mention	2	2	2	6
refer	1	1	1	3
remark	1	1	–	2
report	–	–	2	2
state	–	1	–	1
tell	2	–	14	16
try to make a point	–	–	1	1
Total	9	12	31	52

Apart from the consequences of reaching agreement or disagreement, as a result of some speaker's proposition being accepted as true, it seems that there is another potential source of conflict for participants that tends not to be discussed

very much by speech act theorists. This is the conflict that can arise when the speaker does not find evidence in the listener's participation display that speaker's intentions are being acknowledged. I have called tokens that describe such acknowledgment, 'contact' strategies; that is, strategies that indicate the willingness and ability of second persons to continue the interaction (cf. Allwood, Nivre and Ahlsen, 1992). The tokens concerned are presented in Table 9. 10.

Table 9.10

Tokens for Describing 2nd Person Contact Strategies

2nd Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
listen	–	1	3	3
start to listen	–	–	1	1
–				
ignore	–	1	3	4
totally ignore	–	–	1	1
not going to listen	–	–	1	1
not listening	–	1	3	4
not listening carefully	–	1	–	1
not quite listening	–	–	1	1
not taking notice	–	1	–	1
+/–				
start to listen	–	–	1	1
say as little as possible	–	1	–	1
Total	–	5	14	19

Contact strategies are crucial for not only establishing that ostensive signals have been acknowledged, but also that they are to be contextualised. Interlocutors can of course signal degrees of 'attentiveness' by offering kinesic and recipiency cues of different kinds (cf. eye contact; head nodding; backchannelling etc). Since

they did not have access to visual information, it is presumably recipiency cues of the verbal kind (see Chapter 6) that have led to evaluations of this type.

The relative lack of references to second person associative participation displays is presumably because the activity of 'listening' itself is taken for granted. Notice, however, that 13 out of the 19 references are concerned with dissociative strategies that result from not attending or listening. How we 'attend' to what someone is saying, in whatever circumstances, presumably affects the kinds of information that we are likely to focus on or take of note of (cf. note taking practices in lecturers as discussed by Rost (1990: 125ff.) for instance). It is also likely to have concomitant effects on the nature of interlocutor relations as some sequence of verbal exchange develops. Continuing displays of the dissociative kind presumably lead to relational discomfort at least, or at worst to a total breakdown of the communicative process.

2 . Coordinating and Negotiating Outcomes

Listeners can of course do more than ratify a speaker's contribution and provide prompts for them to continue. Listeners may also shape discourse by indicating which parts of the discourse are to be developed. Similarly a listener can shape the discourse by challenging the informational content of a speaker's contribution or the speaker's right in making that contribution (cf. the linguistic 'feedback mechanisms' discussed by Allwood, Nivre and Ahlsen, 1992), and also the list of listener strategic responses identified by Rost, 1990: 116–117). Quite often the strategies that describe such contributions are not attributed to any one individual, but instead refer to the result of conjoint behaviour or accomplishments ('they weren't attending'; 'the speakers were feeling their way around' etc.). Since this behaviour and/or accomplishment necessarily involves dialogic exchange, I have simply included these in the second person category.

Coordination of intent, or mutual acceptance of the other party's intent is vital in collaborative discourse. Misunderstanding can occur when a listener does not understand the speaker's particular intent in making certain comments or in pursuing a certain line of argument or discourse (Grimshaw, 1980; Humphrys-Jones, 1986; Varonis and Gass, 1985). Communicative conflict can occur when s/he does not accept what a speaker has said. Labov and Fanshel (1977: 62) refer to the kinds of act involved in such coordination as 'disputables'. The frequency and types of token used to describe what I prefer to call coordinating and negotiative strategies are presented in Table 9. 11.

Table 9.11

Tokens for Describing 2nd Person and Conjoint Negotiative Strategies

2ndPerson & Conjoint References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
accept	–	1	–	1
agree	1	3	6	10
come to same conclusions	1	–	–	1
communicate	–	1	1	2
think along the same lines	1	–	–	1
understand	1	1	–	2
–				
contradict	–	–	2	2
disagree	–	1	–	1
dismiss	–	–	2	2
not communicating	–	–	2	2
react negatively	–	1	–	1
+/–				
go through a process of agreeing	–	1	1	2
not clashing	–	–	1	1
Total	4	9	15	28

The most commonly used token is 'agree' with 10 associative and 2 ambivalent references. Leech (1983) suggests that there is an 'agreement maxim' in talk that is closely tied to politeness. The maxim proposes that participants 'maximise agreement' and 'minimise disagreement' (Leech, 1983: 132), and perhaps this is what judges are basing their evaluations on. 'Seek agreement' is of course a major strategy of positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 112), which is used by participants for claiming common ground. Brown and Levinson also mention the trategy of 'token agreement', which I think the two ambivalent references may be

describing (i.e 'going through a process of agreeing', and 'not clashing'). Token agreement is the pretence of agreement that is used where an individual or both parties may 'disagree', but do not want to openly appear to do so in order to maintain positive face.

3. Initiating and Responding to Requests

Labov and Fanshel (1977: 63) suggest that:

> A very large part of discourse is concerned with *requests* of various kinds: requests for action, information, confirmation, attention or approval.

In speech act theory, requests (sometimes included under the category of 'directives') are taken to have the illocutionary force of attempting to get the hearer to do something. The intended effect on the hearer is to have them acknowledge S's desire. Leech (1983: 106) assigns directives to the competitive category of speech acts ("the illocutionary goal competes with the social goal"), where negative politeness is important. However, directives such as 'invitations' are taken as intrinsically polite. Tokens for initiating requests or invitations are presented in Table 9.12.

Only 9 tokens and 12 reference strings were produced for first person request strategies of the task-oriented kind. The majority of tokens fall into the ambivalent category, though I presume that the consequences of always being the 'requestor' may have an important effect on both discourse and social relationships. What is remarkable is the lack of any references in Study 3; there are no references of the second person kind either. Perhaps this pattern is simply a function of the kinds of stimulus material that was used, which involved a fairly high proportion of narrative rather than consultative strategies. I have included references of the consultative kind, that is, that suggest particular face wants and needs in the non-task category presented below (e.g. 'appeal'; 'ask for sympathy'; 'seek reassurance' etc.).

Table 9.12

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Invitational Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
ask relevant questions	1	–	–	1
ask a serious question	–	1	–	1
–				
ask a meaningless question	–	1	–	1
ask a pointless question	–	1	–	1
+/–				
ask a question	–	4	–	4
ask all the questions	1	–	–	1
initiate questions	1		–	1
set out to ask a question	–	1		1
swap questions	–	1	–	1
Total	3	9	–	12

Tokens used to describe second person responses to invitational strategies are listed in Table 9.13. Labov and Fanshel (1977: 63) note that:

> In response to a request from A, B has three basic options: (1) he may give X–the *information, confirmation,* or whatever is requested, or he may *carry out* (*perform*) the action or suggestion not necessarily by speech; (2) he may *put off* the request with an accounting; or (3) he may *refuse* it, with or without accounting.

Judges' comments suggest that they are aware of something of all of these possibilities.

Table 9.13

Tokens for Describing 2nd Person Responses to Invitational Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
give a conventional answer	–	1	–	1
provide a more extended answer	–	1	–	1
–				
answer under duress	–	1	–	1
don't answer		1	–	1
avoid the responsibility of answering	–	1	–	1
unwilling to answer	–	1	–	1
avoid the question	–	1	–	1
don't explore the question	1	–	–	1
don't respond	–	1	–	1
+/–				
answer	–	2	–	2
not able to answer	–	1	–	1
not needing an answer	–	1	–	1
not wanting an answer	–	1	–	1
reply	–	3	–	3
give yes no replies	–	1	–	1
respond	–	2	–	2
just respond	–	1	–	1
talk when asked	1	–	–	1
Total	2	20	–	22

Where an invitation is complied with, participants are described as 'answering'; 'responding'; or 'replying'. There are of course different types of answer', 'responses' and 'replies' as the tokens indicate. Hence, one may answer

in a positive way, or in some ambivalent or minimal way, or with some reluctance, or not at all as the tokens suggest. The kind of strategy that is employed in this regard, presumably has both interactional and relational consequences. If a participant only provides 'yes no replies', for instance, the discourse is likely to be interpreted as lacking in spontaneity (cf. judges' comments in Study 2 (Extract 3). On the other hand, if a participant 'only talks when asked', this presumably reflects a difference in relational status (cf. judges' comments in Study 1, and also Grimshaw, 1980).

9.4.3 Face-Oriented Strategies and Goals

Human social actors spend much of their time in "coopresence" either in attempting to manipulate the behaviour of others, or in themselves being objects of manipulation (Goffman, 1967). Given the fundamentally complementary character of social life and its matching of power with weakness, resources with needs, and assertiveness with acquiescence, this is not remarkable. What is remarkable is that attention to the behavioural repertoires employed in such manipulative behaviour has been, until quite recently, rather modest as Grimshaw (1982; 1990) points out.

However, an integrated model of discourse and context that offers a number of useful concepts and hypotheses is *Communicative Accommodation Theory* (CAT) (see Coupland and Giles, 1988; Coupland, Coupland and Giles, 1991; Giles and Coupland, 1991). This model allows testable predictions about communication strategies and their outcomes. The sociolinguistic heart of CAT focuses on processes of communicative attuning, adaptive and strategic moves made by the participants to increase and decrease social and sociolinguistic distance. The interpretive tokens that are assigned to these strategies by third person judges seem to be of two basic kinds. These describe strategies that are essentially self-

interested or 'egocentric' on the one hand, and strategies that are other-interested or 'exocentric' on the other. Leech (1983) makes something of the same distinction in describing the putative relationship between participants in talk. He notes: "*self* will normally be identified with *s*, and *other* will typically be identified with *h*" (Leech, 1983: 132). 'Other' can of course also refer to participant or non-participant third parties.

1. Egocentric Strategies

Evaluative statements that describe egocentric strategies focus on attempts by 'self' to signal and satisfy personal wants, needs and priorities (cf. Brown and Levinson's (1987: 101) notion of positive politeness which involves "redress directed to the *addressees* positive face" - my italic). I have coded the strategies referred to by judges into two different sets. I will refer to these as 'consulting', and 'status' strategies.

Consulting strategies are categorised by Labov and Fanshel (1977) under the rubric of 'requests', and seem to be related to Leech's (1983: 132) sympathy maxim in which individuals are modelled as (a) minimising antipathy between self and other and (b) maximising sympathy between self and other in order to achieve their goals. Tokens used by judges that describe attempts by 'self' to consult in this way are presented in Table 9.14. The references were mainly derived in Study 2 (Extract 1), where the speaker concerned was described by three of the judges in the following way:

Study 2 (Extract 1)

Judge 1
she seems to be acting in some way
even at the end she isn't fully natural

Judge 6
it sounds like a girl who has got a crush on teacher
there is a little girl lost sort of attitude

Judge 7
it sounds false
the girl sounds self-conscious

These interpretations suggest that the speaker is perhaps trying to minimise a possible threat to face by using 'exaggerated' prosody in the way Brown and Levinson (1987: 104) describe. Hence, she is considered to be 'consulting'; 'seeking assurances'; 'asking for sympathy' and so on. The strategies are perhaps also indicative of the role and relational asymmetries that were ascribed to the participants in this particular exchange (cf. judges' comments in Section 8.5.1; and Grimshaw, 1980).

Table 9.14

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Consulting Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
appeal	–	1	1	2
consult	–	1	–	1
plead	–	1	–	1
seek reassurances	–	2	–	2
want an answer	–	1	–	1
want a response	–	1	–	1
ask for sympathy	–	1	–	1
want sympathy	–	1	–	1
+/–				
feel out	1	–	–	1
feel the way along	1	–	–	1
feel the way around	1	–	–	1
probe for advice	1	–	–	1
sound out	1	–	–	1
want to do something	1	–	–	1
not needing to communicate	–	–	1	1
not wanting to go into deep detailed discussion	1	–	–	1
Total	7	9	2	18

Similar asymmetries were also referred to by judges in their descriptions of the participants in Study 1 (see Section 8.6), and may account for the ambivalent tokens listed in Table 9.14. The tokens suggest interpretations of 'pessimistic' or 'hedged' illocutionary force, where the speaker is considered to either assume "H is unlikely or willing/able to any of the acts predicated of him", or 'doesn't assume "H is able/willing to do any of the acts predicated of him" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 136). Hence, tokens such as 'feel the way around'; 'sound out';

'probe for advice' etc. seem to describe indirect or concealed strategies that are used by participants to 'prepare the ground'. Judge 4, for example commented:

Study 1

Judge 4
one was probing for advice
feeling his way along
he want's to do something
but isn't sure about it
he was sounding out

I suggest that comments of this type appear to be sensitive to *a priori* goals that are expressed in terms of negative politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129ff.). Something of these goals are also intimated in the comments of Participant A who said:

Study 1

Participant A
I wanted to reprocess my application
as a research student
I was trying to explain
why I wanted to come back to University
Ian was trying to make sure of my motives

While references to consulting strategies may be explained in terms of judges' sensitivity to positive and negative politeness, there are a set of request strategies that Labov and Fanshel (1977: 64) suggest operate at "a deeper level of interactional significance". These include actions that either seek to 'challenge' or 'support' interlocutor status (cf. Grimshaw, 1980). Labov and Fanshel describe 'challenges' as "any reference (by direct assertion or more indirect reference) to a situation, which if true, would lower the status of the other person" (Labov and Fanshel (1977: 64). 'Supporting' strategies on the other hand are described "as that form of behavior which would reinforce or raise the status of the other person".

Since the latter are 'other' rather than 'self-oriented', I will deal with them in the exocentric category.

Only 2 references were identified which seem to describe status challenging strategies. The tokens concerned are listed in Table 9.15.

Table 9.15

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Status Challenging Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
–				
moan on	–	1	–	1
nag	–	–	1	1
Total	–	1	1	2

However, the corpus of responses provided 18 references to a third type of challenging strategy that is not discussed by Labov and Fanshel. I have called these 'status-enhancing' strategies, that is, strategies that generally refer to behaviour which seeks to reinforce or raise the participant's own self-esteem or status. Street and Cappella (1985) relate such behaviour to the goal of 'social control'. They note:

> *Social control* represents the desire to influence others in order to satisfy personal needs and obligations and to enhance self-image. (Street and Cappella, 1985: 252)

Tokens describing behaviour of this type are listed in Table 9.16, where the most frequently cited example of its type is 'try to impress'.

Table 9.16

Tokens for Describing 1st Person Status Enhancing Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+/–				
give off really high flown ideas	–	–	1	1
give out what you want to say	–	–	1	1
make the other person know where he went	1	–	–	1
name drop	–	1	–	1
put on a show	–	–	1	1
try to come over as educated and informed	–	–	1	1
try to come over as the educated opinion	–	–	1	1
try to create an impression	–	–	1	1
try to impart wisdom	–	1	–	1
try to impress	1	3	4	8
try to project an image	–	–	1	1
Total	2	5	11	18

This strategy seems to be synonymous with the other tokens identified in the set, since I presume that the perlocutionary effect of 'giving off really high flown ideas' and 'name dropping', for example, is to 'impress' one's interlocutor. However, the actual effect of this kind of strategy may be double-edged, as the following comment from Study 2 suggests:

Study 2 (Extract 4)

Judge 6
one is taking the impressed the role
without genuinely being impressed

Although I have marked them as relationally ambivalent, the interpretive connotations associated with such strategies tend towards the negative rather than positive end of judges' evaluations.

2. Exocentric Strategies

Exocentric strategies are oriented towards the needs and wants others, and hence help to initiate, develop and maintain social-relational goals as Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991: 26) argue:

> When a speaker has particular relational goals for an interaction (for example wanting to gain the other's approval, wanting talk to be effective and efficient, or conversely, wanting to establish self, or self's social group as distinct from the interlocutors and his/her group, she or he will select from a range of sociolinguist (and non-verbal strategies) *attending to or anticipating the recipient's own communication characteristics*.

Strategies used to support an interlocutor are described by tokens listed in Table 9.17. Most of these tokens are of the associative kind, where the participant is viewed as actively attempting to collaborate with or converge towards his/her interlocutor in order to achieve communicative success by establishing and maintaining comity. In fact, participants are judged to be 'trying to do something' in 10 out of the 34 references in this category. Compare:

> 'try to establish a rapport'; 'try to establish confidentiality'; 'try to find something to talk about'; 'try to get a routine'; 'try to relax the situation'; 'try not to score over'.

Table 9.17

Tokens for Describing Supporting Strategies

1st Person References	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Tokens				
+				
advise	2	–	2	4
approve	1	–	–	1
encourage	3	–	–	3
help	–	2	1	3
look for a point to relax	1	–	1	2
make an effort	–	1	–	1
put at ease	2	–	–	2
support	1	1	–	2
talk about something personal	1	–	–	1
try to engage	–	–	1	1
try to establish a rapport	2	1	–	3
try to establish confidentiality	1	–	–	1
try to find something to talk about	–	1	–	1
try to get a routine	1	–	–	1
try to relax the situation	1	–	–	1
try to rescue the conversation	–	1	–	1
try not to score over	1	–	–	1
want to be sympathetic	–	1	–	1
+/–				
act as stooge	–	1	–	1
play along with	–	1	–	1
put up with	–	1	–	1
take the impressed role	–	1	–	1
Total	17	12	5	34

9.5 Key Tokens

The other substantive group of tokens which furnishes evidence of judges tendency and willingness to comment on supratextual matters are those describing communicative 'key'. The notion of 'key' is understood in the Hymesian sense (1972; 1974) and includes evaluative interpretations of what the participants were considered to communicate as a result of the tone, manner or spirit in which the exchanges had taken place.

Examples of the kinds of comment that participant and non-participant judges provided are listed as follows. The following statements are taken from Study 1. A total of 194 different tokens were identified from statements of this type.

Study 1 (Participants)

Participant B
I can't believe it sounds good
it sounds bloody boring
there is something tentative and final
about the way it comes out
there is no genuine surprise
it ought to be more interesting
but isn't
he wasn't particularly enthusiastic

Study 1 (Non-Participants)

Judge 1
the other guy was not relaxed
he was cagey

Judge 2
Ian operates at a flippant level
really is ambiguous
it's not convincing it had shades

Judge 4
the other speaker sounded eager but hesitant

Judge 6
the interactants are not interested
in what they are saying to each other

Judge 7
they are kind of modest with each other

Judge 8
it's not intimate but relaxed and friendly

Judge 9
when he says it sounds good there is approval

Judge 10
there is humour when they talk about tax

Judge 11
one was pretty relaxed

Judge 12
there is almost a mild sort of modesty

Judge 13
the other man sounded a little bit uneasy

Judge 14
the other guy was passive

These statements, and others like them in Studies 2 and 3, suggest that different adjective tokens form the basis of judges' comments. Compare the use of adjectives such as 'boring'; 'tentative'; 'final'; 'relaxed'; 'cagey'; 'flippant'; 'ambiguous'; 'modest' and so on. By generating concordances of all the adjectives used in such statements, I was again able to list and categorise the various types of token involved. Two categories of token were established in this way:

(1) 'indexical' tokens - adjectives used to describe participant affectual and attitudinal orientations (cf. 'boring'; not enthusiastic'; 'amused', 'earnest', 'indignant' etc.);

(2) 'interactional' tokens - adjectives used to describe discourse or goal related effects (cf. 'approval'; 'final'; 'ambiguous', 'non-involved', 'superficial'; 'unnatural' etc.).

I presume that interpretations involving these vocabularies are closely related to observed textual features of the prosodic kind (see Section 7.1.2), where such features include marked variations of pitch , tempo, loudness, articulatory setting and timing. For a given speaker, use of marked features of this type (i.e. other than those the speaker usually uses) may signal to the listener that the speaker is giving a special attitudinal weight to the utterance. Rost (1990: 79) presents a configuration of some of the vocal cues that have been associated with attitudes of English speakers (see Figure 9.1).

Marked vocal features								
	ps	vr	tmp	ld	vs	as	ap	tm
excited	ext							
pompous	low		slow				prc	
depressed	rst	low		soft			slr	
nervous		rsd	rpd		brt	tense		
shocked	ext	rsd	rpd	loud	brt	tense		ext
affectionate		ext						ext
cold		rst				tense		
thoughtful			slow					
sexy	ext	low	slow	soft	brt		slr	
angry	ext	rsd	rpd	loud		tense	prc	
fearful		rst						

ps = pitch span: extended (ext), restricted (rst), or unmarked

vr = voice range: low, raised (rsd), or unmarked

tmp = tempo: slow, rapid (rpd), or unmarked

ld = loudness: soft, loud, or unmarked

vs = voice setting: breathy (brt) or unmarked

as = articulatory setting: tense or unmarked

ap = articulatory precision: precise (prc), slurred (slr), or unmarked

tm = timing: extended (ext) or unmarked

Figure 9.2

Vocal Cues Associated with Speaker Attitudes

Prosody cues can also provide the basis for weak inferences about speaker meaning, and I consider these in the 'interactional' category. A wide range of evaluative inferences related to both types of key were drawn by the judges in each of the three studies, and these are considered in the sections which follow.

9.5.1 Indexical Tokens

A list of the adjective tokens involved in the description of indexical key are presented in Table 9.18. These include evaluations of participant affectual and attitudinal orientations.

Table 9.18

Tokens Describing Indexical Key

Key Terms	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
acting	–	2	–	2
angry	–	1	–	1
animated	1	3	1	5
bored	–	5	–	5
carefree	–	–	1	1
carried away	–	–	1	1
cheerful	–	1	–	1
complacent	–	–	1	1
confident	–	2	1	3
disinterested	–	2	–	2
dreamy	–	1	–	1
drunk	–	1	–	1
dull	–	1	–	1
eager	1	–	–	1
earnest	–	1	–	1
effacing	1	–	–	1
embarrassed	1	2	2	5
emotional	–	–	2	2
excited	–	–	1	1
fed up	–	1	–	1
flippant	1	1	–	2
forceful	–	–	1	1
friendly	3	3	–	6
funny	–	1	1	2
gentle	–	1	–	1

impatient	–	–	2	2
indignant	–	–	2	2
indulgent	–	–	2	2
inert	–	1	–	1
informal	2	1	–	3
interested	2	4	–	6
irritable	–	–	2	2
jaunty	–	1	–	1
keen	–	–	2	2
lackadaisical	1	–	–	1
laconic	–	1	–	1
liven up	–	1	–	1
modest	2	–	1	3
natural	1	4	1	6
nervous	–	–	1	1
not at ease	1	–	–	1
not bored	–	1	–	1
not fully natural	–	1	–	1
not gentle	–	1	–	1
not genuinely impressed	–	1	–	1
not disinterested	–	1	–	1
not interested	1	–	–	1
not intimate	1	1	–	2
not pleased	–	–	1	1
not posturing	1	–	–	1
not relaxed	2	–	–	2
not sympathetic	–	2	–	2
passive	1	–	–	1
paternal	1	1	–	2
pick up	–	1	–	1
pissed	–	1	–	1
platitudinous	–	–	1	1
playful	–	–	1	1
polite	1	–	1	2
pretty indignant	–	–	1	1
quiet	–	13	–	13
relaxed	3	2	2	7
reticent	–	1	–	1
semi-serious	–	1	–	1
serious	1	1	–	2
surprised	–	1	–	1
surprisingly serious	–	1	–	1
sympathetic	–	1	–	1
tired	–	1	–	1
unhappy	–	1	–	1
unhelpful	–	1	–	1
weary	–	1	–	1
Total	29	78	32	139

The table includes 74 different tokens, which generated a total of 139 references. Just over half of this total were elicited in Study 2, where the stimulus fragments provided relatively few contextualisation cues. I presume this lack of context may have affected the kinds of comment judges made. However, only a small group of tokens produced over 5 references or more. These were in descending order of number:

Table 9.19

Most Frequent Indexical Tokens

Tokens	Number
quiet	13
relaxed	7
friendly	6
interested	6
natural	6
animated	5
bored	5
embarrassed	5

Only one of the tokens from this group ('bored') appears in Crystal's (1969) list of Twenty labels which he used to try and establish what range of labels native speakers would apply to any given intonation pattern. Crystal's list includes the following labels, which were "chosen from general use" (Crystal, 1969: 297):

> excited; dismayed; haughty ; puzzled; angry; amused; matter of fact; precise; disapproving; pleased; bored; questioning; vexed; apologetic; conspiratorial; worried; impatient; satisfied; grim; irritated.

A further two items ('excited'; and 'angry' - also cited in Rost's list above) appeared in the response data, but these only received one reference each. The most obvious prosodic effect judges seem to be sensitive to is 'loudness', since there were 13 uses of the token 'quiet'. More systematic work would have to be

undertaken, however, in order to try and determine which other intonation contrasts correlate with the tokens that judges provided. The problem, of course, is that the interpretations are not always related to specific utterances (cf. the interpretive work presented in the following section and in Chapter 10), but are ascribed to participant attitudes in a very general way. Crystal (1969) clearly recognised this difficulty in his own work when he noted:

> What I consider to be the most important difficulty in the matter of the semantic analysis of intonation ... is the problem of which descriptive labels to use to refer to the attitudinal effects being signalled by the prosodic and paralinguistic complexes. (Crystal, 1969: 294)

Perhaps a more fruitful line of inquiry would be to consider the labels in terms of strategies that are linked to impression management in talk, that is, where individuals are considered "to present themselves in a socially acceptable manner (e.g. friendly, polite) or in ways consistent with their ideal selves (e.g. independent, knowledgeable)" (Street and Capella, 1985: 252). Third person judges could be given sets of tokens derived from studies of the kind that I have conducted, and then asked which of them apply to the individuals who have participated in the same stimulus data for instance.

9.5.2 Interactional Tokens

Evaluations of interactional key involve interpretive responses that describe different discourse or goal related effects. Table 9.20 presents the list of 99 tokens that were used by judges, and these generated a total of 149 references.

Table 9.20

Tokens Describing Interactional Key

Key Terms	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
adjective phrases				
accusing tone	–	–	1	1
affected	–	2	1	3
ambiguous	1	–	–	1
amusement	–	4	2	6
anticipation	–	1	–	1
approval	1	–	–	1
artificial	–	2	1	3
authentic	–	–	1	1
casual	1	2	–	3
changes mood	–	1	–	1
changes tone	–	–	1	1
comes out too easily	–	1	–	1
complacent	–	–	1	1
confident	–	2	1	3
conspiratorial tone	–	1	–	1
contrived	–	1	–	1
conversational	2	–	1	3
cutting	–	1	–	1
despair	–	1	–	1
different attitude	–	1	–	1
disguised neutrality	–	1	–	1
disillusioned	1	–	–	1
dramatic	–	–	1	1
emotional agreement	–	1	–	1
emotionally involved	–	–	1	1
emphatic	–	–	1	1
enjoyment	–	–	1	1
expressionless	–	2	2	4
expression	–	1	1	2
false	–	2	–	2
false modesty	–	1	–	1
firmer	–	3	–	3
flat	–	2	1	3
forceful	–	–	1	1
formal	1	1	1	3
futile	–	1	1	2
guarded	–	1	–	1
has shades	1	–	–	1
hesitant	2	1	–	3
humorous	2	1	5	8

humourless	–	–	2	2
intimate	1	2	–	3
ironic	1	–	–	1
low key	–	1	–	1
meaningless	–	2	–	2
middle class warmth	–	–	1	1
mild sort of modesty	–	–	1	1
mock sincerity	–	–	1	1
neutral	–	1	–	1
no conviction	–	1	–	1
no emotional emphasis	–	1	–	1
no real emotion	–	–	1	1
no surprise	1	–	1	2
non-committal	–	1	–	1
non-involved	1	–	–	1
non-threatening	–	1	–	1
not aggressive	–	1	–	1
not common	1	–	–	1
not convincing	1	–	–	1
not fully natural	–	1	–	1
not ringing true	–	–	1	1
not spontaneous	1	–	1	2
overdone	–	1	–	1
overemphasised	–	1	–	1
peculiar	–	3	–	3
pedantic	1	–	–	1
personal	–	2	–	2
pleasurable satisfaction	–	1	–	1
put more life in	–	1	–	1
quite involved	–	–	1	1
racy	–	–	1	1
restrained excitement	–	–	1	1
revel in	–	–	1	1
sarcastic delight	–	1	–	1
semi-serious	–	1	–	1
sense of wonder	–	1	–	1
serious	1	1	–	2
spontaneous	1	–	–	1
stilted	1	–	1	2
subterfuge	–	–	1	1
superficial	1	–	1	2
superfluous	–	1	–	1
surprisingly emphatic	-	1	–	1
tentative	–	1	–	1
thoughtless	1	–	–	1
throwaway	1	–	–	1
traumatic	–	–	1	1
uncertain	–	1	–	1
unconscious	1	–	–	1
underlying assumption	1	–	–	1
understated	–	1	–	1

unease	3	–	–	3
unemphatic	–	1	–	1
unimportant	1	–	–	1
unsaid	1	–	–	1
unspoken agreement	–	1	–	1
vague	–	1	–	1
vehement	–	–	1	1
without conviction	–	1	–	1
Total	33	72	44	149

Many of these references involve glossing work in which judges were able to cite particular utterances or topical segments and then offer their own interpretations of associated message effects. Examples of this type of interpretive work are found in each of the three exploratory studies, and include comments such as:

Study 1

Participant B
I can't believe it sounds good
it sounds bloody boring
there is something tentative and final
about the way it comes out

Judge 2
really is ambiguous
it's not convincing
it had shades

Judge 6
he said bone fide person
I didn't like it
it had underlying assumptions
it was thoughtless
a throwaway
Hall introduces the thing by saying
tell me about your life
it's non-involved

Judge 9
when he says it sounds good there is approval

Judge 10
there is humour when they talk about tax
there are polite comments like
oh that looks nice

Judge 13
he said bona fide person
it was a serious thing
about being serious

The veracity of such evaluations may be checked with the participants, but it seems to be the case that different individuals are likely to provide their own idiosyncratic interpretations of key, even where the same utterances are cited. Compare the rather negative comments of Participant B, who suggests that on playback the locution "it sounds good" sounds to him: 'boring'; 'tentative; and 'final', with those of Judge 9 who interprets the same locution in a positive way by suggesting that it signals 'approval'. In the same way, Judge 6 suggests that the phrase "bona fide person" is 'thoughtless' and 'a throwaway', while Judge 9 considers that 'it was a serious thing about being serious'. The substantive differences in interpretation here presumably stem from individual and social differences in the interpreters themselves.

The indeterminacy of speaker intent in single utterances and the possibility that speaker acts may have more than one intent, or indeed, an ambiguous intent is a very complex issue (see, for example, Thomas, 1983). Consequently, I intend to deal with the kinds of interpretive multiplexity that are reflected in judges' comments separately. It is this issue which forms the basis for discussion in Chapter 10, where the nature of lay and professional *post hoc* inferencing, with respect to the same stretches of utterance, are the subject of more detailed analysis.

9.6 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered information that judges were able to provide about the stimulus fragments as goal-oriented activity. This 'supratextual' information not only included the types of genre that different exchanges involved, but also a wide range of strategies, goals and attitudes that were associated with both first and second person interactional praxis (cf. the list of listener performance strategies identified by Rost, 1990: 116–117). It is suggested as a result that third person judges must have a highly developed interpretive model of the communicative procedures and processes that participants can employ when language is used in this way.

Of the three informational domains that I identified from the response data, it was this domain (the 'supratextual') that provided by far the largest category of comments. A total of 799 evaluative references were coded within the domain, based on a wide range of descriptive vocabulary. Presumably the more instances of verbal exchange that are used, and the greater the number of judges involved in the playback process, the more extensive this vocabulary would prove to be. Indeed, it seems to me that the methods which I have presented may be further developed in order to provide a lay lexicon and grammar of everyday communicative activities. This work could be used for exploring differences in the kinds of descriptive token that are used by women as opposed to men judges for example, or between individuals from different social backgrounds. It could also be used cross-linguistically to compare the kinds of interpretive work that might be undertaken across and between the speakers of different languages (cf. Metge and Kinloch, 1978; Veronis and Gass, 1985; Knapp et al. 1987; Singh and Lele, 1989). Are similar strategies and goals manifest in the speech activities of speakers of Maori, or French or Tok Pisin? Do speakers of these languages display similar attitudes and affectual orientations?

While these are questions for future rather than the present research, they seem to be worth mooting given the extent and types of response that judges were able to provide about the communicative content of the stimulus fragments. The issue that remains to be explored in the present work is that of interpretive multiplexity, and it this task that forms the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

THIRD PERSON RESPONSES AND INTERPRETIVE MUTLIPLEXITY

10.0 Professional and Lay Responses

This chapter synthesises and develops a subset of the material presented under different headings in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The material involved is taken from analyses of the interpretive responses produced in the course of Study 3. An important part of the rationale for using this material was that the records, provided by Crystal and Davy (1975), were accompanied by "clarifying remarks" (see 5.4). These records are transcribed in ordinary orthography with accompanying analyses of the main prosodic features. Where Crystal and Davy deem it appropriate, students referring to the text are advised of "important prosodic effects that require elucidation in order to clarify what is being signalled". Another important reason for using this material is that 'prosody' was the most commonly observed feature in the textual domain, and 'key' the most commonly evaluated feature in the supratextual domain.

In this chapter, I want to explore two issues emerging specifically from Study 3. These are:

(a) whether the judges I used as informants would comment on the same or similar stretches of utterances and effects, and/or

(b) match the interpretations of the data given by Crystal and Davy.

Before undertaking this exploration, I shall briefly summarise the investigative method that was used in order to pursue this work (see

Section 5.4 above for a fuller account of the approach to data collection used in this study.)

10.1 Investigative Method

In Study 3, the chosen extracts were played on different occasions to eight pairs of judges as outlined in Chapter 4. The idea of using pairs of informants, rather than single individuals, arose because in previous work of this nature, I thought it possible that my personal involvement with individuals might restrict what they had to say. By using pairs of informants, I hoped to minimise my influence as analytic observer and thus encourage greater spontaneity of comment.

> Each pair of informants were given the following verbal instructions:
>
> I am going to play you a number of short extracts of talk which have been tape-recorded. At the end of each extract, I will switch the machine off. If you have any comments to make about the extracts, I would like to note them.

If clarification of these instructions was requested, I simply explained the need not to prejudice the outcome of the research and further assured informants that *any* comments they made would be welcome.

Whilst comments were noted as far as possible, tape-recordings of each session were also made in order to check the accuracy of what was said. Transcript records of each set of comments were made in ordinary orthography to facilitate a comparison of judges' remarks with the Crystal and Davy glosses. The analysis that follows is based on judges' comments for each extract in turn.

10.2 Extract 1

The first extract is taken from Crystal and Davy (1975: 22-23). In this extract, Crystal and Davy note the importance for interpretation of the following prosodic and paralinguistic features in respect of two utterances; both utterances are realised by the same speaker.

Utterance 1

|Leeds 'played SHOCKINGLY | – |worst 'game they ↑ever PLAYED

C&D commentary: Note the husky tone of voice indicative of disparagement.

Utterance 2

|OOH |the |sea of – ↑bodies in front of you ↑MOVING |and people|
'started to PUSH |BE|HIND you |it got| quite FRIGHTENING | cos you|
couldn't have 'done 'anything you'd have been| absolutely ↑HELPLESS|

C&D commentary: Note the extra prosodic features as C gets more involved in his story, marked glissando movement, and increasing speed towards the end.

The following comments, in respect of these two utterances, were produced in the response data.

Pair 1
shockingly really stood out
yeah
it sounded really affected
it was the way he said it
shockingly

In both realisations of the word 'shockingly', the judge attempted an itation of the original. A fuller prosodic and paralinguistic analysis of the

utterance concerned reveals that 'shockingly' carries: (a) a wide falling nuclear tone, (b) receives a high booster at onset, (c) is drawled on the first syllable and (d) has the paralinguistic feature "husky". A comparison of the imitations with the model utterance is interesting in terms of the features by which the judges realised it. The nature of the glosses, and the fact of the imitation, suggest that the co-occurrence of prosodic and paralinguistic features in the original utterance is intentional, that is, both in respect of the signalling the speaker's intentions and his determination to gain the attention of his audience. Notice too that one of the pairing also makes a bare judgement about the effect of this realisation, at least from her own point of view ("it sounded really affected"). This comment may be compared to the remarks of the second pair of judges in respect of the second utterance. Pair 1, by the way, made no reference to the second utterance and Pair 2 made no reference to the first.

Pair 2
all those people
and it got quite frightening
didn't sound natural at all

Perhaps this remark is responding to what C&D note as "C getting more involved in his story", though to what extent we could claim that the extra prosodic features are integral to the interpretation 'non-natural sounding' is problematic. However, we can speculate that since one of the judges in the first pairing considered that 'shockingly' sounded affected and at a different point one of the judges from the second pairing judged that what was said did not sound natural, the comments offered are presumably based on the relative quality of these notions based on judges' own interactional experience, either real or imagined.

How judges apply the nature of this experience in making the evaluations that they did is not obvious, but suggests the use of some kind of inferencing framework which is sociolinguistically based. What the analyst considers is communicatively significant, for example, may differ from the judges' sense of what is communicatively significant because of the different roles that they fulfil as an 'interpreter'. The comments offered by Crystal and Davy must be determined, at least in part, by their sense of what it is to be professional linguistic analysts. What they have to say, as a result, is likely to be governed by their knowledge of the situation and of the individuals whose talk they seek to characterise.

However, in playback, one of the analysts commented as follows:

Study 3 (Participants)

Judge B
one guy almost in spite of the other
was trying to comment factually on the game
the other one was expressing his reactions
to overcrowding and so on
I also still feel that the one of them
who's commenting emotionally on it
although he uses one or two emotional terms
and expressive locutions
gets across a lot of his meaning
by exaggerated intonation patterns
he seems more excitable about the whole thing

These comments are worth comparing with those of Pair 3 who seem to make very similar points about the emotional (key) involvement of the participant concerned (see Section 9.5.1). This pair also noted a difference in interactional behaviour between the participants. They said:

Pair 3
a guy who was trying to make a point kept saying
it was really quite frightening
it was like talking to somebody who wasn't

really listening
he kept repeating things

they're talking about Chelsea and Leeds
he didn't sound so pleased about it
he said Leeds played shockingly
like he had an interest in it

he was quite vehement about it when
he said Leeds played shockingly

at one point it seems that they're not talking
about the same thing
one guy is talking about the gates
and the other is talking about the sea of bodies

the second guy is quite sympathetic
and doesn't seem to know what it is like
the other guy has kind of experienced it all

While these comments report in part what was actually said, they also involve comments that are imposed upon the data. The first member of the pairing suggests that "it was like talking to somebody who wasn't really listening". The second member guesses that the speaker had "an interest" in the way in which Leeds played and whilst one of the speakers is judged to be "quite sympathetic" to the story that is being related, he does not "seem to know what it was like". The speaker's interlocutor, on the other hand, is sensed as having "kind of experienced it all". These attributions of speaker involvement are remarkable because they also seem to match the C&D gloss.

C&D, for example, note "disparagement" in C's tone of voice. Compare the sense of "displeasure" and emotional content, with respect to the topic of conversation, reported by the judges. Though "vehement" goes rather beyond the notion of "disparagement", the adjective does suggest that the utterance concerned has been invested with a particular emotional stance.

Indeed, C's "sense of involvement" (C&D) is clearly established for at least one of the judges in the pairing because he is described as "if he's kind of experienced it all".

These comments may be compared with those offered by the fourth pairing who were both to describe the communicative effect of 'shockingly'.

> Pair 4
> he was definitely posh when he said shockingly
> I wouldn't have said that
> I thought he was a Northerner

The nature of these comments is worth comparing with Pair 1 ("It sounded affected") and Pair 5 below ("I loved his expression of the word shockingly. It sort of represented upper bourgeoisie middle class"). The reactions of the judges here suggest a degree of sociolinguistic stereotyping which may relate to the backgrounds of the judges concerned (see 8.5.2). All three judges who remarked on the varietal "affectedness" of 'shockingly' came from London. Of these three, the informants from Pair 1 and Pair 4 were both speakers of Cockney or localised London speech, whilst the informant from Pair 5 was an RP speaker. The second member of Pair 4, who contradicted the judgement offered by her partner, came from Southport on Merseyside. In terms of accuracy, it is the notion of "northerness" which comes closest to identifying the region of origin of the speaker. Crystal and Davy (1975: 19) inform us, "C is a primary school teacher, who has lived in Berkshire for many years, but whose accent has remained predominantly that of his county origin, Yorkshire". This information also gives C's occupation as primary school teacher, which presumably does not generally carry the stereotypes of "poshness" or indeed "upper bourgeoisie middle class". Since the judges who made these statements did not know the individual(s) concerned, the attribution of

non-linguistic information of this kind has to be based purely on guess work. The guesses, as in this case, are often wrong but indicate the willingness of judges to generalise about who and what the speakers are. It is perhaps interesting to note that the judge who attributes a negative class stereotype to the speaker was in fact a social worker and may have been reflecting her own personal/professional judgemental norms in assessing C as she does.

However, despite the disagreement between the members of Pair 4, they do seem to concur in their assessment that there was something "odd" about the realisation of 'shockingly'. Their response to the second utterance, 'it got quite frightening', is comparable to the remarks made by Pair 2 about the same utterance (cf. Pair 2, "it got frightening didn't sound natural at all" and Pair 4, "quite frightening sounded quite artificial"). The artificiality, in this case, is attributed to a stylistic rather than varietal source. One informant from Pair 4 explained, "quite frightening actually sounded quite artificial, as if he was reading it rather than speaking". The notion of 'naturalness' was also implicit in the remarks made by Pair 5 about the realisation of 'shockingly'.

Pair 5
I loved his expression of the word shockingly (imitated)
it sort of represented upper bourgeoisie middle class

yes
it's inflected
shockingly (imitated)

m m
he certainly emphasises the word
doesn't he

While the speaker is judged to be marking the utterance in some fairly obvious way for both these judges, the markedness is not specified as being 'disparaging' as C&D suggest.

Indeed, Pair 5 were to further contradict the glosses offered by C&D and who consider that the extra prosodic markers here are indicative of 'greater involvement'. Pair 5 said:

> Pair 5
> he was talking about a situation
> which he considered frightening
> and yet there didn't seem to be any real emotion

This remark would seem to suggest that the set of cues marking "involvement" are not only to be interpreted from C&D's point of view. Perhaps then, C&D's gloss is based on something more than the interpretation of the features specified in their analysis.

10.3 Extract 2

The second extract was taken from Crystal and Davy (1975: 40). The utterance that C&D comment on is realised by Speaker A.

|\OH |it was RE|\VOLTING|| oh they were ↑\TERRIBLE |the |\PIGS| they made a |dreadful ↑row in the ↑\MORNING|

> C&D commentary: Glissando pitch movement is very expressive of A's intense feelings here. It occurs at various places during the extract.

Judges' comments reveal that four out of the seven pairs were to describe A's contribution as 'excited'. In so far as 'excitement' may be thought of as 'intense feeling', there is general agreement with the gloss provided by the analysts.

Pair 1
there's a sense of excitement
it gets faster as she gets carried away
it's very animated

While Pair 1 link this sense of 'excitement' to the effect it has on the speaker's 'speed' of delivery, Pair 3 attribute the 'excitement' to exocentric strategies that are used to establish and maintain positive face (see 9.4.3).

Pair 3
it's the sort of tone of voice you use
where you're trying to engage people
you know
you are trying to interest

excitement in her voice made it seem
as if it was going to be terribly amusing
but it never really finished

For this pair, prosody would seem to be salient in helping to signal that the speaker, on the one hand, is 'trying to engage' and 'trying to interest' her audience and that on the other, she is preparing to tell 'an amusing story'. Notice that the second judge is prepared to evaluate the communicative success of the story telling by remarking that "it seemed as if it were going to be terribly amusing but it never really finished". This evaluation is presumably based on the judge's notion of what constitutes the successful telling of an 'amusing' narrative (see 9.1.1–9.1.2).

The comments of Pair 4 and Pair 6 are comparable to those offered by Pair 1 and Pair 3 respectively. Both Pair 4 and Pair 6 remarked that the sense of 'excitement' was linked to a perceived increase in speed.

Pair 4
it's a racy sort of exciting delivery
she sort of gabbles it out

it's fastly said
bubbly

The nature of A's delivery is, however, further evaluated by one of the judges from Pair 6 as "a very immature kind of speech". Indeed, her speech style is evaluated as 'lecturing', because she is interpreted as 'trying to hard to interest' her audience (see 9.1.1).

Pair 6
it's a very immature kind of speech
she sounded as if she was giving a lecture
and was trying too hard to get their interest

More detailed prosodic analysis of the utterance in question reveals that there is considerable speech variation to 'allegro' as well as a step up in pitch. The 'widened' pitch range with the feature 'glissando', mentioned by C&D, would seem to account for the following remarks which relate to the extract in general.

Pair 7
she uses different expressions in her voice
and emphasises some things
she is laughing kind of playfully
as if she is sort of excited by it

The notion of 'playful humour' can be compared with the remarks of Pair 3 who said "it seemed as if it were going to be terribly amusing but it never really finished". Pair 5 also report 'humour', but this is related to the nature and quality of the speaker's voice as much as anything else (see 7.1.2).

Pair 5
there is a kind of lightness in her voice
and a definite raising in pitch
it was a very speedy delivery
suggestive of humour

Again the communicative effect of these features seems to be open to interpretation, though judges' comments were not always evaluative. One judge from Pair 2, for example, simply observed:

> Pair 2
> her voice pitch ranged very widely

The comments given for this extract indicate something of the judges' ability to not only describe the kind of prosodic criteria that may be of salience for listeners in interpreting the talk of others (cf. the vocabularies that are discussed in 7.1.2), but also their willingness to evaluate the communicative effect of the utterance. Different inferences are obviously likely to be made about different kinds of exchange and the nature and detail of comments offered would seem to be partially determined by what judges found to be of interest in the exchanges they listened to. We must therefore consider both what judges did and did not say about the extracts they listened to as is clear from their remarks about the third exchange in the series.

10.4 Extract 3

Extract three was taken from Crystal and Davy (1975: 41). Crystal and Davy comment on two utterances taken from this exchange. The first utterance with accompanying commentary is as follows:

Utterance 1

|Enfield's en↑viron↑mental STUDY 'centre|

C&D commentary: Note that B pronounces the noun phrase *Enfield's environmental study centre* with a mock refined accent, perhaps because she feels she has introduced a note of academic formality into the conversation.

The second utterance is realised later in the extract and is spoken by B.

Utterance 2

|this large slobbering PIG |was al|lowed OUT|·| into the MUD|

C&D commentary: An expressive description, with tempo variation playing the main part in producing the effect (note especially the clipped syllable in mud).

The 'mock refined accent' which Crystal and Davy describe is not referred to by the judges as such. Perhaps this is because of different regional norms relating to the stereotyping of particular varieties; though recall the comment of Pair 4 and Pair 5 about speaker A in the first extract. C&D seem to be suggesting that the speaker on this occasion affects a hypercorrection of her own variety in order to "introduce a note of academic formality". The comments which were given about the speaker do not specifically mention the hypercorrection but they do suggest regional and class stereotypes that are judged to characterise her speech (see 8.5.2).

Three pairs of judge were to attribute prestige or status to the variety. They were Pair 1, who came from London and Bradford (Yorkshire), Pair 6, who came from Banbury (Oxfordshire) and Edmonston (Nottinghamshire) and Pair 7, who came from London and Macclesfield (Cheshire). All of these judges used localised rather than RP varieties of English. Their comments were:

Pair 1
I get that middle class aura about it
there isn't much accent
I'd say it was Southern

Pair 6
she is much more genteel in speech
than the other two

there is almost no dialect at all
very little inflection

Pair 7
this is the aspiring middle class I think
they have got quite a high status
there are traces of background

it sounded pretty middle class
Midlands
middle of the road
they have some intellectual status

The kind of stereotyping these comments reflect has no doubt as much to do with other features of the exchange (phonological, syntactic, lexical) as it has to do with non-segmental features but they are no less interesting for that. I draw attention to the remarks of Pair 1 and Pair 6 in particular because of how they attempt to locate the speaker in terms of regional origin (see Section 8.5.2–1). The judge from Bradford comments "there isn't much accent". Establishing where the speaker comes from is consequently problematic and the judge applies the general label 'Southern' in contrast to her own speech of 'Northern'. The other judge from Pair 6 said "there is very little dialect at all, very little inflection". This judge came from Cheshire. His perception of dialect is presumably taken as a measure of the fact that the speaker concerned is using a variety which he finds difficult to try and localise. The judge goes on to suggest that the lack of dialect can be accounted for at least in part by the relative lack of inflection in the voice. To what extent the judge is relating this perception to his own use of non-segmental phonology is unclear (the degree of intonational variation between judge and speaker were not that marked to my ears). However, the judge had spent the last two years of his life in Newcastle upon Tyne and it is possible that his judgement was based on a comparison with Tyneside

speech where he might have perceived much more inflectional variety than in the South.

Compare now the comments of the judge from Pair 7 who characterised the variety as "Midlands, middle of the road". This judgement is wrong, since the speaker came from Liverpool (Crystal and Davy, 1975: 39). However, the other participant was in fact from the Midlands. As a result, the judge may have assumed that they both originated from the same area, an area which he was not unfamiliar with, since he came from Maclesfield in Cheshire.

These attempts to specify the speakers regional background seem to be closely related to other non-linguistic information that is provided by the same three pairs of judges. The speaker is judged to be 'genteel' (Pair 6) and 'aspiring middle class', and 'pretty middle class'. Pair 1 suggest that the exchange has that 'middle class aura' about it. Regional background and socio-economic status are further associated with stereotypes of prestige (Pair 7). The speakers are judged to have 'quite high status', they have 'traces of background', and 'some kind of intellectual status'. The social-psychological attitudes that may have prompted this assessment appear to be shared by the three pairs. The six judges involved were all University students and some kind of group norm may be being exhibited here. However, the extent to which such non-linguistic information is central to what goes on in some particular interaction is uncertain, and has not received as much attention as that fact that British people tend to derive such information about their interlocutors as a natural consequence of our everyday behaviour. Speaker A is described by C&D as "a housewife". The other female participant was also "a housewife who does some primary teaching". The two male

participants were the spouses of the women and are both university teachers (see Section 8.5.2–2).

The second utterance that C&D comment on concerns the description of pigs and prompts them to describe the speakers realisation as 'expressive'. The tempo variation which they mention was remarked upon by one judge. He said:

> Pair 1
> it was a bit slow
> with some bits slower than others

Another judge described the utterances as a very dramatic presentation. This sense of drama was shared by one other judge, who proposed that the speaker was using non-linguistic cues. She commented:

> Pair 5
> I think I imagine her using her hands a lot
> when she said *large pig*
> I could imagine her saying how big it was

A different interpretation was supplied by Pair 7:

> Pair 7
> again she was trying to impress people
> with her wit with her way of saying things
> like her emphasis on the words *mud* and *pig*

This interpretation is linked to the status enhancing strategy of 'trying to impress' (see 9.4.3).

10.5 Extract 4

Extract 4 is taken from C&D (1975: 59). The commentary for this extract involves the use of a single word which is used twice in the exchange with different degrees of stress and a falling tone.

↑HOWEVER|

C&D commentary "however": used to indicate a return to the main theme.

The use of 'however' was remarked upon by the five out of the seven pairs of non-participant judges (see 7.2.1).

Pair 1
however receives emphatic stress

she just dismisses his argument
and his interruptions
however (imitated)
as if she wasn't going to listen to him any more

These comments suggest that in communicative terms, the judges interpret the effect of "however" as an intentional strategy to 'dismiss' or 'ignore' the speaker's interruption (see Section 9.3). It is not only that the speaker is held to be dismissive, but also that she seems determined to maintain her turn even at the expense of ignoring her interlocutors. The same communicative effect is suggested by Pair 2 who said:

Pair 2
I noticed the way she said however
whenever somebody did interrupt her
she just continued
and said however
and then just continued
she didn't want her flow to be interrupted

For this pair the speaker is judged to use the word 'however' as a means of revoking any attempt to take over her turn and also to indicate that she does not wish to be interrupted. In order to hold the floor she has to dismiss any attempt to take over the turn space. She does this by 'chopping him off at the knees' (Participant Judge B); 'refusing to listen' (Pair 4) and by 'refusing to be sidetracked' (Pair 5).

Judge B
the most striking thing is the way
she cuts the other chap off
who is her husband
she really chops him off at the knees
and shuts him up
like a wittering academic

Pair 4
every time he tried to interrupt
she kept going
she kept saying however
she is not going to listen to him
however she says (imitated)

Pair 5
there again you've got this woman telling the story
and she's not prepared to give in on the story
despite various comments
which could sidetrack her from the discussion
she seems to be ignoring them
a couple of times she just sort of talked over him

The use of "however" is also interpreted as a means of signalling the speaker's determination to continue her turn and that she will continue until she decides to relinquish it (see 9.3.1). Pair 3, 4, and 7 commented:

> Pair 3
> earlier on where he says
> the whole place will be over run with mice
> she cuts him off with however
> every time he tried to interrupt her
> she just kept going
> her husband tries to get in a few times
> and is summarily dismissed

The strategy 'dismiss' or 'ignore' is achieved in a number of different ways according to these comments. It is achieved by 'refusing' to yield the turn; thus the speaker can continue talking and actively rebut attempts to take over the turn slot. It can be achieved by 'ignoring' attempts to take over

the turn slot, and it can be achieved by intimating that the turn slot is not negotiable. The difficulty for the analyst is to decide which of these strategies is most likely to have led to the communicative sequence that resulted. Comments such as the above may help to establish which assessment is more likely. As analysts, we do not have to be right, but perhaps more circumspect in the analyses we offer.

C&D also comment on the communicative key that is used by A later in the same extract.

|·|I'm st· I'm |being FÀCTUAL DĀVID|

C&D commentary: Note the effect of the level tone as the second element of a compound tone: a 'warning' is introduced into the dialogue. A presumably wants to get on with the story, and not be side-tracked into a point of detail: the tone is one of mild irritation.

As one of the authors, Crystal intimates that he was a participant in this particular exchange and reports that 'a warning' is introduced into the dialogue because he recognises the speakers tone from previous interactions.

Both Participant judges commented on this segment as follows:

Judge A
it sounds as if she is being very factual
which is what she er said to him
that she was being absolutely factual

Judge B
yeah you can um
you can visualise the situation from
the detail she gives

Judge A
m m

Judge B
which is very precise in accounting
one particular story

Although the speaker's attitude was not mentioned by this pairing, her strategic behaviour is interpreted as being strongly dissociative ('she chops him off at the knees'; 'she shuts him up'). Presumably, it is this behaviour that leads to the characterisations "a battleaxe" (Participant B) and "a rather fearful woman to encounter" (Participant A). These comments strike me as being very similar in kind to those offered by one of the non-participant judges from Pair 5 who said:

Pair 5
the thing that struck me
was the way she dictated the conversation
she was a bit kind of women's lib

However, rather than 'mild irritation', the non-participant judges tended to suggest that A's attitude was more emotively marked. Compare:

Pair 2
she sounds indignant
the man kept trying to break in
and contradict her
she kept just not listening
and carrying on
which is infuriating for a person
the man had no control over her irritated burst

The indexical key here is judged to be 'indignant', although like the participant evaluations the supraxtextual strategies (see Section 9.4.1) are clearly interpreted as dissociative ('trying to break in'; 'contradict'; 'not listening'; 'carrying on'). The consequences of these strategies for the exchange are that speaker's interlocutor is viewed as having "no control over her irritated burst". The key of 'indignation' is also reported by Pair 3.

Pair 3
she was very indignant with the bloke
and keen to get on with the story

The notion that she is "keen to get on with the story" provides evidence in support of C&D's claim that she is "not going to be sidetracked into a point of detail".

Pair 4 use the adjectives 'excited', 'nagging', and 'dogmatic' rather than 'indignation', and the speaker is evaluated as someone who "definitely knows that she wants".

Pair 4
her voice gets more excited
when he starts interrupting
she sounded nagging really
she makes it more dogmatic
she definitely knows what she wants
and what she wants is to get on with her story

Pair 5 suggest that the tone stems from habit of story-telling, and that she treats her audience like children.

Pair 5
it sounds to me as if she has told the story
several times
it's almost as if she is telling a bedtime story
to the children
they are going to listen and that is that

While Pair 6 suggest that as part of the detailed account she provides, the speaker is "trying to get over the point very forcefully".

Pair 6
she seemed to be trying to get over the point
very forcefully
she gives a very detailed account of what
the mice were doing

What is being described in this type of comment seems to me to be directly associated with the speaker's interactional goals (see Section 9.4).

10.6 Extract 5

The fifth extract was taken from Crystal and Davy (1975: 75) and involved the following exchange. The utterance that is glossed by C&D was realised by Speaker B.

|ÒH |but I |"DÒ believe in FÁIRIES|

C&D commentary: The louder and slower pronunciation signals the quotation.

The participant pairing commented as follows:

> Participant B
> it struck me as sounding very natural
> like um natural story telling
> there's no sense that she's playing for effect
> it's all being done in a natural story-telling
> kind of way
>
> Participant A
> that's right
> even to when she imitates the um
> the Susie voice

Four of the non-participant pairs also commented on the realisation of this utterance. Pair 1 observed the use of 'emphasis' and 'repetition'.

> Pair 1
> she was very emphatic
> when she was repeating the story
> and what the little girl said

Pair 2, on the other hand, considered that the speaker's use of intonation was 'excessive', but deliberately so in order to render an imitation of a child's voice.

Pair 2
she was excessive in her use of intonation
she uses it mainly to imitate the child
oh but I do she says (imitated by the judge)

Pair 5 thought the key was 'expressive' rather than 'excessive'.

Pair 5
there is more expression in her voice
when she imitates the child
it's very expressive
when she changes her tone

it's not just the tone though
it's just the way she emphasises things

There was some disagreement about whether the speaker intended the imitation. Participant Judge A, for example, considered that the speaker was being 'natural' and 'unaffected'.

Judge B
it struck me as sounding very natural
like um natural story telling
there's no sense that she's playing for effect
it's all being done in a natural story-telling

Pair 6, by way of comparison, suggest that the imitation is intentional because it is marked stylistically. The effect of the imitation is judged as being 'self-indulgent'.

Pair 6
it's a story telling voice.
she really loves story telling.
she establishes an effect upon the audience
I do believe in fairies (imitated)

yes
she becomes emotionally involved with it
it's also a very indulgent way of speaking
she talks very indulgently about the child

A more detailed analysis of the utterance reveals that it is not only slower and louder but also makes use of wide fall rises, extra strong stress on do and is accompanied by the paralinguistic features 'whisper', 'tremulousness' and 'giggle'. The effect of these features is judged to be 'greater emotional involvement' and the fact that speaker is adjudged to be using a story telling voice. This voice is evaluated in terms of those qualities that are perceived to be good story telling. Individual taste and/or preference would seem to be the determining factor here and the speaker is evaluated both positively and negatively in this regard. (cf. the comments of Pair 1 and Pair 5 with those of Pair 2 and Pair 6). What is of salience for C&D on the other hand is not so much the qualities of the speaker as a story teller, but the fact that she uses specific features to indicate that she is now 'quoting' what was actually said for narrative purposes (see 9.1.1–9.1.2).

10.7 Extract 6

The final extract judges were asked to listen to was taken from Crystal and Davy (1975: 78) in which C&D comment on the following utterance.

|NO\ |but you |KNOW\ what I MEAN/| i it to |ME/ | it's |ALWAYS\ been a con'fession of 'failure|

C&D commentary: Note the change in speed as C tries to make a serious point.

The change in speed was not noted by any of the non-participants. However, the speaker's attempts to make a serious point drew the attention and comments of three pairs of judges. Pair 1 said:

> Pair 1
> having talked about beer and sex
> they go back to the argument again
> they say no but seriously

reinforcing the fact that I've thought about this for years

This comment is notable because either the judge has misheard what was said, the quotation does not match the actual words used, or the judge is interpreting the message effect of C's locution as "now I am being serious". The speakers change of attitude is also linked to the change in the topic of conversation:

Pair 1
having talked about beer and sex
they go back to the argument again.

Pair 4 suggest that the speaker makes use of a status enhancing strategy ('give off very high flown ideas') in order to satisfy his goal of 'achieving agreement' (see Section 9.4.2).

Pair 4
he's giving off very high flown ideas
he wants others to agree with him

A very similar interpretation is offered by Pair 6, but notice the speaker is interpreted as having achieved his goal.

Pair 6
he is trying to come over as the educated
opinion on these things
and his mates agree with him

Given the number of possible functions of the utterance suggested here, the problem facing the analyst is to decide what function is most operative at the time of utterance. Is the speaker 'giving off high flown ideas'? Is he 'trying to come across as the educated opinion'? Is he 'attempting to make a serious point'? The fact that these possibilities arise, seems to merit serious consideration. Indeed, any theory of utterance interpretation has to take these differences in interpretation into account if the interactional and

communicative functions of everyday language use are to be more fully understood.

10.8 Discussion and Conclusion

By presenting the interpretive comments of third person judges and comparing them with the conceptualisations offered by C&D, I want to highlight the problem of interpretation that I introduced in Chapter 3. 3. In the absence of an adequate framework for providing such conceptualisations, and without other supporting evidence, it seems to me that the analyst will always run the risk of falsifying or simplifying the data. One must take great care to distinguish between participant and non-participant perspectives in this regard, however, as I intimated earlier (see 3.3).

Participants can always seek ratification of what has been said or what has been understood, but this possibility does not exist for third persons. In attributing the kinds of information that they did, it is also important to remember that judges' comments may only involve a low level frame analysis of what was believed to be going on. While the ways in which participant judges assess these possibilities is difficult to ascertain, the use of playback enables something of these possibilities to be explored from a *post hoc* perspective.

What seems to be evident from the commentaries is that different interpretations about the communicative content of verbal exchange are quite normal. These differences partially stem from the fact that it is impossible to draw judges into the same interpretive framework without directing their attention in some artificial and predetermined way. But even

hen it might be argued that judges were attending to the same or similar retches of the fragment, different interpretations of particular utterance gments were often provided. I offer the following possible reasons as to hy these differences might occur.

First, it is possible that contextualisation cues are differently ranked with spect to one another by different judges. Second, it is possible that such ues are differently interpreted as to their cooccurrence. Third, it is possible iat their communicative effects are differently 'understood'. And finally, iese differences in interpretation must surely be related to the individual nd social differences that exist between judges. The differences I have in iind include:

(a) judges' familiarity with the participants used in the stimulus material;

(b) varying regional and social norms concerning the perception and attribution of different stereotypes across and between judges (e.g. social networks, education, status, sex);

(c) varying social and psychological histories (e.g. judges' age, sex, socio-economic background)

(d) different interpretations of the investigative task, in terms of judges expectations about what I wanted them to say;

(e) the relative willingness of judges to comment at all, whether on the basis of stereotype memory or invention;

(f) differences in informant roles and analytic knowledge between lay and professional judges.

here is also the possibility raised by Labov and Fanshel (1977: 46) who note:

> In our view, the lack of clarity or discreteness in the intonational signals is not an unfortunate limitation of this channel, but an essential and important aspect of it. Speakers need a form of communication that is deniable.

If "one routinely presumes on mutual understanding that doesn't quite exist", as Goffman (1976: 261) assumes, then great care needs to be taken in any kind of interpretive work that involves the study of everyday verbal communication. What this care involves is presumably the recognition of talk as an ostensive-inferential process, a process that enables participants to present and negotiate their social and communicative goals. Given the interpretive differences that I have presented in this chapter, the role of the listener has to be incorporated as a crucial part of this process. This role can only be satisfactorily explored in the context of a sociolinguistics which incorporates a theory of listener effect, and the kinds of interpretive diversity that can result.

CHAPTER 11

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

11.0 A Brief Retrospective

The research that I have presented in this thesis has sought to investigate ordinary members' descriptions about what is communicated when language is used in everyday verbal communication. Such an investigation has required a methodology that is significantly different from other linguistic and sociolinguistic traditions which seek to investigate everyday language use, and consequently was based on an approach that deals directly with issues arising from the ability of speakers to interact. The methodology used for this purpose was based on third person descriptions of actual verbal encounters that were elicited in the course of 'playback'. These descriptions were then used to generate hypotheses about the kinds of interpretive capacity that judges must have utilised in order to provide the descriptions.

Following a general introduction, Chapter 2 began by reviewing contemporary developments in the study of talk which have argued for the recognition of verbal communication as (a) an inferential process, and (b) action-oriented behaviour, that is, behaviour which is purposively organised in the pursuit of communicative goals or ends. It is now widely accepted that human language is only useful or practical to the extent that it ministers to such goals, but the problem for analysts is that what gets communicated cannot be recovered directly as language is being used, because talk is embedded in oral sequences that are automatic, context and time bound.

The methodological challenge of exploring the communicative process was therefore taken up in Chapter 3, where systematic investigation of third person interpretive capacity, and especially that of ordinary members, was called for as part of the investigative armoury that would-be-analysts might call upon in order to warrant claims about what speakers might be said to be doing as talk is in progress. To this end, modern electronic technology has provided a mechanism whereby talk can be recorded and inspected *post hoc*. However, although a great many examples of conversational exchange have been collected, transcribed and analysed in such a way as to provide information about the management and structure of verbal communication as a collaborative achievement, particularly in the framework of conversation analytic and social psychological approaches to the study of talk (see, for example, Roger and Bull, 1989), the need to model this achievement from an integrated sociolinguistic perspective seems to be have been overlooked, as the work of scholars such as John Gumperz (1982a, 1982b) and Coupland, Coupland and Giles (1991), for instance, have suggested.

Since such achievement is not normally, or always readily, the subject of conscious recall by ordinary members, the present study has sought to investigate different interpretive responses to what is communicated in various decontextualised fragments of talk, where the responses in question have been elicited from different individuals, under the conditions described in Chapter 4.

Three studies, based on the *post hoc* interpretive perspectives of participant and non-participant listener judges who took part in the research, were presented in Chapter 5. The data from these studies was then used to examine the nature and scope of judges' interpretive responses, by making the responses themselves the object of study. Perhaps a weaknesses of this approach is the fact that judges were asked to listen to fragments of decontextualised talk. This is a criticism levelled by Grimshaw (1990b: 590–91) who suggests that had the judges received

more information, "including contexts of text and of situation", they would have been able to provide "more principled reports and interpretations". I am not sure whether the reports would have been any more 'principled', but appreciate Grimshaw's point that the nature of the comments and their informational focus may have differed in type and detail.

In Chapter 6, an analytic instrument for describing and comparing the responses was devised. Three descriptive categories or domains were identified across the response data, with each containing its own distinctive vocabulary. These were:

(1) the textual domain used to categorise statements about surface linguistic features of the fragments that judges listened to;
(2) the contextual domain used to characterise statements about extralinguistic features about the scene and the participants;
(3) the supratextual domain used to characterise statements about communicative genres and practice.

In Chapters 7, 8 and 9 where the main results of the investigation are reported, judges' vocabularies within each of these domains was examined. On the basis of the information that they provide, it was argued that individuals must resort to linguistic and social resources in order to make sense of communicative events previously seen. Chapter 10 focussed on discrepancies between analyst and participant interpretation. The presentation of the results in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 made use of the distinction between 'observations', 'evaluations' and 'judgements'. These distinctions were used to make comparisons across and between the types of interpretation provided in each domain. The results of this work can be illuminatingly summarised in terms of the distinction that Robinson

(1979) makes between 'knowing how to do something' linguistically and 'knowing that' which I discuss below.

11.1 Knowing How and Knowing That

The distinction between 'knowing how to' and 'knowing that' is summarised by (Robinson, 1979: 218) as follows:

> We can know how to do things without being able to express this knowledge verbally: that we know how to do something does not entail that we know how to talk about how we do it. Conversely, we may be able to represent knowledge verbally without being able to exploit it in experiment or in real life. We can know how without 'that' and we can know that without 'how'. *Knowing that* means being able to talk accurately about a matter. *Knowing how to* means being able to achieve something through action of some kind.

In order to provide the kinds of commentary that were elicited in the work which I conducted, it seems to me that judges demonstrated the ability to interpret the communicative behaviour of others on the basis of 'knowing how to'. Their ability to talk about what they 'know' clearly differs from judge to judge, and amongst other things is hypothesised as the product of a continuum of individual responsiveness to the stimulus fragments and sociolinguistic awareness of who was involved in them, and what these individuals might be said to be doing in interactional terms.

The nature of individual responsiveness is not something that one can control in an experimental context, however, unless judgement tasks are pre-established. Task demands can structure the behaviour of respondents as Robinson (1979: 217) argues.

> The answers that respondents give within the categories established for them may not reveal how those respondents behave, how they think, or what they say in the course of their everyday activities.

As far as possible, therefore I tried to avoid constraining how some individual might respond to the data fragments I used. The negative side of this strategy is that one has to accept whatever responses are given, even where these may be of the "I have nothing to say about this" variety. Physiological arousal and facilitating factors, such as current affective states and attitudes with respect to the experimental situation, are likely to be important elements in determining the nature of third person behavioural responses to the tape recordings.

As far as sociolinguistic awareness is concerned, the nature of one's interactional experience, including knowledge about different kinds of participant, must also have influenced what judges had to say. On many occasions, judges clearly base their remarks on prior beliefs and schemas as evidenced in locutions such as: "it sounded like"; "it reminds me of" etc. The accuracy of their remarks is of course another issue (see, for example, Sillars, 1982), but I presume this must depend on the degree of repeated familiarity with the activity and on who the participants are as Kreckel (1981) suggests. While Kreckel compares family and outsider judgements in monitoring different aspects of the speakers verbal and non-verbal behaviour, the problem of *post hoc* interpretation remains, as I indicated earlier (see section 2.3). The problem is that as analysts we can never recover *all* the information that the participants shared, as Labov and Fanshel (1977) point out.

Robinson argues that if we accept the usefulness of the distinction between knowing how to and knowing that, and if we allow ourselves the luxury of a measure of philosophical innocence, it is probably safe to propose that, in the everyday world we experience, 'knowing how to' is ahead of 'knowing that'. One reason why knowing that is liable to lag, at least in lay circumstances, is that third persons must devise their own technical jargons for talking about matters they have not previously had the opportunity to describe and discuss. Not only that

but with respect to language and its use, the relative weights of knowing how to and knowing that seems to vary greatly from one level of linguistic analysis to the next. One might compare in this respect the kinds of vocabulary that were provided in the textual ('knowing that') as opposed to supratextual ('knowing how to') domains for example.

The total number of textual vocabularies elicited in the course of each of the exploratory studies is presented in Table 11.1. Thirty nine individual tokens were identified in the corpus of interpretive responses and these provide a small quasi-technical vocabulary for describing the stimulus fragments. A total of 266 references were generated across the different categories identified in this domain.

Table 11.1

Number of Textual Vocabularies

Number of Individual Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Speech Products				
lexis	4	3	3	10
prosody	2	13	13	28
Total	6	16	16	38
Sequential Products				
turn-taking	7	5	8	20
topic	5	5	3	13
Total	12	10	11	33
Total	18	26	27	71

Table 11.2 presents the total number of supratextual tokens used in each of the major analytic categories. There are over six times the number of tokens in this

domain as opposed to the textual domain. Four hundred and two individual tokens of the supratextual kind were identified and these produced 799 references. While there were relatively few tokens of the genre kind, there were a striking number of tokens in the praxis category. These included, 89 metalinguistic tokens, 119 metapragmatic tokens, and 194 tokens used in the description of key. If we combine the metalinguistic and metapragmatic tokens under the rubric of 'strategy', some 208 different tokens of this type were used by judges in the course of their evaluations. This number is comparable to the 210 metapragmatic categories identified by Kreckel (1981) over five different studies, whose principal research focus was the nature of message effects in everyday communicative acts. These categories are listed, as they are newly introduced in each of the studies, in Appendix A of her book (see Kreckel, 1981: 287–292).

Table 11.2

Number of Supratextual Vocabularies

Number of Individual Tokens	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Total
Genre				
activities	2	3	6	11
units	4	5	7	16
Total	6	8	13	27
Praxis				
strategies	58	105	79	242
key	49	101	66	216
Total	107	206	14	458
Total	113	214	158	485

Compared to lay judges, experts report their interpretations of their observations to yield another important layer of reality. It is an important layer because it tends to generate a life of its own in the academic community and because it can impinge upon the beliefs and behaviour already referred to. Far from suggesting that expert frameworks be replaced, I want to propose that professional and lay interpretations of talk can be used to complement each other. In other words, accounting for 'knowing how to' and 'knowing that' may help to lay the foundations for a unified programme of research on human understanding from the perspective of ordinary members much as Gumperz (1982a) suggests. Based on the findings of this thesis, I propose that two future research paths might contribute towards the further development of such a programme.

11.2 Applied Concerns and Perspectives

The first of these concerns the provision of a lexicon and grammar of everyday speech events based on the interpretive vocabularies of ordinary language users. This could be conducted with respect to a range of different types of judge and as many types of talk as one might hope to present. An extension of this work, for instance, could be a cross-cultural study of contextualisation conventions of various languages as Lele and Singh (1989) seem to propose:

> Only a cross-cultural analysis of (mis) interpretations by native hearers of non-native speakers and non-native hearers of native speakers, and most importantly of how or whether these misperceptions entail the same sort of consequences, regardless of who is being misunderstood by whom, can help us understand what is involved. (Singh and Lele, 1989: 113)

A second site is the further exploration of participant goals. The perceptions of judges that participants are considered to be actively attempting to achieve their interactional ends are highly salient in the data. Judges' comments suggest that the conversationalists problem is not simply one of making sense of a given chunk of discourse; participants must enlist others' cooperation and actively seek to create conversational involvement before the process of interpretation can begin. The need to understand this process is particularly urgent in the current political climate, as Coupland (1988) notes:

> There can be no clearer pragmatic context for language than the nuclear threat, which is directly contingent upon reading and second-guessing super power discourses of aggression and deterrence. The agenda for a variationist discourse analysis is open-ended, and that in itself will force practitioners to select social contexts where their analyses will be increasingly recognised as an explanatory resource open to the social sciences as a means of accessing dynamic processes in the diverse episodes of our lives. (Coupland, 1988: 17)

Verbal communication is the human way for human beings to deal with others, and in it we must surely find a fundamental expression of our humanity as Labov and Fanshel (1977: 361) suggest. What makes its study challenging,

perplexing and engrossing is that we are all participants in the same practice. A sociolinguistics that takes into account the relationship between the interpretations people give and the behaviour they exhibit as part of this practice can only serve to enhance our understanding of the communicative process, with all its richness and complexity, as this investigation has attempted to demonstrate.

APPENDIX A

Stimulus Fragment for Study 1

A
yeah
it's all these little knick knacks
I like them
they're beautiful
B
it's it's a good office
actually
A
it's not bad
you know
it looked a little bleak
when you first came in
but then I suppose
B
yeah
A
I think what I need to do is
is something to the colour of the paint really
B
but I'm slowly covering it up
with as much junk as I can find
A
yeah
I like the little juvenile portraits
they're good
aren't they
B
they are
black holes
that black hole is good
A
yeah
B
Jane was s
is that Jane
eight
I suppose she is
yeah
she eh
is she was

she was having a lift with eh
eh this bloke
who had eh
John Taylor's book
on black holes
A
mm
B
and she said
what's a black hole
what is a black hole
and of course
you know
I mean
the book is difficult enough to understand
A
mm
B
but trying to explain it
to a kid
A
mm
B
I mean
in a sense it's easy
you just say it's
something in space that has
so much
energy
that it sucks everything in
but you can't see it
but beyond that
that's what her notion of a black hole is like
yeah
tell me about this Barrat
Barrat
A
well
B
place
is it really as lunatic as it sounds
A
oh
it's absolutely
mad

mm
it's it's good fun
I enjoy it immensely
uhm well
I dunno what you know about
the English language teaching
scene at the moment
do you know anything about it
B
y mean
A
well
it's still very much of a private business basis
B
yeah
A
and uhm
B
the schools have to kow tow a little bit
to Arrels
which is the association
of recognised language schools
but apart from that
they're just about free agents so
A
mm
B
at one end of the scale
you get establishments like Wells Schools
which are enormous great
uhm
fantastically run places
which cost the earth
B
mm
A
and you have you know (coughs)
couple of swimming pools
and twenty five language labs
and at the other end of the scale you get
you get people
who are really making rip offs
B
mm

A
especially with foreign students
who are getting nothing
we lie somewhere in the middle
pretty small place
about a hundred students (unintelligible)
B
residential
A
no no
just a day school
B
and they have to find flats
A
they've got some accommodation bureau eh
B
and where you know
they farm students out
that kind of thing
A
mm
B
(coughs) sorry about that
and uhm
Barrat
the principles
are making a bit of money out of em
you know
but it's useful
A
and gives me enough (unintelligible)
I was very cagey about teaching
but eh
B
yeah
A
once I got over the first six months
then I enjoyed it very much indeed
B
yeah
eh
look
the little bit of this I've done
I found it
I mean

yeah
it's very interesting
but ultimately
the whole thing depends on the social relations
you strike up with students
I mean
I was always in one to one situations
A
yeah
B
which perhaps makes it a bit more dodgy
but I mean
really
all you gotta do
is convince them that you're a bona fide person
and they learn anything
A
mm
B
you know
A
it's all very tongue in cheek (unintelligible)
B
yeah
it doesn't get you anywhere
I mean
it doesn't get you anywhere
it's a kind of
it's it's
a total one way process really
A
mm (unintelligible)
B
you're giving out all the time
A
yeah
eh
I get home
and I can't think about anything
B
mm
A
but gerunds
and infinitives

B
yeah
A
it's
it's amusing
B
oh
you teach all that stuff
A
I mean
you teach them a bit of metalanguage as well
A
uhm
B
you say
A
yes
B
this is a gerund folks
A
yes
but the accent as much as possible
is on actually speaking
rather than the rationale behind it
B
mm
that's what they come for mostly
it's how to talk
A
yeah
B
not how to write
A
yeah
a lot of them
you know
have been brought up in Iran somewhere
they say
I've spent six years on the grammar
you know
and they know gerunds backwards
but they don't how to pronounce them
B
yeah
it sounds good

so you're not broke anyway
A
well I'll tell you what Ian
I was better of when I was a student
there's no question of that
B
really
oh you'll be
A
by the time the tax man takes his cut
and Cambridge is a pretty expensive place to live in anyway
B
oh yes
of course
you pay tax
God
A
I lost mm
B
do you want some sugar
A
no thanks Ian
just straight black
God
I spilt some of the stuff
B
but you
but you can get it back presumably
most of it
can you

APPENDIX B

Participant Comments for Study 1

Participant A
what I have to say is bound to be biased
because I took part in the exchange
there is a role relationship
student stroke supervisor
it's important
I was conscious of the situation
we were not meeting as mates
it was very much a student supervisor chat
we have a lot of language in common
tails offs and that kind of thing
for example uh dot dot dot cup of coffee
it's all pretty formal
up to the point I imitated the Iranian accent
it was mid way through my career
I wanted to reprocess my application as a research student
I was trying to explain
why I wanted to come back to University
Ian was trying to make sure of my motives
the kettle sound makes it difficult
to recover what was said on tape
there are a few formal words like have a cup of coffee
it tells you something about the formality of the situation
I felt someone else was in command

Participant 2
fact number one
what I have to say is probably confusing
since I can remember the situation
I've got more knowledge available
and my knowledge of the situation
determines what I have to say about it
it was a Saturday morning
nothing happened in terms of seeing the bloke
it's all preliminary crap
the function of the talk is one simple introduction
to the physical characteristics of space
it 's an attempt to convince the other bloke
that there is some human background
it enables people to talk about something

there is an introduction to the physical characteristics of space
knick knacks
colour
bleak
it moves from the room to an eight year old daughter
it moves abruptly
there is a direct question
which offers the equivalent chance to say something
about other human contextualisations
this question is interpreted as let me know what you've been up to
what you've been doing professionally
rather than in more general terms
it moves the thing into a different air of formality
it moves from me as a person to you as a person
to you as a person
to me as teacher
to you as a teacher
its an attempt to establish some sort of code
the kettle noise is pretty bad
and you can hear the constant hum of the strip light
it sounds good is overtly talking about B's outline of his job
what it really means is let's finish this off for God's sake
and move on to something more interesting
I don't really want to know about Cambridge
I want to know if he enjoyed it
I can't relieve believe it sounds good
it sounds bloody boring
there is something tentative and final about the way it comes out
there is no genuine surprise
it ought to be interesting but isn't
it's all pretty formal
I didn't feel very formal
but the participants never interact
there is a peculiar dislocation
as if they weren't attending to each other
my overall feeling of the conversation
is that it wasn't worth coming in for
he was seeking reassurances
and yet never got into it
he wasn't particularly enthusiastic
it was basically a waste of time

APPENDIX C

Non-Participant Comments for Study 1

Judge 1 (Female)
the kettle noise makes things a bit difficult
the first person is Ian
he's obviously in his room
I recognise his manner
there are a number of pauses
the other guy is a Southerner
rp
they didn't know each other very well
they're not on intimate terms
not bosom pals
but acquainted
it's very disjointed
they are thinking on the same lines
much is unsaid rather than said
they are pretty fluent
they obviously didn't know that the tape was on
Ian was himself
the other guy was not relaxed
he was cagey
there is a distance
yet they know each other

Judge 2 (Male)
a lot of it was mumbly
one of them was sitting much nearer the tape-recorder
it's a casual encounter
he's just called by
the business is to come after
there is an increase in animation
I don't know the second man
the first speaker is Ian
they settled into a rhythm
there is lots of hesitancy uhm uh and so on
I'm sure you wouldn't notice this multiple hesitancy
in an ordinary conversation if you were there
he imitates an Indian
it sounds very natural
Ian operates at a flippant level

buying life insurance policies is a comment on him
rather than on what he says
the whole conversation revolves around a sense of agreement
there is an active attempt to converge in style
and attitude
there is a long kind of mumble
yes marks understanding
rather than agreement
really is ambiguous
it's not common
not convincing
it had shades in it
the second bloke has a tendency to refer to himself in
a slightly effacing way
it's slightly depersonalising
Ian is slangy
rather than colloquial
both have a facility for altering their speech to fit the situation

Judge 3 (Female)
I recognise Ian
he is making topics of conversation
rather than being spontaneous
the conversation does become more spontaneous though
it sounded like a beginning of term interview
both participants are well educated
they know each other well
but not too well
there's a noise problem with the kettle
I think the other guy may be a former student
there is a long embarrassed pause
a conversational lapse
he thinks about his words
there are gaps
and uhms
Ian on the other hand isn't concerned about his realisations
the other guy has a complex about being a student
he tends to think before he speaks
Ian introduces topics he can talk about
he encourages him by saying uhm and yes all the time
Ian is more conversational in tone than the other speaker

Judge 4 (Female)
there are plenty uhms
I means
and you knows
they aren't used for any particular reason
they talk fairly lucidly

but they still put things like that in
there is some overspeaking
there is a topic switch with do you want some sugar
it just sounded normal
like any conversation
they talk about a range of topics
black holes
how to teach
how to get money
it wasn't like a lecture or an argument
one was probing for advice
feeling his way along
Ian had control all along
he kept saying yes yes I see
the other speaker sounded eager
but hesitant
it came from the way in which he said things
may be his tone
he wants to do something
but isn't sure how to go about it
he was sounding out
I'm conscious that he was being put at ease
especially when they were discussing the surroundings
there is a kettle noise which made things difficult to hear
it didn't seem to make any difference to them
Ian is interested in what he's done
it's kind of come on over and tell me what's going on
what you're doing and how I can help

Judge 5 (Female)
it's in Ian's room
he is talking with another bloke
they are talking about Jane
it's a bad tape
fuzz seems to obscure most of what they are saying
it's all about the ethics of tuterdom
they are pretty articulate of course
both talk well
in almost complete sentences
some utterances weren't complete in grammar and syntax
it's Ian's way of jogging the conversation along to say
yeah yeah grunt
it's an indication of his interest
most people do similar things
actually I missed half the content listening to the general
flow of conversation
rather than listening to what they were saying

Judge 6 (Male)
the conversation is carried on in lackadaisical fashion
the interactants are not interested
in what they are saying to each other
they don't seriously consider the topics under consideration
I can't really make out one speaker
there is a lot of surface noise
a kind of hum
one speaker is Hall
he said bona fide person
I didn't like it
it had underlying assumptions
it was thoughtless
a throwaway
the whole conversation is a throwaway
it's trivial
like talking about what's for tea
and going to films
it's not so much trivial
as unimportant
the speakers are feeling their way around
trying to establish a rapport
the tone is one of trying to feel each other out
trying to sort things out
it's a coffee making interim conversation
the preliminaries before getting down to the real stuff
there is a sense in which they didn't know each other
it reminds me of other conversations I've listened to
it's a way of filling in silence
they move on to different things
it's exploratory
it's a linguistic shaking of hands
Hall introduces the thing by saying tell me about your life
it's non-involved
neither of them are terribly interested
Hall's reaction to the blokes job is negative
it doesn't get you anywhere
the kettle is a problem
but sort of fits in with the tone of the thing
there are symptoms of a superficial level of conversation
tossed away remarks
and the like
there is a lot of non-strict grammatical speech
uhms and spaces
the content tends to be unfinished
and they start to talk about other things
although Hall asks relevant questions

Judge 7 (Female)
one of them is Ian
both sounded well educated
they use terms like bone fide
and relationship
they talk about a kid's language
and use hip language
like rip offs
they also talk about money
and life as student
it's a typical opening to a conversation
they are kind of modest with each other
Ian is more dominant
perhaps because it's in his office
the other bloke has to be encouraged to talk

Judge 8 (Female)
the background noise of the kettle covered a great
deal of the conversation
it's a discussion between colleagues
it's not intimate
but relaxed
and friendly
they converse colloquially
they didn't choose their words in terms of formal conversation
it sounded like a school common room
with teachers discussing things
the switch of topics is indicative of relaxation
ordinary conversation shows no logical sequence
it's fairly well balanced
the host leads the conversation
the speakers are in the same business
they come to the same conclusions
they sound as if they know each other
there is no formal language
words like rip offs are used
it's an occasion to go for coffee
and talk while you are making it

Judge 9 (Male)
it's a friendly discussion between two people
in an office
or at home
it's in their tea break
they are relaxed
and friendly

trying to score over anybody else
they have an intellectual background
both have the same job
they are friends
yet it's all vaguely ironic
one guy is slightly paternal
but not obtrusive
he acts as a kind of springboard for the other guy
the humour adds to the informality
the question-answer format is not so much an interrogation
but a chance for the younger guy to explain things
it's interspersed with them talking over each other
when he says it sounds good there is approval
he gives advice from a position of experience
the slang makes it easy to follow
there are also agreement noises all the way through
which is pretty normal
there are lots of uhms
yeahs
and wells
they add to the informality
the two people use the same language
one of them uses a foreign accent
it sounded more Indian than Iranian
he must have known the other guy to use an accent like that
they are intellectuals
who are not disassociated
there just isn't any surprise

Judge 10 (Female)
the noise is disturbing
it's a buzzing noise
and it gets worse
it's a conversation between two males
they seem to have a lot in common
and know each other quite well
it's easy chatty conversation
the talk is informal
come into the flat and have coffee
it's a visitor visiting a friends flat
there are polite comments like oh that looks nice
people always start their conversations like this
they have teaching and education in common
student teacher relations are discussed
there is humour when they talk about tax
although it's quite social
the situation isn't very relaxed

Judge 11 (Female)
there is a noise problem
it's probably an electric drill
or cement mixer
it took place in an office
there are juvenile pictures
there is a door slamming
and shuffling
they have difficulty in describing black holes
there seems to be a lot of background noise in the pieces I can hear
there's something about life insurance
and Christmas
and forking out one hundred and eighty five pounds
for something
there is also something about social relations with a student
giving out all the time and one way process sound disillusioned
the conversation is disjointed
they switch from topic to topic
one was pretty relaxed
he used uhms
and ahs all the time
the other tended to just sit there
and think

Judge 12 (Female)
there is a lot of noise
they seem to say yes
and uhm to everything
the conversation moved off as if they both remembered
what they were talking about
advice is given
and cliches are used
a lot of the conversation is done without thinking about it
it's unconscious
and fairly casual
the bit about black holes is brief
and concise
they didn't seem to want to go into deep detailed discussion
words such as junk
and rip offs are used
it's a thing people do
there is almost a mild sort of modesty
they are people who know each other
filling in time
because they happen to be there
it wasn't for a purpose
there is a slight element of trying to impress

the one who initiates all the questions seems more dominant

Judge 13 (Female)
one man is entertaining the other to coffee
he plays the role of host
and asks all the questions
they know each other
the host didn't say very much
but really kept the conversation going
his language was very repetitive
he said bona fide person
it was a serious thing about being serious
the other man sounded a little bit uneasy
rather stilted in fact
it's a common conversational thing
that when people talk about money
they talk about the tax man
yeah yeah all the time is a kind of prompting
it is meant to give encouragement
one of them imitates a foreign student

Judge 14 (Female)
one of the participants only talked when asked to
he was very hesitant
a bit low
and mumbly at times
it was the other man who really kept the conversation going
it sounded as if he were trying to make conversation
but kept loosing the thread
he tried to put the other guy at ease
it sounded to me as if he were talking down to him
though not consciously
the other guy was passive
it wasn't easy for him
the conversation doesn't follow a logical pattern
it switches
the more dominant one tends to support the other's conversation
he is talking down to him
the kettle boiling makes it difficult to follow
there are lulls in the conversation
gaps when nobody has anything to say
they are thinking about it
it's not official conversation
although there is a certain amount of unease
A tends to talk only when spoken to
but there is some overlapping
which shows that it isn't terribly formal

Judge 15 (Male)
one is louder than the other
they sounded cultured
well educated

Judge 16 (Male)
there are two blokes
they talk about three subjects
painting
black holes
and teaching
they sort of linked together
the one who was nearest the microphone
knew he was being recorded
he distinguished his words more
the other seemed to jumble his words
I couldn't tell what he was saying till he thought about it
the kettle boiling didn't help any
it's in the kitchen
or home of one of the participants
they know each other
they are acquainted
they talk about previous events
there are no long gaps in the conversation
it all ran together
it's not a conversation
where they were particularly thinking about what was coming
gaps come when they didn't know what to say
there is some change in their attitude
they are not quite at ease
the bit about Arrels is a bit pedantic
it makes the other person know where he went
I'm unsure what the other person would think about this
there is unease when he mentions he has spilt his coffee
so you're not broke anyway is trying to relax the situation
trying to establish a confidentiality
in the early bit they are looking for a point to relax
that's why one of them mentions pictures on the walls
to provoke a conversation
he is trying to establish a rapport
he brings in the family to talk about something personal
he's trying to get a routine that he's had before

APPENDIX D

Stimulus Fragments for Study 2

Extract 1

(A= Female; B = Male)

A
I remember the biology teacher
who had us once
a young bloke
still got very impatient
very easily
and he said
once he got
really lost his temper
in front of the class
and he said
if you lot realised
how much effort
how many processes
your body
had to go through
in order for you to do that
B
mm
A
you wouldn't be messing about in the way you are
because you are all
wasting energy
B
yeah
A
and that's what he that
he said it in a real temper
and it's always stuck in my mind
cos of that
B
mm
A
I still get that feeling
the kind of thing you just said

B
mm
A
shut your eyes
and you think of your entire body changing gear
an
it's fascinating
B
mm
A
ah
can you
answer me a question
B
probably not
A
oh
I shouldn't think you will be
actually
able to
B
why are you going to ask me then
A
tut
I'm going to ask you
why people have to do finals
B
uh
why are you gonna ask me this question
if you don't think I can answer it
because it's not the kind of question that anybody can answer
B
no
I suppose not
it just seems to me
while I have a thought like that
I think aw
all this
sitting in the library
cramming things
in order to forget them a little while after
when there are people like that
to think about

Extract 2

(A = Male; B = Male)

A
also
I mean
I'm fairly sick of being broke
but if I had this Germany job
you see
six hours a week
no admin
nothing
I mean it's it's a dream
I can't lose realisation
I can't
B
and if there were no tax
you'd then immediately be well off
A
yeah
I mean
if there were tax
if I got myself a decent tax adviser
I'm sure I wouldn't be wor any worse off
B
no no
A
if I could fix up the house
that's the only problem
if I could get somebody to rent
B
yeah
A
the house
B
but that was the thing which transformed all our salary
for two years now
that that
A
I don't
I don't know how much tax we are paying now
B
but if you are paying about fifty
sixty pounds a month

A
I dunno
I just got my tax
B
that's another saving of two hundred quid
A
tax claim this morning
did you get your tax claim this morning
B
no
what's that for
A
oh
dear old Jane
the postman stuffed the stuff through the
and she came rushing into the kitchen saying
great
on her majesty's service
oh God
she didn't understand my reaction at all
she said
it's not the queen who
takes your tax away is it
B
oh
I must go and pee
so that I'm in a state of preparededness
for our squash
A
what's the time
B
it's now half past
A
half past
right
B
so you've only got two to three minutes
A
right
B
ok
A
are you coming via here
B
well shall I come back down
A
mm

Extract 3

(A = Male; B = Male)

A
do you never get frightened on that job then
B
no
A
do you always work nights now
B
yes
far better working on night shift
A
what even in Southampton
B
yes
Southampton
I worked on night shift
A
so you don't sleep all day do you
B
well
I go to bed about uh
seven o'clock
A
mm
B
and I get up about two o'clock
or something like that
you know
but if I fancy a pint
I get up earlier
A
yeah
seven in the morning
you sleep
B
yes
till two I suppose
A
and you don't go to bed again then
B
no
well when you got into the library
you know
the time
the switches is all time switches

you know
A
no
what lights
B
yes
all the lights is time switches
you know
and when you go
A
yeah
B
you don't put a switch on like this
A
yeah
B
you press a button
A
yeah
B
you press a button
A
ah
then the lights go on
B
yeah

Extract 4

(A = Male; B = Male)

A
yeah
a lot of them
you know
have been brought up in Iran somewhere
they say
I've spent six years on the grammar
you know
and they know gerunds backwards
but they don't how to pronounce them
B
yeah
it sounds good
so you're not broke anyway

A
well I'll tell you what Ian
I was better of when I was a student
there's no question of that
B
really
oh you'll be
A
by the time the tax man takes his cut
and Cambridge is a pretty expensive place to live in anyway
B
oh yes
of course
you pay tax
God
A
I lost mm
B
do you want some sugar
A
no thanks Ian
just straight black
God
I spilt some of the stuff
B
but you
but you can get it back presumably
most of it
can you
A
uhm well
I didn't pay tax up to Christmas
B
yeah
A
I was getting lulled into a false sense of security
I suppose
putting a hundred and eighty five in my pocket every month
B
yeah
A
which felt great
B
yeah
A
and uhm
after Christmas

the tax man hit me
B
but uhm
A
and it was pretty much like
a hundred and twenty five I suppose
you know
but it's all right
I get about a third knocked off in tax
B
mm
A
which is about par for the course
for a single man
B
yeah yeah
you wanna buy some life insurance policies
or something
A
yeah
B
and they're tax deductable
aren't they
A
yes
I'll have to think of something

Extract 5

(A = Male; B = Male)

A
must find it very disturbing that
Jane
B
upsets you does it
A
mm
B
you'd really be quite pleased to get rid of it
A
yes
I haven't been unreasonably leaving it on my desk
cos I don't want to put it on the wall
B
you think it might get you

A
yeah
I think I'd prefer if it got you
B
yeah
A
it's that sort of facelessness that worries me
B
that's right
A
the red eye
blue one
B
one arrow outline
A
one red eye that doesn't look forward
it looks straight out at you
if there is
B
what is it
the evil eye of mawdor
A
yeah
B
or whatever that crap is in Lord of the Rings
A
yeah
B
I thought I'd made an anal
did you not
you didn't see my analysis of that appalling meeting
did you
A
no

Extract 6

(A = Male; B = Male)

A
uhm
what's what
what are your plans then
B
nothing at the moment

A
work
I mean
you know
like are you on your way to Paris
or
B
no
May the first
I go to Paris
A
or twenty five weeks holiday
or
B
well
just a couple of weeks holiday
A
or
just messin around
what are doing for the next three weeks
B
uh
poking around here
A
yeah
B
I'll probably go down to London for a week
A
yeah
B
I'd like to if I could find somewhere to stay
I could write a few letters to people who I haven't seen for years
and try to stay with them
A
have you got a British lib
uh mm
British museum ticket
B
yeah
A
have you got a photo
I mean
you've gotta have a photograph
and thing stuck on it
B
no
A

Brian Richards told me
uhm
B
may be they've changed the system now
A
that within the last six months
that you
you've
you have to have a photo
you have to have a new ticket
with a photograph attached an
you have to get one now
B
I think they change it for you
if you've got a current one
A
yeah
they change it for you
B
but you've gotta have a present day photograph
A
oh
B
that's the one I've got
A
oh God
that's different
I'll show you mine
it's really old
B
I got this August last year
A
well I've had mine
about ten years now I suppose
and they just keep
B
yeah
A
scribbling on top of it
B
yeah
I used to have one like that
A
yeah
ah
the old days
B

APPENDIX E

Non-Participant Comments for Study 2

Extract 1

Judge 1 (Female)
the girl is talking very quickly
that is emphasised
there is hesitation on got
and it's fascinating seems higher
almost as if she doesn't know what to say
it's filling in
she seems to be acting in someway
there is hesitation in actually
when she asks the question she doesn't sound fully natural
she is acting
the man sounds more natural
he's kind of playing along
and helping her in the conversation up to probably not
probably not
is quite a conventional answer to a question of that sort
perhaps it avoids the responsibility of fully answering
perhaps it's embarrassment
why do people have to do finals is almost whining
the why is drawn out
almost as if she's pleading
again it's as if she doesn't actually want an answer
but that she wants sympathy or a response from him
she ignores his following comment
at that point he is not gentle or sympathetic but firmer
it's not the kind of question that anybody can answer
he is much firmer
and anybody is stressed
at the beginning he's trying to be gentle
keeping his voice low
he gets louder as he gets firmer
even at the end she isn't fully natural
her intonation goes completely haywire
and she gets lost in her own rhetoric
cramming things is trying to get an effect
things is drawn out
she pauses for too long and gets lost

she's not sure how to react
there is more confidence in young bloke
she imitates the biology teacher's intonation and speech
there is some kind of anger
it's spoken for effect
she emphasises really
she stops imitating at you're all wasting energy
there is amusement at the end of that section
there are long gaps
before can you answer me a question
provides for a change in gear
ah is long and drawn out
her voice gets quieter in the middle section
when she is asking for sympathy
particularly in her last speech
when she is talking more slowly
thinking about what she is saying
it speeds up again towards the end

Judge 2 (Male)
it's amusing
there is a whole burst of conversation
and then a pause
it comes out as almost superfluous
she doesn't mean this is fascinating
there is a complete change of direction
with ah can you answer me a question
it moves from abstract monologue to a personal level
probably not comes out too easily
the interest isn't really there
if it was he would have produced a more extended answer
it comes across as false modesty
it doesn't indicate an unwillingness to answer
but rather lack of interpenetration with the other person
it's almost a gesture rather than a serious thought
she accepts that he won't be able to answer her question
and there is a tone of futility
why are you gonna ask me implies why bother in the way it is put
it indicates the pointlessness of the whole exercise
there is definite despair in why do people have to sit finals
there is a real sense of appeal
to reinforce the fact that she is unhappy
it's at the level of emotional agreement
rather than intellectual questioning
nobody can answer the question implies end of conversation
he wants to avoid the question
almost as if he's gone through it so many times
that the question has become meaningless

he offers a conversational package in his answers
despite his unwillingness to answer
there is an indication that he is prepared to take this seriously
his tone indicates that he has to deal with the question
under some duress

Judge 3 (Male)
I didn't think much to that
there is a question
which seems totally unrelated to the bit before
it sounds like the first bit was incidental
the real question is about finals
it's pronounced well
she sort of sounds bored in the end section
there is a big sort of breath at the end
she changes her tone quite often
he doesn't pick the conversation up
he answers with mms all the time
almost as if he's aware that she is going to ask the question

Judge 4 (Male)
what struck me was the completely different way
in which she talked about the biology teacher
it was quicker
more animated than the rest
Ian made the appropriate noises
there was a long pause after fascinating
but one expected them to continue
then there was a complete change in tone
it sounded a serious question about finals
she was seeking reassurances
and let the question tail away
her voice is quieter
and more intimate
but there is no emotional emphasis
it's a conversation between a student and Ian
a lecturer who you know you can talk to
Ian is cagey
but he lets things continue
probably not is casual
and guarded
there is a difference in pace
and animation
Ian becomes surprisingly serious

Judge 5 (Male)
there is an abrupt change of subject
and I thought the guy got very impatient

the syntax is odd
he doesn't answer the question

Judge 6 (Male)
it sounds artificial
there is a fair degree of variation in the speed at which she speaks
the intonation is fairly artificial
and she makes an effort to put expression into her voice
there is a tremendous emphasis on that
her story is slow
and then increases in tempo
it becomes a bit babbled
it's fascinating seems contrived
ah can you answer me the question
is trying to keep the conversation going
the ah is like a breath
and sounds like pleasurable satisfaction
he is much younger than the person who she is talking to
it sounds like a girl who has got a crush on teacher
and is trying to impress
probably not is so expressionless and dull
there is no incentive for her to continue talking
he gives the impression of being bored with the whole thing
it's a contrived casualness
but informal
and non-threatening
why do you have to do finals sounds bored
there is a pause
and then I'm gonna ask you
the second part is totally different
she sets out to ask a question which she feels is pointless
and then virtually apologises for asking it
it's a question she doesn't need an answer for
doesn't want an answer for
the question is embarrassed
there is a little girl lost sort of attitude
it's not the answer that's important
but just some kind of contact
she doesn't respond to anything the bloke has said
because he doesn't give her anything to respond to
his probably not is very much an end of conversation gambit
he is bored and disinterested
and she doesn't get any help to encourage the flow of conversation

Judge 7 (Female)
it sounds false
the girl sounds self-conscious
ah can you answer me a question says here I am

talk to me
it's fascinating seems overdone
her voice goes up at the end
and it's over-emphasised
because it's not the kind of question that anybody can answer
it sounded very teacher like
it was as if he was trying to impart wisdom
they are very precise
and make no mistakes
the content is pretty revolting
I find the story about the biology teacher affected
I guess it's difficult to judge
on the basis of a small segment though

Judge 8 (Male)
there is an interesting dynamic at work
sounds as if Ian is completely inert
more so than usual
I don't know who the girl is
Ian isn't concentrating
he wants to be sympathetic
she has a slightly rhetorical style of delivery
there is a tinge of a affected boredom in two comments
probably not
and
why are you going to ask me
they are typically laconic replies that Ian would give
there is something in it's fascinating
I just can't get a visual image of the girl
if it's just a social call
there is a peculiar kind of flatness
there is something odd too about
ah can you answer me a question
a disparity
a lack of logic

Extract 2

Judge 1 (Female)
it seems very quiet
Ian almost doesn't want to be heard
he is virtually mumbling
he gets more fluent
as he gets more confident
in the bit about Jane at the end
his mind doesn't really appear to be on the conversation

it's an effort
and he has to fit in with the patter
Keith seems more confident
the speech about salary seems rather lost
towards the end of Germany job he drops his voice
his voice goes up and down
and is much quieter
Keith is tentative
and rather quiet
Ian follows on from his quietness
there is amusement in the story about Jane
it starts off quietly
he captures her intonation by imitating
I doubt if his imitation is accurate
it's more like his interpretation of it
what he is trying to capture is that ohms is special
he emphasises great
there is a gap before the end of the laugh
it didn't follow immediately
perhaps he felt subconsciously he should laugh
the last part about squash is more relaxed
half past is not so hesitant

Judge 2 (Male)
I don't feel I have anything to say about this
it's all at a very uninteresting level
there is unspoken agreement
that it's all rather naive
and amusing
two people are discussing the potential of increasing their salary

Judge 3 (Male)
the voice rises
and there is anticipation in if I could fix the house up
the voice also rises in no admin
the voice sounds dreamy
as if he's living it
the voice falls after each thing
with a little pause in between
B slows down
you can tell he's thinking
the rest has a kind of monotony
it only livens up with Jane's story
the voice rises
as he starts to laugh
it's not the Queen
he says are you coming here as if he wants him to

Judge 4 (Male)
Ian about Jane is much more animated
it's quite a serious conversation
it doesn't actually get anywhere
he sounded weary
tired
he sounded lower than usual

Judge 5 (Male)
I thought there was a peculiar use of realisation

Judge 6 (Male)
my first impression is that they are both distinctly inarticulate
a tremendous number of words are left out
the tone of the speech is conspiratorial
one has an articulacy problem
he always seems to be thinking about what he is saying
there is a tremendous repetitiveness in his speech
they seem to cue nicely enough to each other
A seems to slur his words
he's searching for words
and runs words together
he seems to be consulting the other speaker
in the story about Jane something funny happened
it was as if he had something stuck in his throat
there is a totally different attitude at this point from the rest
totally informal humour
breaking the ice
we are good mates
let's have a laugh

Judge 7 (Female)
I know these people so well
Ian sounded a bit pissed
I don't suppose he was if he was about to play squash I mean
it's a dream a realisation
is very pretentious
there are lots of false starts and errors
he is usually quite precise
Keith is avuncular
he is there to listen to Ian
dear old Jane sounds awful kind of drunk
he really seems to be struggling with his pronunciation
Keith is very business like
and factual
when they talked about the financial situation
the conversation shifted to a more formal kind of thing

Judge 8 (Female)
knowing both people makes it difficult for me
to comment on any peculiarities
it seems a fairly representative piece of conversation
I'm not sure if they'd been drinking
it has to do with the slightly florid way
he pronounces preparedness
the conversation is split into two halves
the subject fizzles out at the anecdote about the tax claim
the fact that it peters out indicates the casualness of the thing
they obviously know each other well
they have no difficulty in swapping questions

Extract 3

Judge 1 (Female)
the guy Ian is talking to seems to be saying as little as possible
he is not at all confident
he follows on from what Ian is saying
rather than initiating anything himself
the tone of yes seems too flat
and non committal
no has the same effect
the other speaker gets more fluent later in the exchange
he talks fairly slowly
and occasionally hesitates
he uses conversational fillers like you know
his tone is friendly
but not intimate
you know seems to be typical of his conversation
there is a long gap after no
B continues to speak
probably because of the gap

Judge 2 (Male)
the banality of non-communication
and disinterest
they are communicating
in that they are exchanging words and phrases
but their is a distance in their replies and responses
they seem to be stuck in a rut
they are looking for a subject
in which they can establish a conversation
they keep having to repeat themselves
A asks all the questions
B is just responding

Judge 3 (Male)
sounds like Ian is trying to get the fella to talk
the fella gives yes no replies
when he gets going he talks about the library
this is the interesting thing in his life
yes and no have the same tone
the man sounds shy
he sounds as if he's going to launch into a tale
and begins to talk about Southampton
it all has the same intonation pattern

Judge 4 (Male)
I thought they were in some kind of vehicle
the bloke is very ungiving
Ian tries to get the bloke saying things
he doesn't give anything away
it's hard to describe
he seems to start everything with yes and no
he sounds as if he's not going to go on
and then does
he's aware that there's a conversation
and that he's making part of it
he talks personally about himself
the first no is reticent
and unhelpful
it is the toneless way in which the man speaks
seven o'clock is much more intimate
and had a tone in it
none of the first segment seemed to interest him
but he goes on to become quite different

Judge 5 (Male)
there is something strange about it
but I can't work it out
it's a peculiar conversation
there is not much continuity
and lights seems a strange subject to continue on

Judge 6 (Male)
it sounds like two blokes
chatting in a boiler-room
person B is a Geordie
he reacts very well to the cues given by person A
B is reliant on the other person for things to talk about
A gives very short cues
but they are effective
yes and no seem to be automatic responses from the Geordie

no was very expressionless
flat
but not bored or disinterested
what even in Southampton
is very much a cue to the other speaker
there is inflection in the voice rising
it is a cue to give an answer
the reply is again quick and automatic
there are tremendous differences between the two kinds of speech
person A starts to acquire some of the speech patterns of person B
there is a hint of Geordie
and sometimes his inflection is very singy songy
like in what even in Southampton

Judge 7 (Female)
it sounds like a toilet conversation
there are long pauses
and they seem to have problems speaking to each other
Ian is trying to get the other man to speak
and doing it badly
the man seems to be trying to get into some kind of natural
rhythm of speech
he is slow
and deliberate
and does not impart information easily
he is thinking things out
as he goes along
Ian doesn't feed him with the appropriate things

Judge 8 (Male)
I like that one
Ian is trying hard to elicit information
the man's responses are fairly sparse
it's a bit hard going
I know from Ian's earnest tone
that he is trying to be interested
trying to set up some sort of rapport

Extract 4

Judge 1 (Female)
it's difficult to hear
one guy imitates a foreign accent
God I spilt it is hardly audible
perhaps because the guy was talking to himself
they seem to know each other pretty well

of course you pay tax seems surprised
the background noise makes it difficult to hear
it doesn't seem to have much effect on the speakers though
par for the course gives some impression of the bloke
partly because of his accent
and partly because of his tone
he is a pompous person
and thinks of himself as middle class

Judge 2 (Male)
it's amusing
how we can screw as much money out of people as possible
it's a remarkable cliche
and is trotted out thoughtlessly
linguistically Ian makes a gesture towards the other person
but it is stepwise
rather than forward
I'm relaxed in your company
and we can chat
one of them drops into imitation
it's a racialist cliche
it sounds good is an understatement
apart from trivial things like making coffee
A is seeking reassurances
I can talk about this
because you understand me
it finishes off by stating that there must be some way
of avoiding tax
the whole emphasis is on money
as opposed to teaching

Judge 3 (Male)
it's boring
the conversation is incidental to coffee
they are just filling in time
the voice rises in that sounds good
it is sarcastic delight
so you're not broke anyway is not sympathetic
he's saying you're all right really
it's got a sort of monotony
as his voice hardly changes
yeah is said without agreement in his voice

Judge 4 (Male)
Ian is making coffee
the other guy is an abstracted sort of person
I'll tell you what is terribly conventional
he has a managerial manner

that sounds good is said without conviction
but is friendly enough
Ian picks up the remarks of the bloke
it's all rather casual
I didn't like it

Judge 5 (Male)
really oh you'll be is cut off
and there is no indication of what the bloke is going to say
but uhm is an interruption which doesn't quite come off
one of them seems to be putting on a foreign accent
imitating students that he's had
it indicates that they don't know how to pronounce
in a sense it's a joke
imitation is often used to joke with
you know foreign man don't speak properly
there is no indication
that the person who he speaks to finds it funny
sounds good so you're not broke anyway is fairly meaningless
it indicates that he doesn't want to talk shop

Judge 6 (Male)
that's horrible
that wasn't a conversation
one person was insignificant
I could hardly hear him
I think that the accent is South East to South Midlands
it's an educated kind of accent
the bloke has been through the right schools
it's a bit puzzling
because they seem to know each other
but somehow have lost contact
one is trying to impress
and one is taking the impressed role
without genuinely being impressed
the one who is trying to impress is an unpleasant fellow
he is self-opinionated
and over self-confident
I think he must suffer from an inferiority complex
his imitation of an accent of someone who wasn't from the
same educational background was vindictive
and cutting
the other guy is fairly run of the mill
and doesn't seem to have the same pretensions
the other guy always seems to be name dropping
and talks about the tax man
Cambridge
and expenses

on one occasion the bloke who he is talking to doesn't
finish his sentence
he says something like oh you'll be
he isn't bothered whether the other person cuts in or not
he seems very used to the other speakers type
do you want some sugar is completely neutral
it is a disguised neutrality
with no positive reinforcement signals

Judge 7 (Female)
it's obvious that Ian isn't listening very carefully
Michael is very uncertain
Ian is more concerned with making coffee
Michael is moaning on
when he says you know but it's all right he changes his tone
it's more kind of jaunty
he puts more life into it
sounds good doesn't really sound as if it sounds good
Ian is just supporting Michael
Michael is being kind of quiet
it's a filling in space conversation
Michael doesn't attach much importance to it
single man goes up
there is a change of mood
it's an attempt to be more kind of cheerful
the thing actually seems to take longer than if you were actually
a participant
if something is isolated like that
you expect to find something significant
actually I find the extracts that I have listened to kind of boring

Judge 8 (Male)
Ian definitely converges towards the man in style
and attitude
he assumes all the time
a knowledge in Ian
of what he is talking about
it's kind of clubby
there is a type of jargon in it
getting it knocked off
par for the course
and takes his cut
the way he talks about Iranians
there is an assumption that he knows what he is talking about
he is giving information
rather than swapping ideas
it's really boring

Extract 5

Judge 1 (Female)
there is considerable variation in volume
B is quieter than A
the air is quiet
and thoughtful
rather than excited
there is amused agreement in I think I'd prefer if it got you
B's tone almost suggests that he is putting himself in the place
of the child
he gives the impression of having that kind of wonder
the conversation gets more excited after red eye
before then they are going through a process of agreeing
and only treat the subject matter semi-seriously
Ian picks up though
and begins to talk quite rapidly
B acts as a stooge
the laughter seems to be helping things along

Judge 2 (Male)
I've nothing to say about it
it's a chat stroke conversation
at the level of coffee talk
what's caught you're eye
let's talk about it
followed by a jump in direction to move the thing on

Judge 3 (Male)
it's in a sort of low key
with very quiet tones
it changes at the end
it's very difficult to get a sense of what's going on

Judge 4 (Male)
it's hard to follow
a witty exchange that doesn't quite come off
facelessness is something that they can talk about
it all seems aimless
and surprisingly unemphatic
the conversation dies
and one of them has to try and rescue it

Judge 5 (Male)
I don't know what they are talking about
I may have been unreasonably leaving it on my desk is peculiar
it might get you it might get me is a joke

they don't sound very serious
it becomes progressively more amusing I suppose
there are two people with a picture which is a painting
it's a very natural conversation
and there's no status between them
there are lots of interruptions
but its not aggressive interrupting
I think that the two people might work together
they talk very quickly
and there are lots of slips of the tongue
and words left out
there is some friendly rivalry
as they try to find something to talk about
the conversation moves on from pictures to work
and the topic changes completely

Judge 6
there are two people with a picture which is a painting
there is no status between them
there are lots of interruptions
but it's not aggressive interrupting
I think the two people might work together
they talk very quickly
and there are lots of slips of the tongue
and words left out
there is some friendly rivalry
as they try to find something to talk about
the conversation moves from the picture to work
and the conversation changes completely

Judge 7 (Female)
it's difficult to make out what they are saying
they are both giggling
and looking at each other
if you were there it might be more meaningful

Judge 8 (Male)
that's a good one
there were bits I didn't understand
and I got the feeling that it was very much a fragment
the whole thing is very strange
and very disjointed
it's an extreme example of people talking about something
that is incomprehensible
especially on tape

Extract 6

Judge 1 (Female)
virtually inaudible
just can't hear it
so I've nothing to say

Judge 2 (Male)
I don't have a great deal to say about this
it's non-serious
the tone indicates an easy interchange about the immediate future
A puts up with the conversation
there is a flippant tone about twenty five weeks holiday
which is about all I could catch

Judge 3 (Male)
sorry
I can't hear much of that one
one guy sounds interested at the beginning
then doesn't seem to take any notice of what is said in between

Judge 4 (Male)
it moves into quiet monologue
Ian takes over the content of what the other man has to say
there are lots of overlaps
I used to have one like that is terrifically speedy

Judge 5 (Male)
the sound quality is very poor
there are lots of overlaps
which most people do most of the time in conversations

Judge 6 (Male)
it's in a gent's washing room
and they are washing their hands
and talking at the same time
the conversation is incidental
and there is no clear point of contact between them
holidays provides a good start
and it's a very predictable conversation
person A makes more effort than person B
person B sounds as if he's got the cold
there is tremendous switching around
and it's all a bit vague

Judge 7 (Female)
oh dear

they have quite a job to get it going don't they
they keep talking on top of each other
it reminds me of one of the earlier one's I listened to
they don't really listen to one another
and Ian has to try and keep the conversation going
he is trying hard
the other bloke is very quiet
as if he's shy of Ian
I didn't think much to it at all

Judge 8 (Male)
this is similar to the fourth conversation you played
it could have been the same bloke
I'm trying to work out what Ian would think of this bloke
the aspect of his delivery is slightly different from the other extract
it's almost as if he's fed up with the bloke being there
probably he hasn't a lot in common with him
but it's easy surface conversation on which to operate

APPENDIX F

Stimulus Fragments for Study 3

Extract 1

C
I went to Stamford BRIDGE last year ONCE
B
all fifty thousand have got to get OUT though THERE
C
I'd never BEEN BEFORE
COR
COR
the CROWDS
OOH
and you WONDERED
if you were going to be trampled to DEATH
they started to SHOVE
do you KNOW
it's quite FRIGHTENING
A
where was THIS TONY
B
YEAH
C
carrying Justin Stamford BRIDGE
where I went to see CHELSEA
play LEEDS
A
oh YES
m
C
and Leeds played SHOCKINGLY
worst game they ever PLAYED
B
well some of the gates might be about as WIDE as that ROOM
as the ROOM
MIGHTN'T they
REALLY
C
OOH
there were KIDS
sitting on that great HOARDING

B
about as wide as THAT
and about thirty THOUSAND have to go out through THERE
C
COR
B
you KNOW
I mean er
A
m
B
oh it's TERRIBLE
C
OOH
the sea of bodies in front of you MOVING
and people started to PUSH
BEHIND you
cos you couldn't have done anything you'd have been
absolutely HELPLESS

Extract 2

A
oh and one pig DIED
because it ATE too much
B
ooh REALLY
A
OH
it was REVOLTING
oh they were TERRIBLE
the PIGS
C
oh
A
they made a dreadful row in the MORNING
when it was FEEDING time
and ONE PIG
it was erm a YOUNG pig
about THAT size
you KNOW
m MIDDLING
and erm it was DEAD
and it was LYING there
I'd never SEEN a dead pig BEFORE
absolutely STIFF

B
di the children SAW it DID they
oh they were ENGROSSED
you KNOW
C
oh YES
it was MARVELLOUS
A
erm they thought this was WONDERFUL
and erm they asked why it was DEAD
and er the farmer apparently didn't want his wife to KNOW
because he'd overfed them BEFORE
and she'd been FURIOUS
and of course he was trying to keep it FROM her
but all the KIDS
were agog about this dead PIG
and was telling them not to tell the farmer's WIFE
D
YEAH
A
and all THIS
so this pig was absolutely DEAD
so they put it on they have a sort of smouldering HEAP
that smoulders all the TIME
so they went to burn the PIG
and all the KIDS
hanging over the GATE
watching this PIG
and they were very er very taken that the pig had DIED
because it had EATEN too much
you KNOW

Extract 3

B
AH
well we took a we took some children on a VISIT
to er Enfield's environmental STUDY centre
they other DAY and they have various animals around THERE
one of WHICH
is a PIG er PINKY
PINKY
PINKY
that's RIGHT
and all the CHILDREN

stood round the OUTSIDE
C
m
B
like THIS
at the FENCE you see
and this large slobbering PIG
A
YEAH
B
was allowed OUT
into the MUD
and each child was given a slice of CARROT
you SEE
cos they had two VISITS
a DAY
so twice a DAY
this pig was FED
by twenty slices of CARROTS
and Pinky looked a VERY happy pig

Extract 4

D
I didn't realize you'd let those things lose in the GARDEN
no wonder we're infested by MICE
A
well they er it was a very cold NIGHT
and they'd never been out BEFORE
and I thought
D
well they'd been out in the GARAGE
which wasn't a particularly WARM
A
and it was very DAMP
and I thought they'd soon be DEAD
of pneumonia if nothing ELSE
HOWEVER
there was the mother UNACCOUNTED for
and one who'd escaped we'd SEEN go out
D
at LEAST one
at LEAST one
A
one I'm st I'm being FACTUAL DAVID

D
well it could have been YES
well it could have been far MORE
because there were
A
HOWEVER
we thought it's in the GARAGE
so then one Sunday MORNING
David cleaned out the garage COMPLETELY
and they're TERRIBLY clever
we had tomatoes in there RIPENING
wrapped up in NEWSPAPER
each one individually WRAPPED
and everyone that was RIPE
that had really TURNED
the mice had EATEN
the m mouse or MICE
had EATEN a little bit of
and the ones that HADN'T turned
they hadn't TOUCHED
C
m
A
they hadn't even nibbled at the PAPER

Extract 5

B
ANYWAY
Susie SAID
that there was no such things as FAIRIES
ELVES
this that and the OTHER
WELL
the night she PUT her tooth under the PILLOW
we forgot to put the MONEY there
and take it AWAY
we forgot all ABOUT it
so she got UP in the MORNING
and there's no MONEY
Dave said well there you ARE you SEE
YOU said
you didn't BELIEVE in FAIRIES
so how can you expect the fairies to come and SEE you if
OH
but I DO believe in FAIRIES

you know
I really DO
so Dave said well try again TONIGHT
so that NIGHT
thank goodness we REMEMBERED
C
m
B
so the next MORNING
she gets UP
all HAPPY
oh they've BEEN
they've BEEN
I've got my MONEY
and Dave said well there you ARE
that just SHOWS
that you i if you they hear you say you don't BELIEVE
no MONEY
she SAYS
she says well I know you're only SAYING that
because you forgot to PUT it THERE

Extract 6

B
I MEAN
CINEMA
have b for a LONG time
has been in TROUBLE
I mean that's why you get all these SEX films
it was a kind of a desperate attempt to
C
sh it's a sure sign of FAILURE
ISN'T it
B
YEAH
C
once they're sort to THAT
REALLY
B
WHAT
once you resort to SEX
you MEAN
C
well it's some people resort to BEER
NO

but you KNOW what I MEAN
i it to ME
it's ALWAYS been a confession of failure
B & C
YEAH
C
you KNOW
tha the i it's CHEAP
is'n it's a cheap way of I er
B
it's trying to get the crowds in
C
it's a CONFESSION
er YEAH
to ME
it's a confession of a lack of a STORY
ISN'T it
a lack of er
YEAH
you KNOW
any DEPTH REALLY
D
I've ALWAYS thought THIS
with with THESE things

APPENDIX G

Participant Comments for Study 3

Extract 1

(A = Female; B = Male)

A
right
three people
one not really taking part
and the other two
it sounds very much like a conversation
except that for me
they both have their own separate thing
that they're putting forward
the one is very practical
and the other one is more descriptive
B
yeah
now that's that's what struck me on this listening through
I heard you make that point to begin with
and it wasn't until this about third time listening through
that I noticed the discrepancy between the two
A
yeah yeah
B
that the one guy almost in spite of the other one
was trying to comment factually on the game
and the other one was expressing his reactions
to overcrowding and so on
A
that's right
the sea of people
and the hordes of children
whereas the other one
was describing the size of the opening
the number of people going through and
B
yes
and although as I said before
it still seems still

sounds to me to be like fairly genuine conversation
between those two
they in effect are not really talking to each other very much
A
no
B
so much as expressing separate attitudes
A
yes
B
to the kind of information that they're dealing with
A
yes
that's right
but I do wonder to what extent number three guy
cause they are sort of channelling it through number three
although he doesn't take an active part in it
B
no
well he was trying to keep out of it
because he knows the recording's taking place
and the other two don't
A
yeah yeah
I understand that
but it does seem on listening now
that I can sense that might be a factor that's involved
B
yeah
it could be
and I also still feel that
the one of them who's commenting emotionally on it
A
yes
B
although he uses one or two emotional terms
A
mm
B
and expressive locutions
gets across a lot of his meaning
by means of exaggerated intonation patterns
A
yes yes
I would agree with that
yes he does
I can't remember the actual words that he uses
but I can see what you mean

yes he does
he seems more excitable about the whole thing
B
yeah true
A
doesn't he

Extract 2

B
well
do you remember recording that
A
I don'
B
don't you
well
you could recognise yourself on it
couldn't you
A
was that me
B
yeah
A
that was
I was talking about the pig
B
yes
no no
the one saying most about the pig was Holly
A
oh
B
about the children's reaction to the pigs
but you were
A
in the background
B
well
in the foreground really
I was in the background
and you subsequently tell the tale about the pig
at that
the kids from Wynchmore Hill went to see
A
mm

B
um
where they were
they fed him with bits of carrot
all the kids gave him bits of carrot
do you
A
yeah yeah
B
remember that
A
mm
yes
yes I do
but what
oh I didn't remember that at all
B
what um was your reaction to that
A
well my first actually
my first reaction was thinking well
intonation certainly is playing a part here
because I was aware mostly of the way
the voice was up and down
and up and down with the excitement of it
B
Holly's voice
A
Holly's voice
B
yes
it's very expressive
isn't it
A
yes it is
B
but not only the intonation
but almost also tremendous changes of speed
so that at some points the speed
A
yes yes
B
is so extreme that the words
you could only intuit if you were a native speaker
I think
A
yes
I was also thinking of the background

funny
I've forgotten all about that incident
but I was thinking of the background
and who else was there
B
yeah
A
and it didn't dawn on me that it was me
but I thought I could hear
I could recognise that there was a male
and a sort of female who was laughing hysterically at once
yes
B
all right
that was you
A
mm
yes
well that follows.
B
but you didn't recognise your own voice
A
no I didn't
I didn't
B
well that's amazing
A
and I didn't recognise Holly's voice
I I
B
no
A
I had no recollection that that girl was Holly
B
well its a long time since this was recorded
isn't it
A
yes it is
B
way back in the mid-seventies
and you've probably not listened to it since
A
no
B
and also
the playback from that little tape recorder is not particularly good
A

but I would have thought
that I would have remembered the story
B
I would have thought so
yes
A
and I I'm still trying to think now
and I can't think what she was
where it was that they had seen this pig
B
mm
I
can you remember if you were aware of being recorded
for that one
A
no I can't
I presume we must have done it at er
B
is it the Palace's place
A
at the Palace's
yes
B
yes
I've got a feeling that um
that we'd set you and Holly up
A
aah
wait a minute
B
and you didn't know you were being recorded because
Holly's speech behaviour there is so natural and unaffected
A
umm
B
that I don't think she could have been aware of being recorded
A
I remember that we were set up for one thing
and that did we do something about um
did we do the bonfire one
B
yes
but you knew about that one
A
that's that's what I was thinking of
B
but that wasn't with Holly

A
who was that with
B
that was with that um that other girl um
a friend of Neville Carsons I think
A
ah
B
oh
his wife
Neville's wife
A
oh
I can't remember who it was
B
but this one
I've got a feeling that we'd set you up
and you didn't know you were being recorded
and we were just being stool pigeons again
and keeping quiet.
A
yes well
so was Terry there as well in the room
B
mm
A
no
I can't remember that
and no
I just didn't remember recognise Holly
and I didn't remember the story which is
B
well
that's interesting
A
mm

Extract 3

B
so that was the Pinky story
and you say you can't remember it
A
I can't remember it
no
but it sounds the sort of thing that went on

when I was at Wynchmore College
B
oh yeah
yes
well I can remember it very well
I can remember getting the recording
and er
on hearing it played it back
I can recall very well when we first recorded it
A
mm
B
what struck you about that
did presumably
you would have recognised yourself on that
even if I'd not told you that it was you
A
yeah well I
there were certain clues as well
when it was Enfield Environmental Centre obviously
B
yes
but not
not just the content
the voice quality and so on was
A
mm
B
is quite distinctive
A
actually I'm not sure that I've ever listened to these before
B
maybe not
possibly this is the first time
A
because er
these recordings were made
and I
we never listened to them again as far as
well I never
B
mm
A
listened to them again
you used them
but um
yes

would probably have clued into that one
but I um
I don't know
I don't know (sigh)
it's a long time isn't it
B
yeah
A
a lot of things have gone on since then
B
yeah
what strikes me most about it
is that almost the whole thing
as you're talking
you're either giggling
or laughing through the speech
it's a very good instance of um
of not just a laugh occurring in a sequence like a word
but affecting the speech of somebody
and everybody who talks on that
because of the funny little tale
A
mm
B
um
their voice is affected by a laugh all through
A
mm
well we were
I can't remember what situation we were in
possibly we were around the table
and had a meal or something like that
because the way the stories were told
seemed to have that sort of um atmosphere about them
and presumably the children were not around
our own children were
B
no
A
not around at that time
so we were obviously all more relaxed
B
mm
A
and they were in bed or whatever
they were away from us
so that we would tell these tales
without having to um worry about er looking after children

B
yeah
A
and they are stories obviously sparked off by children
aren't they
B
yes
can you remember the story now you've heard it
can you remember the event
I mean
it's the kind of story that could have been told dozens of times
isn't it
A
well that's what I
I mean
B
Pinky the happy pig
A
well that's the sort of thing
I say when it would have clued me in anyway
um because those sort of things seemed
seemed to go on all the time
um when I was at that particular school
we seemed to have um
numerous Pinkies
or Billy the Goat
or whatever stories that we were all involved with

Extract 4

B
this story about the mice
A
m
B
well you
presumably you've not heard that one before
A
no
I hadn't
B
what struck you about it
A
well again
it's another woman who is telling the story
isn't it

B
mm
well again
she gets very excited at some points
doesn't she
A
yes
speaks quickly
B
fairly quickly
A
yes
B
the most striking thing
for me
is the way she cuts the other chap off
who is her husband
A
oh
I see
B
when he tries to intervene
A
mm
B
and put the record straight or
A
about how she's being practical
B
she
she tries to emphasise that she's telling the actual truth
and its um
I remember from this recording
that there are several instances
where she
she really chops him off at the knee
and shuts him up
when he's wittering like an academic
and she's down to earth and er yes
I remember my comment when I first heard this was
what a battleaxe she sounded
A
yes
B
in the way she shuts him up
A
yes
she's certainly very sharp with him

and um
there's something of that element
in the way that she's telling the story
because she's so very precise
B
mm
yes
A
and she says something about the mouse
or the mice
B
yes
A
you know
she's very precise about it all and
B
yes
A
yes
and the whole story that she tells
has is sort of very logical
isn't it
B
yes
it was a very good story
the whole of it is very funny
and very carefully recounted
with lots and lots of precise detail
A
right
yes
and in fact
it sounds as if she was being factual
which is what she er said to him
that she was being absolutely factual
B
yeah
you can um
you can visualise the situation from the detail she gives
A
mm
B
which is very precise in accounting one particular occurrence
A
right er
and the news even to the paper story
B
yes

A
the newspaper that they're the things were wrapped in
so it is a very exact story
it does sound as if she would be a rather fearful woman
to encounter

Extract 5

A
but that was Holly
wasn't it
B
that was Holly
yes
A
yes yes
well again
Holly um
I can I can
she's uses a wide intonation range
doesn't she
B
and very wide speed range
A
and speed range
and there was a hint of Welsh there
wasn't there
was there a hint of Welsh in her
which I'd never noticed before
B
well I don't know
possibly
she was um
Liverpool
North Welsh
A
mm
B
mixture I think
A
mm
B
well I would never
I've never noticed it
A
mm

and the story again is focusing again on children of course
B
yeah
and very reminiscent of the previous one
in the way she told it
A
yes
B
her manner of speech was consistent
from one to the other
I think I
A
mm
that's right
yeah
B
recognised the personal idiosyncrasies
A
yeah
B
of it
at least that's the way it strikes me
A
right
yes that's true
mm I don't
I might have heard that one
I don't know
I might have heard that one before
B
m
m
A
though I can't understand why um
the background noise again
I assume was some sort of social gathering
B
yes
I think they had a meal
A
yes
um
the clatter of things and the laughter of the others
but mostly it was Holly's
the thing
the thing that struck me mostly
this high you know
the up and down

and uh then the speed
B
yeah
A
and
and at some point she's almost whispering
isn't she
B
mm
yes
she in places
I think it's the sort of thing that um
you'd really need to be a native speaker
in order to know what had been said
it was said so quickly
and quietly
A
that's right
that's right
B
but then it struck me as sounding very natural
like um natural story-telling
so I suspect that that was another one when um
she'd been set up and didn't realise
A
mm
B
she was being recorded
A
mm
B
because there's no sense that she's playing for effect there
it's all being done
A
no
B
in a normal story-telling kind of way
A
that's right
even to when she imitates the um the Susie voice
mm
B
yeah
yes
A
yes
that's as much as I can think of for that one

Extract 6

B
well
those were the same two speakers who were
who were talking about football
A
talking about football
B
along with Chris Davidson in the background
A
yes
yeah
B
what struck you there
A
well er
I think
it must be the guy who er was going on about the um hordes
the seer of or sea of
B
what was it
the sea of people
A
the sea of people at the football match
again seemed to be dominant to me in that extract
B
um
oh
I don't know whether I got that impression
there
there was a tremendous amount of overlap
they were competing for and not turn-taking
but competing with each other
weren't they
A
yeah
B
and talking simultaneously
A
mm
B
no
what struck me most of all
about that one in particular
I don't know whether it was any worse than the previous one
from a linguistic point of view

it was the kind of um linguistic untidiness
you only get in conversation
if if it's genuinely spontaneous
I
I don't think they could have been aware of being recorded
A
and also with people who knew each other quite well
B
yes
they're very relaxed
and very familiar with each other
so that they were not afraid to talk across each other
A
yes
B
without seeming rude
A
right mm
B
but its a tremendous mixture of bits and pieces
broken words
hesitations
broken constructions
and so forth
A
but all the time that one
the one guy is trying to make his point
isn't he
he's trying to get his
B
yes
rather as he did before
in the football match one
A
yes yes yes
B
yeah
A
so that's what I meant when I said he seemed dominant
he
he was trying to persist
B
I see what you mean
yes yes
A
with getting his view across
B
yeah

A
and the other two
seem to be um
having a sort of jokey reaction to everything
yeah
yes

APPENDIX H

Non-Participant Comments for Study 3

Extract 1

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
there were lots of overlapping sequences
B
yes
uhms and yeahs
and that sort of thing
it was very garbled
did you notice the way that shockingly really stood out
A
mm
B
it was the way he said it shockingly
A
was it in a pub somewhere
cos it sounded like just after the match
and they were having a drink or two
B
you mean because they sounded so garbled
A
I guess so

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

A
it's like a conversation I heard between two old men
across the bar
B
it didn't sound very spontaneous though
A
no
I guess not
B
there were too many cliches in it
A
may be they knew they were being recorded

B
I don't think so
they were talking too fast to be reading a script
A
all those people pushing
and it got quite frightening
didn't sound natural at all
B
I was wondering
whether they actually knew each other
because they didn't seem to listen to each other at all
A
uh maybe
one sounded as if he were from Bristol
B
he also tended to speak while his friend was speaking
A
yeah
agreeing with him while he was talking

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
it seems to be some discussion of a match
B
yeah
A
it's definitely about a football match
they talked about Stamford Bridge
B
it's difficult to hear on tape
because people are trying to get in on top of each other
A
a guy who was trying to make a point
kept saying it was really quite frightening
it was like talking to somebody who wasn't quite listening
he just kept repeating things
B
the second guy seemed quite sympathetic
but doesn't seem to know what it's like
the other guy has kind of experienced it all
at one point it seems they're not really talking about
the same thing
they talk about the same topic
but not about the same thing
A
one guy is talking about gates

and the other guy is talking about the sea of bodies
B
mm
A
when they talk about Chelsea and Leeds
he didn't seem so pleased about it
he said Leeds played shockingly
like he had an interest in it
B
I agree
he was quite vehement about it
when he said Leeds played shockingly

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
one seemed older than the other
and seemed more impressed by him
B
yeah oh yeah
they seemed very interested in the conversation
and there were a good deal of overlapping sequences
which shows how keen they were to talk about it
A
the one who said shockingly was definitely posh
B
I wouldn't say that I thought he was a Northerner
but not a posh one
A
quite frightening sounded quite artificial though
as if he were reading it rather than speaking
B
mm may be
I think the older one had a more pronounced accent
than the younger one
but I don't think it was artificial
A
he pauses
then repeats frightening
just to fill in a gap in the conversation

Pair 5 (A = Male; B = Female)

A
I couldn't make much of that
they seem like two interlining tracks
that just go together occasionally

B
they're both commenting on the same thing
and they're both wanting to get their word in
do you know what I mean James
A
mm
B
they're talking about the same thing
they're aware of what each other is saying
but they don't seem to be interested
in what the other one is saying
A
mm
one voice certainly seemed louder than the other
B
one dominant trend
one dominant man
A
they didn't seem particularly bothered about it
he talked about a situation
which he considered was frightening
and yet their didn't seem to be any real emotion
B
I loved his expression of the word shockingly though
sort of represented upper bourgeoisie middle class
shocking
A
he emphasises the word certainly

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
one
they were talking at incredible speed
and tend to want to get in what they want to say
before anyone else
it's not communicating
so much as giving out what you want to say
they've both got very strong accents as well
B
yes
A
very fast
very colloquial speech
B
it sounded like two friends

who were chatting over a football match
both knowing what the others opinions are
so there is no need to communicate
just talk
A
a lot of it is not so much words
as uhm blah blah blah sort of sounds
there tends to be exposturation on those kinds of word
they seem to be kind of waiting to say something
B
I couldn't understand the beginning
it sounds a completely different language
I'd try to place it as Yorkshire I think
Yorkshire
Lincolnshire
or thereabouts
A
I didn't think that the beginning was so much garbled
as that they were talking very fast to each other

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
it seemed that the people talking to each other
were very impatient with each other
they're both excited
and gabbling
and the main speaker uses words like shockingly
and frighteningly
which is very effete
shockingly didn't seem to fit in with the way he spoke
somehow
B
I think he was trying to make an impression
more than anything else
A
it sounded very contrived to me
B
they are both in their forties I'd say
A
quite frightening is odd
it's also difficult to tell what they were saying
B
it was certainly very muddled
A
yeah

I put that down to excitement
you put it down to the fact that
they were trying to impress each other
B
perhaps they had a few drinks
the subject they were talking about was exciting
but I don't think they were particularly excited
themselves
they were trying to create an atmosphere of excitement
A
it's quite repetitive
particularly the guy
who was trying to hog the conversation
the other guy's impatience came across
in the way he kept saying mm mm
I just couldn't tell what the other man said at all

Extract 2

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
she's a very nice lady
A
she was talking quite fast
and there was lots of repetition
like when she said it was definitely dead
B
yeah
A
they kept talking through each other
and kept referring to the fact that the pig really was dead
there was excitement
and it got faster
she really got carried away with the story
B
I agree
she really got quite animated
I can almost see her gesticulating

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
there's three of them there
A
nah

it's a man and a woman
B
he could sort of be interviewing her
cos her voice pitch ranged very widely
did you get the impression
she was trying to put on an I am being recorded voice
A
not really
it seemed to me that
she was trying to create an impression
she dwelt on certain things in the story
the smouldering bit
B
she came up with twice quickly
and I got the idea that it was for effect
she emphasised things
like it had been absolutely dead
I don't know what the situation was then
A
oh she was just telling a story
B
it's very difficult to get your ear in on this business

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
she's talking about a pig dying
because it's been eating too much
and the farmer is trying to keep it from his wife
B
it's a bit unusual for those people I thought
struck me as being a bit incongruous
did it strike you like that
A
I wouldn't say it was quite a really straight coherent narrative
it was caught up with emotional things
she seemed to be a little bit protective towards the farmer
somehow
B
it seemed to me
as if it were going to be a terribly amusing anecdote
but it never really finished
like it didn't have an ending
A
her tone of voice was trying to fill it all in
trying to give the whole background
and there was this pig

and the farmer didn't want his wife to know
B
yeah
it was that kind of voice
where you are trying to engage people
trying to take up their interest
but it wasn't a terrible kind of disaster
that this pig had died
it was as if it was going to be really funny
but didn't quite turn out like that

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
did you speed that one up at all
A
her voice seemed a bit high at the beginning
I thought she was very young
but she's not
she's middle aged
she was getting more excited as it went on
and she gets more wrapped up in what she was saying
then she started laughing
when she was talking about the dead pig
B
I didn't hear the beginning
but I knew they were talking about a dead pig at the end
A
the other person involved got sort of left behind
and started to listen the story
without saying anything
B
sorry I got a bit lost

Pair 5 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
aw poor pig
A
I didn't feel they were communicating
when she said poor pig
it meant nothing to her
A
to me it sounded like a woman with an audience
I've got a picture of her
early to mid thirties
with blond hair on top

B
I suppose there is a kind of humour
in the way she was telling it
A
she obviously thought it was very funny
B
mm
there is a kind of lightness in her voice
it sort of rose
and the speed of delivery was affected as well
which is suggestive of humour
A
it sounded like a nun's joke to me
a bad holiday recollection
I found it banal
and I've nothing more to say about it

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

B
one woman seems to be doing all the talking
and the other is listening
A
it seemed to be a very stilted passage
like those programmes on television
where they get two woman talking
it was a very immature kind of speech
B
she did talk very clearly though
a bit like a lecturer
she might have been talking to people who
didn't know anything about farming or whatever
A
I thought it was a racy
sort of exciting delivery
fastly said
bubbly
B
it was much clearer than the first passage for me
may be it was just the speech style
but she seemed to make everything clearer

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
I think that's a hypothetical story

an eighteen year old girl
whose gone to work on a farm
possibly a student
she's got a very kind of north country type accent
and is trying to disguise it
with the articulation of the words
very precise
she's got to be about eighteen
may be reporting back to her family
about this experience she's had
there's some kind of subterfuge about the whole thing
it's not so much that she is affecting an accent
but a mode of speaking
she says absolutely dead
which simply means deader than dead
I think she's got an audience
and wants to impress them with her percipience
her grasp of what's happened
and the way she uses language it just doesn't ring true
B
I think that it sounds like a middle aged farmer's wife
at tea talking to another farmer's wife
or some friends
and trying to make a very big episode out of a
very small incident
obviously it wouldn't be small to them
because its local and relevant
she uses different expression in her voice
emphasising some things
laughing kind of playfully
A
there's a sort of mock sincerity about the whole thing
there is amusement
interested amusement
as if she's inside the situation
it may be something quite serious
but because they are inside it
they've been through the traumas of it
and they can joke about it afterwards
B
I don't think that she's speaking from the inside
because that sort of thing happens very often on farms
I think she's seeing it from the outside
and she's sort of reporting it back
A
but people like that don't speak about things like that
in any sort of way
they just kind of ignore them

there is a distance of somebody quite involved
she's sort of excited by it
but its a very restrained kind of excitement
B
I think they might talk like that to the vicar

Extract 3

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
it's quite excited
and far more funny than the previous extracts
but it's slow
with some bits slower than others
A
sorry
I just don't agree
B
why not
A
because it gets faster as it goes on
and is very fast towards the end isn't it
B
I suppose so
but she gets really slow in telling the story
about feeding the carrots
it's like she's telling it to an audience
and trying to make contact
by emphasising the point
there are quite a lot of pauses too
B
mm
well if that's what you think
I suppose I'd better not argue

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

A
interesting woman wasn't she
B
I think she had a child with her
she's giving the child's idea of a school trip
A
mm
she seemed to know who she was talking to

perhaps they were neighbours or something
B
yes
I think she knew who she was talking too quite well
because she didn't need to kind of explain things
you know
it wasn't like telling a joke
she didn't seem to have to convince her audience
how many people do you think there are
A
I'm not sure
but I'd like to say what the role of that man was
he just seemed to sit there
and said nothing
B
yeah
his laughter was polite
A
may be they weren't very close neighbours

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
it compares with what we said about the previous extract
B
yeah
A
it was a very dramatic presentation
when she starts off
she says one of which was the pig
as if he's a kind of hero
A
they all kept giggling at the kind of things she said
it's a bit silly

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
I think I imagine her talking with her hands a lot
when she said a large pig
I could imagine her using her hands
she stressed things in certain parts
like when she said poking the carrot through

A
she sounded a bit Australian to me
but not all through

she said the pig [laid] instead of the pig [leid]

Pair 5 (Male and Female)

B
she's obviously got some kind of audience there
she paused several times
apparently waiting for somebody to nod
or say they got the point
A
I liked her little laugh
which said oh this is going to be fun
B
yes James
she's got a very fruity voice reminiscent
of well sort of actressy
as if she was putting on a show
it reminds me of JP's I've met
when they are pronouncing sentences on juveniles
just that warmth
I get that middle class aura about it all
A
I wouldn't have said that
I thought it was Southern
B
actually it reminds me of my own voice on tape
to be truthful
it's pretty awful
A
shall we proceed

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
God
it's humourless
about bloody pigs again
B
sounds to me like there is a child there
the one she spoke about
she's got that kind of laughter in her voice
when people talk to baby children
A
Jesus
I just don't know what you can say about this
it seemed to be more formal
at least more formal than the previous two tracks

she mentions something like ncl
it's a sort of more genteel speech than the other two
there is very little almost no dialect at all
no inflection

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
this is the aspiring middle class I think
B
oh I like that
A
they've got high status
there's traces of background
the blokes laughing
sounded a pretty middle class laugh
again she was trying to impress people with her wit
by her way of expressing things
like her emphasis on the word mud
and pig
that's all I've got to say about it really
B
I don't think that it is the same people as last time
if that's at all relevant
I think that it's a couple in their thirties
talking to another couple
the wife is talking about the trip they've taken
to one of these environmental study places
or perhaps it's a primary school teacher
or kindergarten teacher
or play school teacher
I don't necessarily go along with you about the elitist quality of it
A
she says [dei] twice
B
I don't think that at all
A
it's middle class
B
but Midlands middle class
middle of the road

A
but there is intellectual status
they are talking about something absolutely trivial
and there is some humour about it
the humour comes from the gap between the status

they have assumed
and the thing they were talking about

B
I don't understand that
A
there was an incongruity
between the way she was expressing things
and the thing she was talking about
B
not really
A
here we go again

Extract 4

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
it's very garbled at the beginning
and the woman has a very funny voice
it's the same woman again isn't it
A
I think so
B
there are quite a few interruptions
like however
she's got a very high voice
and a habit of going uh you know
she keeps doing that
and drags out her vowels a bit
A
she just dismisses his argument
as well as his interruptions
however is reiterated
as if she wasn't going to listen to him any more
B
his accent is very contrastive
hers sounded quite unmarked
more rp
posh

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
is that the same woman

A
I'm not sure
it's a bit higher pitched all the way through
B
yes
much higher pitched
more variation in it
she's pretty indignant
the man kept trying to break in
and contradict her
she kept just not listening
and carrying on
which is infuriating for a person
A
she sounded irritable
B
mm
A
he was having no control over her irritated burst
the second time he comes in
he said no it wasn't that
and contradicts what she was saying
but she just went straight on
she didn't want her flow to be interrupted
she was also kind of using story telling markers
B
I noticed the way she said however
whenever someone did interrupt her
she just said however
and then continued
she definitely was holding court I think
A
very fair I'd say

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
that was a bit difficult to hear
can we hear it again
B
yeah think we'd better
A
she was very indignant with the bloke
keen to get on with her story
earlier on
where he says the whole place will be overrun with mice
she cuts him off with however

it's really stressed
B
she's got a weird voice as well
there's an incredible range of intonation
and her voice was much too shrill to understand
which is one of the problems I had listening to it

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
she's got a sort of whimpering
babyish sort of voice
B
I thought she was quite decisive really
every time he tried to interrupt her
she sort of kept going
when she talks about not having let them into the garden
she ignores him
her voice gets more excited
when he starts interrupting
at the beginning they share a phrase each
but she overtakes him by about two phrases to one
she takes just takes over in the end
A
she just nagged as far as I was concerned
I could hear her tone nag nag nag nag
she keeps saying however
she's not going to listen to him
she just gets more and more dogmatic
B
yeah
I suppose she definitely knows what she wants
she sounds just like she's telling a story
A
she's got a very monotonous rise and fall though
you can imagine him saying yes dear yes dear
the voice says it all
you don't even have to see her

Pair 5 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
there again
you've got this woman telling the story
and she's not prepared to give in on her story
despite various comments that could sidetrack her
from the discussion

she seems to be ignoring them
the comments are coming from the man

A
he's got a very accusing tone
in the earlier bit
sounds as if he's in a bad mood or something
B
sounds to me as if she's told the story several times
it's almost as if she was telling a bed time story to the children
and they were going to listen
and that was that
she just totally ignored his accusing tone
and a couple of times
just sort of talked over him
A
yeah
I guess in the middle
she was just ploughing on

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

B
replay please
A
it's interesting
the way he first tries to qualify what she's said
whenever she opens her mouth
well it wasn't exactly
or it could have been he says
she seems a bit dopey
you know
the kind of person who believes that mice are capable of anything
she is a very scatty sort of person
B
she seemed to be trying to get the point over forcefully
and gives a very detailed account of what the mice were doing
A
mm
she's not very articulate though

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
I think she kind of gives herself away with however
she's either a teacher
or educated in someway

again it's the same middle class thing
perhaps a nature study teacher or something
I think I detected some traces of Yorkshire accent there
B
it sounds very pre-emptory
her husband tries to get in four times
and is summarily dismissed
A
her husband I think is from the South
B
sounds Midlands to me
the thing that struck me most
was the way she dictated the conversation
she was a bit kind of woman's lib
in that women aren't afraid of mice
you know
not bogged down by traditional fears
A
I'm usually quite good at spotting accents
don't seem to be doing too well today
B
may be the tape's a bit hazy
A
she sounded a lot more confident than the woman before

Extract 5

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
I could hardly hear what she was saying
because of all the ups and downs
she was very emphatic
when she was repeating the story
B
she is very good at telling stories this person
children take to her
she must be a teacher
A
there's not a lot more I have to say about it

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

A
very excessive in range of intonation
it is used mainly in mimicking the child

and the child's reactions
oh but I do she says
she seemed to be in control of the story's telling
B
who was she talking to there
A
I thought it was quite a close group of people
B
I think of all the extracts I've heard so far
this sounded the most natural

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
I don't know what on earth that was all about
A
oh it's a woman acting as a narrator
she's telling a story about a child
and how the child reacted
she imitates how the child sounded
like when she said oh but I do
there was a kind of childish surprise
you didn't really miss very much

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
she talks very rp really
a bit posh
and it gets louder
and then she suddenly starts mumbling
you can hardly hear what she says
there's more expression in her voice
and she starts talking through her nose at one point
A
it's very expressive though
B
the way she changes it all the time you mean
A
when she changes the tone of her voice
B
it's not just on tone
she emphasises things
and her voice goes up
I can't tell what the others are saying because its more or less her
A
seems like she had fairly cooperative listeners

from the way she's speaking

Pair 5 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
struck me that they were more enjoying
the conversation and story
than they were in the last one
because there seemed to be agreeing laughter
A
there seems to be a child there
B
there are bits where she seems to be talking to a child
A
there you are then
B
surely she's imitating what she said to the child
I do believe in fairies
there's a sort of inflection on do
A
it's the same dratted woman though
have we got her all the way through

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

B
it's becoming more and more difficult
to make any distinctions between the passages
the conversational style is very much the same
one woman addressing the other
A
yeah
B
it's the same woman I think
same kind of story-telling style
she really loves story telling
and goes into great detail
great depth
she seems to revel in the actual story telling itself
and gives all the details
she establishes an effect on the audience
I do believe in fairies
A
yes
she becomes emotionally involved with it
but it's a very indulgent way of speaking
she talks very indulgently about the child

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

B
they sound like they were girls at school together
A
the one that was hogging the conversation
sounded very Midlands
or Northern
while the one that commented
sounded very southern
in her late twenties
B
it sounded quite an authentic voice
A
it sounded superficial to me

Extract 6

Pair 1 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
they are talking through each other again
agreeing
having laughed about beer and sex
they go back to their argument
they say no but seriously
reinforcing the fact that they've always thought this for years
B
it's much like the first extract really
they behave towards each other in the same way
it's the same main speaker

Pair 2 (A = Male; B = Female)

B
unpleasant
A
unpleasant
B
yeah
A
it's kinda complacent
they were both sure of the attitudes
and likely responses of the other one

B
yeah
A
they guffawed a lot together
B
they uhmed
and aahed a lot too
A
they'd got together for some dirty laughs
they definitely knew what the others response would be
B
they talked a lot of bland cliches
compared to the woman speakers
it was quite flat in tone
the main thing was in where they came together
with the other person's response
there was no clash
not even in tone
A
there's a complete lack of any depth really
it's I've always thought this about sex
it's cheap
when he says you know
and really
it's not really saying anything
it's appealing to the other participant
and his knowledge

Pair 3 (A = Female; B = Female)

B
a bit weird that
this chap is saying it's a confession of failure
and it was cheap
the laughter was very cheap
A
it's a very male conversation
at one point
it was impossible to say what was going on
because they were all talking together
would you say that

B
yeah
I think so
it's much easier to hear fellas voices
they've got a lower range

Pair 4 (A = Female; B = Female)

A
they definitely agree with each other
and help each other along
the bloke seems to be having difficulty restraining himself
because he's stumbling over his words all the time
they're probably contemporaries
and seem very like each other
B
seem like solid citizens
though I can't agree with what they are saying
it's all very good natured
though when they were laughing
they sounded embarrassed
A
one was giving off really high flown ideas
the others were just laughing at him

Pair 5 (A = Male; B = Female)

A
I quite liked that one
one man again making free with his opinions
the other one is trying to interrupt
and he just talks straight over him
B
about the only thing they seem to agree on is beer and sex
I can't think what else to say about that one

Pair 6 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
the whole thing is humourless
there's a great bawdy laugh in the background
when sex is mentioned
they are obviously friends
and basically agree with each other
he is trying to come over as the educated opinion on things
and his mates agree with him
he's trying to come over as educated
and informed on these things
but nevertheless he can't resist a quick giggle as well
they are all trying to make an educated conversation
when he said I always feel this way about these things
he seemed to be trying to project an image
citizen

or cinema critic
it's very similar to the first tape as well
B
my general impression is that the men's ones
were less coherent
where there is more than one person who's telling a story
everyone joins in more
it might be to do with the subject matter
because when the woman were speaking
they didn't know the story
and the audience were indulgent
whereas the men were speaking about matters
that everybody cared about

Pair 7 (A = Male; B = Male)

A
well
when he said trouble
I thought this man's from the South
it's in lack of story too
it's one of these hybrid things again
B
I agree
it could be the first two
who were going on about Chelsea
A
there definitely seemed to be a pub thing
pub type humour
take the piss out of your friends
it's the same sort of thing I found appalling about the first one
it's really effete you know
B
but the whole point of going to a football match is for the thrusts
and throwings about
the bloke was reactionary
but carefree
he was trying to go along with the attitude
that some people must go along for the beer
but I don't think
that he was trying to impose his opinions on anybody
or whoever was listening to him
A
perhaps it's somebody who was born in the North
but who now lives in the South
B
it sounds like two bankers

trying to impress each other
or insurance brokers
letting out the pressure
they didn't know each other very well
it's I must try and impress this guy
with the words I use
and how I say things
A
I don't know if I agree with that either
but they didn't sound like people who knew each other very well
there's a kind of nervous laughter about the conversation
B
but many pub conversations are like that aren't they
conversations between people who know each other
are pretty well relaxed
not like this
A
I don't know really
you don't get many conversations that are that relaxed
although this is only my personal view
they're not the sort of person I'd like
but I don't go along with the stock-broker idea
you don't get many stock-brokers going along to watch Chelsea
B
why not
A
it doesn't seem right
B
may be they are down to earth blokes
A
they didn't sound very educated
stock-brokers tend to be Harlequins Twickenham
B
we've got an insurance man at home just sounds like that
A
yeah
as you say he's certainly used to talking to people
perhaps he's a salesman
B
I get the impression
that he's not shy about anything
he's not shy about expressing his opinion any way
he could be a shop manager couldn't he
A
very facile
and platitudinous
he is the kind of bloke who has a great theory of the world

people resorting to sex
and that kind of thing
he sounds to be one of those people
who really hog the conversation
B
like I said
it's like the first conversation
he's the sort of bloke who has a monologue
rather than a conversation

APPENDIX I

List of Labov and Fanshel's (1977: 61) Speech Actions

1. Meta-linguistic

initiate interrupt redirect	continue respond repeat reinforce	end signal completion withdraw

2. Representations

A-*events* (in A's biography)

A	B	
give information express F demonstrate refer	reinforce acknowledge	

D-*events* (disputable)

A	B	A
assert give evaluation give interpretation give orientation	deny agree support give reinterpretation	contradict support

3. Requests

A	B	A
request X interrupt redirect	give X [carry out] put off	acknowledge reinstate redirect retreat mitigate
	refuse with account refuse with account	renew accept reject withdraw in a huff

4. Challenges

A	B	A
initiate interrupt redirect	continue respond repeat reinforce	end signal completion withdraw

X = action
information
confirmation
agreement
evaluation
interpretation
sympathy

F= belief
uncertainty
exasperation
deference

APPENDIX J

List of Kreckel's Metapragmatic Verbs (Generated in Study V - 1981: 136)

Metapragmatic categories	Frequency	Metapragmatic categories	Frequency
accusing	1	inquiring	8
acknowledging	19	insisting	20
agreeing	15	insulting	1
amplifying	1	intensifying	2
answering	2	interjecting	3
appealing	13	joking	1
assenting	11	justifying	10
asserting	9	making observation	11
attacking	2	making supposition	1
brushing off	4	modifying	1
challenging	22	negating	9
clarifying	3	objecting	13
commanding	1	observing	7
commenting	5	ordering	3
complaining	1	pacifying	9
compromising	3	postulating	2
conceding	20	predicting	2
confirming	8	protesting	3
contradicting	15	provoking	8
declaring	15	qualifying	10
defending	8	questioning	12
demanding	2	reasoning	1
demand. agreement	2	reasserting	5
demand. confirmation	2	rebuffing	1
demand. opinion	1	recapitulating	2
demonstrating	1	regretting	1
demurring	1	rejecting	4
denying	12	repeating	18
describing	2	reproaching	2
disagreeing	13	requesting	2
dismissing	9	requesting agreement	5
dissenting	3	requesting attention	1
doubting	2	requesting information	8
emphasizing	5	requesting opinion	4
evading	15	responding	7
evoking	1	ridiculing	2
exclaiming	1	specifying	3

exemplifying	7	stating	20
explaining	3	suggesting	3
expressing	1	summing up	1
expressing opinion	1	taunting	5
generalizing	1	teasing	7
giving information	4	threatening	6
giving opinion	1	underlining	3
giving reason	7	urging	2
inferring	3	warning	18

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