VARIATION IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE IN AND BEYOND THE ENGLISH FOREIGN

LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Summary

This study is concerned with one of the most interesting and the least well-researched areas in contemporary research on classroom interaction: that of the discourse variability exhibited by participants. It investigates the way in which the language of native speakers (NSs) as well as that of non-native speakers (NNSs) may vary according to the circumstances under which it is produced. The study, therefore, attempts to characterise the performance of both NSs and NNSs (with particular emphasis placed on the latter) in various types of interaction in and beyond the EFL classroom. These are: Formal Interview (FI), Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI), Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI), Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD), and Informal Conversation (IC).

The corpus of the study consisted of four NSs and fifteen NNSs. Both a video and a tape recording was made for each type of interaction, with the exception of the IC which was only audio-recorded so as not to inhibit the natural use of language. Each lasted for 35 minutes.

The findings of the study mark clearly the distinction between the "artificiality" of classroom interaction and the "naturalness" or "authenticity" of non-classroom discourse. Amongst the most interesting findings are the following: Unlike both FCI and ICI, in the FI, ICD, and IC, the language of NNSs was characterised by: greater quantity of oral output, a wider range of errors, the use of natural discourse strategies such as holding the floor and self-correction, and a greater number of initiations in both ICD and IC. It is suggested that if "natural" or "authentic" discourse is to be promoted, the incorporation of FI, ICD, and IC into the EFL classroom activities is much needed.

The study differs from most studies on classroom interaction in that it attempts to relate work in the EFL classroom to the "real" world as its prime objective.

Key Terms
Discourse Variability
Classroom Interaction
Non-native Speakers
Naturalness

To my parents,

With great respect and obliged gratitude.

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Last, but not least, I thank Helen for her efficiency in typing this thesis; and I thank Mary for making the final corrections.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Preface to the Study

Everybody knows, or thinks they know, that the language of the classroom is not like the language of the "real" world. It is something of a cliche - it is something that teachers acknowledge with a shrug of the shoulders whenever they are asked - that the language of the classroom is not like the language of the "real" world. Indeed, a great deal has been said about the inauthenticity of the language of the classroom as a learning environment: and a great deal has been written in general support of this thesis, which is hardly contentious. Less than one might expect, however, has been said by way of proving it, nor by way of defining the manner in which it is different and the possible implications for classroom practice. This thesis attempts part of this task.

The thesis is, therefore, concerned broadly speaking with an area of discourse variability, and I shall begin by giving some relevant background to this area.

1.1.1 Discourse Variability

The study of variability perhaps derives ultimately from Labov and is grounded historically in the debate between Chomsky (for whom, crudely speaking, language is system) and Labov (for whom language is variety). It is not worth restating the Labovian case, or discussing his work in detail. One point, however, might be mentioned: the so-called "observer's paradox". By this Labov means that good data requires formal systematic observation, but this inhibits access to the vernacular or informal style which is the

main goal of linguistic investigation in the study of language
variation.

I mention this only because I have been aware of the problem of
collecting data in situations designed to be "genuine". It is not a
problem I have attempted to solve. However, the effect of the
observer's paradox is to make "genuine" language less so, and since
I contend that there is a major difference between non-genuine
classroom language and genuine language beyond the classroom, I have
assumed that the "paradox" will work to lessen differences in my
results rather than artificially magnify them. The "paradox" is,
therefore, something I have felt able to ignore, though with
misgivings.

The study of variation has tended, inevitably and naturally, to
mean variation according to the "context of situation", to use
Firth's famous phrase (Firth, 1957); contemporary linguists and ELT
are much occupied with just this problem. Indeed, variability is a
characteristic of all language use in different contexts of
situation. Ellis (1985) has considered variability in language use
and summed it up like this:

> Language use is characterised by systematic and
> non-systematic variation. Systematic variation can
> be explained with reference to both situational and
> linguistic factors, which determine which variants
> are used where, when, and how ... One type of non-
> systematic variation is free variation. Linguistic
> forms which are initially used in free variation
> may later be used systematically to convey
> different meanings. (p.81)

Variability is also a characteristic of the interlanguage of
L2/FL learners. Ellis (1985) describes and illustrates the presence
of both systematic contextual variability and non-systematic free

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variability in interlanguage. The learner extends the language forms he has acquired to additional linguistic contexts. He also develops a clear form-function relationship to resolve the free variability in his interlanguage. Learners systematically vary their choice of interlanguage forms according to whether they call upon a vernacular style in unplanned discourse or a careful style in planned discourse. The variation depends on the extent to which they monitor their own language. Close attention to language forms is likely to result in the learners' use of the most advanced interlanguage forms; and on the other hand, a low level of monitoring will result in "natural" style where accuracy of forms is not the main concern. Thus, a greater or lesser degree of conscious attention on the part of the learners may result in a greater number of errors and so forth. This question of contextual variability is important in SLA. Language development, according to Ellis, occurs in a gradual extension of language from formal to progressively informal styles on the one hand and from simple to complex linguistic contexts on the other.

This observation is similar to those of Dickerson (1975) and Schmidt (1977) on contextual variability. Dickerson, for instance, has observed the change in the L2 learners' linguistic behaviour according to the verbal task. Her findings report that L2 learners use the correct phonological variants in situations where they can audiomonitor their performance. Similarly, Schmidt (1977) has found that Arabic-speaking students learning English were more accurate in pronouncing /ð/ in a formal task than in an informal task. These learners also exhibited the same patterns of this style-shifting in

their native language, Arabic. Tarone (1983) also investigated the effect of situational context on interlanguage styles. The change occurs on a continuum ranging from the vernacular when the learner is not paying attention to the language, to the careful style when the learner is not attending to his speech. In a word, several studies confirm the fact that when learners monitor their own performance they produce more accurate variants of the language either in phonology (Dickerson, 1975; Schmidt, 1977) or in grammatical features (Tarone, 1983, 1985; Schmidt, 1980; Lococo, 1976.)

Like non-native speakers (NNSs), native speakers' (NSs) language is variable. For example, NSs adapt their speech when addressing NNSs, perhaps by simplification (or perceived simplification) depending on the level of the learners and the role of participants (Ellis, 1985; Scarcella and Higa, 1981). This sort of speech is known as "foreigner talk" discourse and was first examined by Ferguson (1975). Thus, it should be noted that NSs do not speak to their students in the same way that they speak to their colleagues or a headmaster. In fact, I offer further evidence in the course of this thesis as to how NSs vary and simplify their input to NNSs in different circumstances or in various types of interaction. We shall also see how NNSs vary their language in and beyond the classroom: their restricted or free responses, their focus on accuracy and fluency in various types of interaction are a few examples of this sort of variation, as we shall see.

This question of variability is significant for language teaching purposes. It tells us that language is not a stable system; rather, it should be adapted to meet the particular needs of certain

situations. It tells us how, where, and why a particular linguistic feature should be used in a particular context of situation. It may be hoped that a realisation of these particular needs will help us select an effective methodology to reach our goals.

1.1.2 Functions of Language in Discourse

From the above it will be seen that modern interlanguage studies are beginning to obtain a reasonably clear picture of the development of second language learners with reference to the way they learn and use the analytical aspects of language - phonology, grammar, and to a lesser extent discourse. However, little attempt has been made to examine the way learners use their interlanguage to perform various language functions. The analogy is often made between first language acquisition and second language learning, but despite this and the amount of work which has gone into the study of the infant's slowly expanding functional capacity (Halliday, 1973) there has been little emphasis at any time in the study of SLA on how learners deploy language to fulfil particular functions.

It is not the purpose of the present research to explore this in any detail, though I wish to take up some points later in the analysis of the data in Chapter 6. It is, however, worth prefacing a study of classroom and beyond-classroom language with a brief glance at some major functional divisions: to remind ourselves of what language is for, and what it is for in the classroom.

There are of course two different levels here. One is the level at which things ostensibly happen in the classroom, the other is the level at which they really happen. Thus, ostensibly, in a communicative classroom language is used to perform any and every

kind of function, except perhaps the more highly literary or the more narrowly narrative (narratives are not interactive, therefore less communicative). But what really happens, it might be argued, is that no language function exists in the classroom except occasional directives to do with classroom management ("open your books"), and the metalinguistic. That is, very little classroom language is really language: it is simply about language. Its major function is [as Brown and Yule (1983a) would have it], "transactional". The teacher uses the language for the transmission of known information and the evaluation of the students' responses rather than the exchange of unknown information in genuine or natural discourse. This brings us into the area of "authenticity", and I shall look briefly at this in the following section.

However, a standard division of language into functions was given by Hymes (1962) who proposes seven types of language functions: expressive/emotive; directive/conative/persuasive; poetic; contact (physical or psychological); metalinguistic (focusing on meaning); referential; and contextual/situational. One might argue that many of these are hardly ever present in the classroom ("emotive" is seldom an appropriate word for the language of the EFL classroom) and none except "metalinguistic" are often there.

Brown and Yule (1983a) also label the major functions of language under two main divisions: "transactional" and "interactional". The "transactional" dimension is concerned with the expression of "content" and the transmission of "factual or propositional information" and is mainly of interest to linguists, philosophers of language and psycholinguists. The "interactional" view is concerned

with the use of language to establish and maintain social relationships and is mainly the concern of sociologists. This is the main domain of conversational analysis, where an emphasis on the analysis of the use of language to negotiate role-relationship and turn-taking procedures is placed. These two major functions of language correspond to other classifications. Brown and Yule make it clear:

> Our distinction, 'transactional/interactional', stands in general correspondence to the functional dichotomies ... 'referential/emotive' (Jakobson, 1960) 'ideational/interpersonl' (Halliday, 1970) and descriptive/social-expressive' (Lyons, 1977). (p.1)

Halliday (1970, 1978) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify three functions that are relevant to the understanding of linguistic structures: the "ideational", the "interpersonal", and the "textual". The "ideational" function of language can be seen through the way language is used to express the speaker's experience of the real world. The "interpersonal" function of language serves to maintain social relations: for example by asking and answering questions and getting things done. The "textual" function of language provides the making of links within the text and the situation in which it is used. Sentences, therefore, are linked through cohesive relations in discourse. These functions explain how to relate the internal patterns of language to its realisation in actual use in the society. It is through these functions that language preserves its naturalness in being related to the social and psychological factors of our existence. This factor becomes clearer when we reflect on our daily interactions. When we read a piece of news, for example, we associate it with our existing knowledge of the world.

Philosophers of language have also discussed language functions and the dilemma of form and function by using speakers' intent as a device to interpret utterances. They considered the utterance as a functional unit in communication. This type of analysis draws on the work on speech acts by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). These philosophers focused their attention on referential uses of language. Their work refers to the fact that some utterances appear as statements but they perform an action, for example, that of promising.[1] This philosophical approach to the study of language functions represents a move away from the study of individual elements of language towards a specification of the uses of whole sequences of these elements in the act of speaking. It incorporates the context of utterances as part of this explanation. It also refers to the cognitive and emotive states of the speaker and the learner when using language as a tool for social interaction.

I would argue that none of the above views are really in conflict. Language is used to understand the world, change it, and express our feelings towards it; and any subdivisions are bound to incorporate the same truths in similar ways. For my purposes, I would wish to make only the obvious point: that even on an optimistic view of how likely genuine interaction in the classroom is, these functions are going to be poorly achieved, never achieved, and in some cases never attempted.

1.1.3 Artificiality and Authenticity in Discourse

Any investigation of formal classroom interaction will show the artificiality of the language used in this particular type of discourse. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have investigated the

language of the classroom as a formal and an artificial setting in which there are "clearly recognizable roles, objectives, and conventions". They were interested in this sort of situation in which there are predetermined rights for the teacher to speak first, last and most, to interrupt and introduce the topic of discussion. Their interest in this type of discourse has led them to avoid other informal situations or what they called "ordinary" conversation as the "least.overtly rule-governed form of discourse".

The reader will see in the course of this thesis that classroom language is artificial in many ways: the teacher's simplified input, his focus on accuracy rather than fluency, his use of display questions that restrict students' responses, and his greater number of initiations are just a few examples of the artificiality of the language of the classroom, as we shall see. This type of discourse is usually described as "artificial", "contrived" and deliberately "planned" for practising the language. It contrasts with other types of language produced in real communicative discourse, described as "natural" or "authentic". This type of discourse is used to describe the informal and genuine conversation in the real world where language is constructed in real-time to cope with situational demands. This concept of naturalness is expressed in the literature by such words as "spontaneous", "unplanned" and "casual".

However, it is not enough for natural discourse to be "casual" in order to be "authentic". For natural discourse to be authentic, it must be created by the interpretation of the interaction between the

reader/learner and the text which carries the intentions of the writer/speaker. Thus Widdowson (1979) states:

> I think it is probably better to consider authenticity not as a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which is bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver. (p.165)

Therefore authenticity, according to Widdowson, exists when the receiver responds appropriately to the intentions of the writer/speaker. These intentions become more apparent in spoken discourse where the negotiation of meanings is typical. In written discourse, these intentions are made explicit through a certain set of conventions which define the kind of discourse. These conventions may be linguistic, related to the shared knowledge of the language code. They might also be rhetorical, related to the shared knowledge of how the code is used in a particular kind of discourse.

Authenticity in language teaching will be achieved when the teacher uses certain effective methodologies that bring about a congruence between the intentions of the writer/speaker and the appropriate response of the receiver. In this sense, Widdowson concludes:

> There is no such thing as authentic language data. Authenticity is realised by the appropriate response and the language teacher is responsible for designing a methodology which will establish the conditions whereby this authenticity can ultimately be achieved. (pp.171-172)

Bearing these factors in mind, classroom teaching should be geared to engage FL learners with authentic discourse. To that end, materials based on interests and experiences related to the learners that would bring about the congruence between the writer's/teacher's

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intentions and that of the learners through the negotiation of meaning is much needed. It is through this sort of authentic discourse that FL learners acquire the skills necessary for real communication: how to ask for information, to use communicative strategies of natural discourse and so forth.

The question remains of how to attain this goal. This is a task that the present research has set out to explore.

1.2 Rationale and Importance of the Study

ESL/EFL classroom studies are limited in scope in that they are not related to the outside world (see the review of literature in Chapter 3). This in itself is a major shortcoming which inhibits a better understanding of classroom interaction. The present research, therefore, takes the study of interaction beyond the classroom as a point of departure. The impetus has been derived from the realisation that this is the least well-researched area of NNS student interaction.

A further impetus for the present study has come from the belief that formal EFL classrooms have failed to provide an adequate grounding for using the language outside the classroom. A close examination of classroom interaction shows that it is based on imparting knowledge about acceptable language forms that could be used in the "real" world. Communicative activities are usually designed for this purpose. Indeed, most language learning programmes focus on the development of oral communication skills through the use of dialogues. However, it should be pointed out that such a conception of communication does not correspond to that

of the "real" world. It is often the case that such communicative activities can hardly achieve the target goals. As d'Anglejan (1978) points out:

> What is commonly regarded as communication in the second language classroom rarely corresponds to any acceptable definition of what might be termed communication outside the classroom. (p.225)

Given this, EFL learners find themselves unable to assign any communicative value to the forms of the language they learn through controlled interaction, which can hardly lead to genuine communication. The explicit teaching of grammar does not transfer readily to situations out of the classroom where learners draw upon their knowledge of the language in face-to-face interchange with other speakers. Furthermore, their lack of knowledge of the strategies and rules of discourse may act as a hindrance to successful communication. This lack of knowledge of the rules of discourse explains the numerous difficulties that face FL learners when they venture to use the target language outside the classroom. A knowledge of these strategies and rules is therefore essential for both the language teacher and the learners. These can facilitate the understanding of natural discourse in the same way that a knowledge of the linguistic rules can facilitate the understanding of syntax and phonology.

If it is true that classroom interaction inhibits the use of authentic language, then this problem should be investigated by a detailed analysis of the various types of interaction in and beyond the classroom. What the present study, therefore, is concerned with is the provision of natural opportunities that would promote communication in a foreign language and would ultimately acquaint

the learners with the strategies and rules required for successful communication. The most important one of these opportunities, as the present thesis suggests, can be better provided by getting the learners engaged in a discussion. Indeed, it is believed that the most natural way of practising the use of English is through discussion. As Ur (1981) puts it:

> The most natural and effective way for learners to practise talking freely in English is by thinking out some problem or situation together through verbal interchange of ideas; or in simpler terms, to discuss. (p.2)

Incidentally, it is through this sort of discursive and conversational skill that FL learners acquire the language and formulate correct hypotheses about its forms. As Hatch (1978b) puts it:

> One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed. (p.404)

The study derives its significance from the fact that paramount importance is attached to meaningful communicative language use akin to authentic natural conversation. Naturally, the importance of language communication in the EFL classroom has often been pointed out, for instance, by Allwright (1984):

> ... communication practice in the classroom is pedagogically useful because it represents a necessary and productive stage in the transfer of classroom learning to the outside world. (pp.156-157)

Allwright puts forward four arguments for advocating communication in the language learning classroom. The quotation above presents the first argument. The other three are: 1) the process of communication is, in an important sense, a learning

process, 2) learning becomes more effective when learners are deeply involved in communication, 3) learning may be enhanced by peer discussion. Allwright also argues that "classroom interaction is important because interaction is the <u>sine qua non</u> of classroom pedagogy", (p.159). Allwright refers here to the interaction that takes place between the teacher and the learners and not to any type
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of communication.

The study, therefore, attempts to highlight the importance of communication for FL learners in and beyond the classroom. This issue is of growing interest to foreign language acquisition researchers, to applied linguists and to language teachers.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Previous studies of classroom interaction have indicated that it differs in a number of systematic ways from other kinds of speech situation (Bellack et al., 1966; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The present study has set out to investigate what these differences are. The objectives of the study can be summarised in one basic question: How can work in the EFL classroom be related to the "real" world outside?

In particular the study aims to give answers to the following questions:

1) What are the major measurable characteristics of NSs-NNSs interaction in various environments within and beyond the classroom?

2) How are any of the differences in this interaction to be characterised?

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3) With particular reference to the role of the teacher, what are the consequences for the profession of any differences found in the interaction?

These are my main objectives: but they imply a consideration of how interaction changes in more or less _formal_ circumstances, and what we mean by _naturalness_ in language use, in particular, amongst other things.

This sort of investigation focuses on the sociolinguistic norms realised in communicative behaviour in the target situations. It examines the effects of situational and contextual factors on FL learning and the extent to which NNSs interact in authentic language use in the target language in and beyond the classroom. Answers to the above questions would enable us to refine language teaching in a way that leads to successful meaningful interaction, which must therefore result in effective language acquisition.

It is worth mentioning that the circumstances in which communication takes place outside the classroom cannot be reproduced exactly in the classroom. What the teacher can do is to bring certain communicative tasks and engage the students in meaningful interaction that mirrors actual communication. In other words, the teacher is required to create a simulation of the situation in which the learner is supposed to use the language outside the classroom.

However, it may be the case that the target situation cannot be simulated. In this case, the aim of such communicative tasks would be to equip the learner with resources that could extend his

knowledge and use of the target language in various contexts. One of these communicative activities that learners need most is how to take part in a group discussion. Another would be how to engage in an interview, a type of interaction which is extremely common. Thus Wolfson (1976) considers the formal interview "a recognised speech event in our society".[4] For Wolfson, it is a natural event:

> Although being interviewed is hardly an everyday experience for most people, there is nothing "artificial" or "unnatural" about it, and there is no reason to believe that the speech produced by the subject in such an interaction is anything but natural for an interview. (p.185)

If the interview is a natural "speech event", and if natural discourse is to be encouraged in the EFL classroom, the EFL teacher should, therefore, prepare his learners to have the skills required for the development of question-answer sequences and the negotiation of meaning in an intelligible natural interview similar to what happens in natural discourse.

The pattern of communication that would realise the above objectives will be derived from the relationships among input, interaction, and the nature of the communicative task. This can be illustrated by the following figure adapted from Vogel et al. (1983).

Language Input
- simple
- focus on fluency

→ Materials
- interesting and related to personal experiences.
- related to certain demands.

Interaction
- focus on message
- exchange of information

→ Methodology
- promotes interaction and involvement in discourse.

Demands of the Task
- real communication

→ Tasks
1. Formal Interview (FI)
2. Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)
3. Informal Conversation (IC).

Figure 1: A framework for a communicative discourse in the EFL classroom.

Input

For authentic communication to develop in the EFL classroom, the input provided to EFL learners must be simple and the focus should

be placed on the fluency rather than the accuracy of their oral output.

Interaction

The learners receive the input and they need to discuss it through an interactive process. The interaction should focus on the meaningful and genuine exchange of information. It is through this process that learners learn to engage in authentic discourse provided that tasks encourage genuine communication. Incidentally, it is also through this sort of interaction that learners develop hypotheses about the language and acquire its forms.

Demands of the Task

Tasks are the means by which a context of meaning is established for interaction. Thus providing interesting input, promoting interaction, and presenting real-world communicative topics would create a communicative learning environment.

Methodology: Materials and Tasks

The methodology would promote opportunities for authentic communication by providing interesting materials and by the way tasks are presented. Therefore, the materials should focus on stimulating and interesting topics related to personal experiences such as the topic I have used for my data collection: the discussion of marriage in the learners' society in which an information gap exists between the teacher and the learners. The materials should also focus on certain activities that the learners need most for genuine discourse outside the classroom. For these purposes, tasks such as formal interview (FI), informal classroom discussion (ICD) or informal conversation (IC) are set up.

Within this framework of reference, the present research has set out to establish possible ways and means to promote natural discourse in the EFL classroom. It is believed that such a framework of reference provides the basis for a successful language teaching programme.

For ease of reference, I attach here a brief summary of the contents of each chapter.

This thesis consists of eight chapters, this introduction being the first.

Chapter Two deals with some approaches to and analyses of classroom interaction. It reviews approaches and methods by which classroom interaction has been undertaken. In particular, it deals with three basic approaches to classroom research, which I refer to as Interaction Analysis (systematic approach), the anthropological approach, and the discourse analysis approach. There is also in this chapter a discussion of the proposed approach to the present research.

Chapter Three is devoted to a review and evaluation of previous research in and beyond the EFL classroom. Due to the large number of studies in classroom interaction, many of marginal relevance, only a few are reviewed in detail. The least well-researched area, it has been discovered, is that type of research which deals with a comparison between classroom interaction and other settings - hence, in part, the present research.

Chapter Four presents a description of the subjects, and the circumstances under which the research has taken place. It also

explores the logic behind some of the distinctions that I have made regarding different types of interaction. It therefore includes a discussion of some results.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven are devoted to detailed analyses of the data.

Chapter Five deals with the input and output in NSs-NNSs discourse. By input here it is meant the language addressed to NNSs and by output the language produced by them. There is an examination of both kinds of language in this chapter. In other words, it offers a linguistic description of NSs-NNSs discourse.

Chapter Six deals with features of NSs- NNSs interaction. In particular it deals with the following major issues that could be found in this sort of interaction: question types, patterns of interaction, repetitions, expansions, and conversational frames.

Chapter Seven presents a close examination of natural spoken discourse: the principles, strategies and turn-taking procedures of natural discourse. On the basis of such an examination, more evidence is provided in favour of supporting that a particular type of the data of the present research is considered to be formal or informal/natural.

In these three chapters attempts have been made to demonstrate that the informal or natural type of interaction has better effects on language learning and language acquisition.

The final chapter, <u>Chapter Eight</u>, has a summary of the main findings of the study. It also includes the implications of the study, and some suggestions for further research.

Notes

1. Speech acts, according to Austin, are classified as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. A locutionary act is an act of saying something. An illocutionary act is "the performance of an act in saying something such as asking or answering and announcing a verdict or an intention." A perlocutionary act is the act which is performed by means of saying something, such as to persuade somebody to do something.

2. The term "discussion" can be used broadly to include anything from the simplest question-answer exchanges to the most complex debates about issues of social and philosophical debates. It is in this broad sense of the word that the term is used in this thesis.

3. The terms "communication" and "interaction" are used in the present research to refer to live person-to-person, face-to-face talk. However, they could also refer to learners working silently at their desks trying to solve communication problems as they read the written instruction (the Bangalore project is a case in point here). In this latter sense, the term "communication" means interacting "with text".

4. Wolfson, however, considers the so-called spontaneous interview "is not a speech event". This kind of interview, he believes, "has no rules of speaking to guide the subject or the interviewer". Wolfson cites the field work researcher trying to elicit some information from his subject as an example of this sort of interview. Here the researcher violates the rules of speaking for an interview in trying to let his subjects speak as freely as they could in a way similar to an informal conversation. Wolfson comments:

   > ... this is not only an unexpected turn of events, but a truly unnatural speech situation. The subject is frequently quite mystified about why a total stranger, armed with a tape recorder, should want to engage him in conversation. (p.196)

   Wolfson provides the evidence that people feel very uncomfortable when placed in such a situation.

Classroom Research: Some Approaches and Analyses

In this chapter I look briefly at various ways in which studies on classroom interaction have been undertaken. Before doing that, a few brief general remarks on these sorts of studies are not out of place.

In his review of the early investigations of classroom research, Wragg (1975) notes that "British journals publishing educational research articles prior to the mid 1960s produced almost nothing about teaching/learning processes based on live observation of classroom events" (p.13). After 1965, individual investigators began to draw inspiration from research in the United States, notably by Flanders, Goffman, Jackson, and others. It was not until 1970, Wragg notes, that researchers began to meet as a group and exchange their ideas about classroom observation.

A similar note is provided by Stubbs (1976a) who remarks that "it is only in the last ten years [that is since 1966] that descriptions of classroom interaction have begun to appear" (p.77). As a comment on these studies, Stubbs points out that they contain interesting insights into teacher and pupil communication in real classrooms, despite their fragmentary nature. He states that "relatively little educational research, paradoxical as this may seem, has been based on direct observation and recording of the teaching process, as it happens, in the classroom itself" (p.68).

Stubbs' remarks express the urgent need (10 years ago) for actual direct research in classroom settings. The lack of and the need for

such research is also pointed out by Delamont (1976, p.43). She states that "most of the research has not considered classroom behaviour at all". A lot of things, she notes, have been written about teachers and their profession, but "our knowledge about the teaching profession is totally divorced from our knowledge about job performance".

Similarly, in their review of educational research in Britain, Hamilton and Delamont (1974, p.1) stated that "the classroom has been .... a marginal preoccupation for educational research". The classroom has been a "black box" providing a vehicle for input and output. "Even the literature 'on teacher effectiveness' contains few studies which involve a direct examination of teaching processes". More recently, they point out (still, of course, pre-1974) a shift of emphasis has taken place on the process of learning and teaching inside the "black box".

Such notes of disquiet are, as far as I can establish, absent in present-day commentators. The reason, one may presume, is the extraordinary influence in this country since around 1976, of the Sinclair-Coulthard model, and the degree of satisfaction researchers have felt with it, and the growing interest in classroom research, associated partly with this work, is summarised in Chaudron (1988). In the case of Delamont, one might add that her dissatisfaction stems perhaps to some degree from a desire to persuade on behalf of Interaction Analysis: but her point is no less valid. Until recent times, there was little research in the area, and even less of it took place within a principled coherent body of research. Even the work of such an influential figure as Barnes (1969) whom I discuss

in more detail below (pp.63-67) remains largely anecdotal and does so without the methodological commitment to anecdote which ethnomethodology may seem to imply.

However, despite the historical changes wrought since by Discourse Analysis, Stubbs' point remains generally valid:

> No single approach is widely accepted in studies of classroom language. Different methods are used to do fieldwork, to collect, analyse and present data, according to different underlying objectives. (p.72)

In order to choose his own approach, the researcher should be, at least, aware of the different approaches in the field. This Chapter will deal with three basic approaches to classroom research on second language learning: Interaction Analysis, the anthropological approach, and the discourse analysis approach. The first of these approaches is, of course, one invented by Flanders and accepted by his successors (e.g. Moskowitz, 1970; Grittner, 1969; Delamont, 1976); the others would, equally obviously, not necessarily be accepted without caveat by those I include under their banners. The scope and limitations of each approach will be briefly discussed. [For a detailed and authoritative review of methodological issues in L2 classroom research, the reader is referred to Long (1980a).] Long considers in detail the strengths and weaknesses of Interaction Analysis and the anthropological approach, and argues for a synthesis of the two in an approach which avoids the limitations of each while taking advantage of the strengths of both. Allwright (1983) also briefly reviews L2 classroom process research from its origin in teacher education programmes through Interaction Analysis, to ethnographic studies.

I have spent most time on Interaction Analysis here not merely because Sinclair and Coulthard is discussed elsewhere, but as a means of emphasising the major relevant distinction in classroom research methodologies: that between objective (or ostensibly objective) systematic study, and the openly subjective studies of ethnomethodology.

2.1 Interaction Analysis

One way of dealing with classroom research is to prespecify certain systems or instruments before the time of observation. Such instruments are expected to collect some information about the questions the researcher has in mind. Long (1980a) commenting on these instruments states the following:

> ... there are now at least 20 such systems for coding teacher and student behaviour in second language classrooms .... In some of these, verbal interaction is classified as discrete linguistic or pedagogic events; in others it is treated as interrelated units of discourse. (p.3)

Long's twenty systems range alphabetically from that of Allwright (1977) to that of Wragg (1970). (See Long, p.4).

In pointing out the advantages of Interaction Analysis, Hamilton and Delamont (1974) note that it uses simple systems for most of the observation: "they are well tried, reliable, and easy to learn" (p.3). These systems are suitable for studying large numbers of classrooms using statistical analysis techniques to interpret the data collected. However, it is not the feasibility of the systems that matters. Long maintains that the value of the observational systems "resides in their potential for revealing insights into the relationships between classroom processes and second language learning" (p.12).

Long criticises Interaction Analysis instruments of second language learning and teaching for the following reasons: the focus on teacher behaviour in most systems is limited and superficial; Interaction Analysis "ignores non-verbal communication altogether"; the analysis is seen from "the observer's point of view rather than the participants' in the interaction", and the analysis "codes surface behaviour and so may miss the communicative value of remarks." (pp.13-15)

These are standard, and valid criticisms of Interaction Analysis. They are also valid criticisms of any method of language analysis which seeks to be formal and objective. It is, in fairness, worth reminding ourselves that Interaction Analysis has the merit that it is relatively hard for two researchers to disagree under; that the categories themselves are a list of language functions; and that - in the end - what Long says is not markedly less true of Sinclair and Coulthard's work, despite the more refined formal apparatus which backs it up.

The most important reason behind the use of Interaction Analysis is the recognition that the rating methods failed "to identify the characteristics of effective teachers or effective teaching" (McIntyre, 1980, p.5). Incidentally, in their review of observational classroom research prior to 1963, Medley and Mitzel (1963) note that "such rating approaches have been uniformly unsuccessful in yielding measures of teaching skills." (p.257) As an alternative to the rating method, systematic observation began to emerge as the popular approach to classroom research. Of these, however, Stubbs (1976a) remarks that "hundreds of studies have been

done with such systems. But results for research have been disappointing" (p.71). In pointing out the shortcomings of this type of research, he notes the following: the actual language used by teachers and pupils is irretrievably lost at the expense of an average measure of classroom climate, and there is no indication of how learners interpret classroom language. In general, he states, "the technique focuses in a fragmentary way on a succession of small bits of behaviour." (pp.71-77)

The criticisms, of course, are like those of Long just quoted; but Stubbs' sense of this type of analysis as "fragmentary" is perhaps a little too great, though such things are inevitably a matter of degree. One might argue, for instance, that the typical patterns Flanders develops of different types of classroom interaction (patterns quite literally, or rather graphically, in that what we are considering here is the shapes on the page made by the researcher crosses as he observes) are reasonable generalisations about fragmentary classroom life.

At any rate, the FIAC system (Flanders, 1970) is a notable example of this kind of classroom observation research. In criticising this system, Walker and Adelman (1975) note that attempts to use the FIAC system to observe teacher-pupil interaction in primary classrooms have indicated severe limitations in this approach. "Flanders' technique is suited to the study of classrooms where talk is used merely as a 'transmission' coding, as part of a communication system where one transmits messages while others receive" (p.74). It does not deal with talk as "the expression of negotiation of meanings". It sees talk, in their words, as

"transmission not as communication". The behaviours are seen in a mechanical way, and there is no indication therefore of why people do things (p.75). Language is not, that is, perceived as purposeful activity.

This is a key insight, not just to Flanders, but to other researchers, and it may be said to Sinclair and Coulthard. Of course, if it is true - and all studies seem to confirm it - that teacher-talk dominates classroom interaction, then it is in the nature of classroom language as it exists to be "transmission" not "communication". And this would suggest of course, in spite of Walker and Adelman's comments, that FIAC since it treats language as transmission is highly appropriate for the study of the classroom. And equally, this time in spite of work undertaken to extend Sinclair and Coulthard into other environments since classroom language is not typical of "language in general" (whatever that is), a system that can deal with one type of language is not automatically capable of dealing with others.

Nonetheless, in systematic observation, one cannot be sure of the covert actions of the participants which provide an adequate understanding of classroom life. And in fact, even without the pre-determined categories associated with systematic observation, it is quite possible to make potentially important contributions to classroom research (see McIntyre and Macleod, 1978, pp.11-128 for a detailed discussion). A similar criticism of the pre-determined categories of systematic observation is made by Hamilton and Delamont: "the potential of interaction analysis to go beyond the categories is limited". (p.4) This limitation, they believe, would

impede "theoretical development". Thus, the narrow focus of systematic analysis on the overt and the measurable and the inattention to context would not lead to significant discoveries.

However, Edward and Furlong (1978, p.42) argue of Flanders that "his system should not be seen as a contribution to theory, but as a tool of action " - a point of view with which Flanders would probably agree. "The purpose of researchers like Flanders is to discover teaching-acts associated with high pupil motivation and achievement." This is a fair point; Flanders' system in the end does not stand or fall on its ability to describe language, but on its effectiveness as a teacher-training implement. This raises the general point that much of the work undertaken prior to the advent of Discourse Analysis was in this sense "action-orientated", and designed to be of immediate pedagogic value first, last and sometimes only.

In pointing out the shortcomings of the approach, Edwards and Furlong note that systematic researchers are usually unaware of the problems of matching form and function. Even with straightforward identification, the observer has to decide when a question is really a question. The main criticism directed at systematic observation, they maintain (and it is a criticism not entirely unconnected to their previous point) is its neglect of sequencing in verbal interaction. It is not possible to look at talk as one distinct item after another. Understanding the meaning of an utterance depends partly on what has been said previously. The other thing noted by Edwards and Furlong on the systematic approach is related to the question of validity and reliability. They believe that

systematic observation researchers take the question of reliability into consideration. The methodology is reliable in the sense that the observers know what they are looking for and would agree with the recorded sequences of behaviour. However, the question of validity, they maintain, is in doubt in the sense that the observers might not see what really occurred, since the coding refers to "observable effects and not to the intention of the actors." In other words, the model of interaction is one of stimulus and response that does not provide sufficient cues to the underlying meaning of the total behaviour. In short, they maintain, the criticism of systematic observation indicates severe limitations on what it can contribute to our understanding of classroom interaction. It underestimates the complexity and the fluidity of what happens and makes teaching altogether look easy. (See Edward and Furlong, pp.39-44).

This in essence is simply a special case of the difficulties of reconciling functional language use with its formal properties. The opposite side of the coin is that a more emphatically functional analysis has no reasoned and systematic way of recognizing when a particular function has occurred except for an appeal to impressionism.

All in all, it can be said that Interaction Analysis uses relatively simple and easy behavioural observation systems for data collection. However, a lot of criticisms have been levelled against this approach, and it may be that its time has gone.

2.2 The Anthropological Approach

At any rate, the type of study emanating from ethno-methodologists, to which I now turn, is directly opposed to the Flanders-like approach (I am using the term "anthropological" in the sense in which it is used in Long (1980a) to cover a number of similar and roughly ethnomethodological procedures). The anthropological approach is used in such fields as anthropology, sociology and ethnography.

In their attempt to contrast the two approaches, Hamilton and Delamont (1974, p.7) note that unlike Interaction Analysis, the anthropological approach is based on ethnography rather than psychometry. The approach, they maintain, deals with "education" in socio-cultural rather than, say, in "cognitive" or "affective" terms. In each approach, "knowledge", the curriculum and even "learning" are regarded differently. The anthropologist, they note, starts with a wider range of issues making no attempt to select or eliminate particular variables. Gradually, he concentrates on the most salient features.

Unlike Interaction Analysis, the anthropological approach does not restrict the data to pre-determined categories. It, therefore, lacks generalizability. However, Long notes that despite the bias in one's own insight, it is safer to trust, as some believe, one's own insight rather than another's alleged objectivity. Ethnographers wonder, Long maintains, whether the results obtained in a controlled experiment can neutralize the biases implicit in "the hypothesis-generating activity that inspired it" (p.28).

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In an analysis contrasting the two approaches, Hamilton and Delamont note that Interaction Analysis, unlike the anthropological approach, is concerned with normative data that can be generalised from a sample population. Statistical norms, however, they maintain, apply to the population as a whole, not to individual members. Such statistical generalisation may therefore not always be relevant or useful since classroom settings are rarely equivalent. They go on to argue that individual classrooms share many characteristics despite their diversity. "Through the detailed study of one particular context, it is possible to clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes, and identify common phenomena" (p.8). This kind of observation and general concepts, they maintain, may be relevant to a wider variety of settings. Thus, case studies are not restricted in scope. Unlike Interaction Analysis, such studies acknowledge both "the particulars and the universals of classroom life" (p.8).

This argument might be seen alongside the argument provided by Long in stating that particular settings are distinguished from patterns in behaviour. He believes that this distinction has "greater value for those interested in predicting and understanding behaviour in settings other than those studied" (p.29).

In the Interaction Analysis approach, no emphasis is placed on particular patterns of interaction among the participants; interest is focused instead on the arbitrary units and quantification of behaviour. Hammersley (1980) notes that previous research after the 1960's adopted a "positivistic" approach emphasising the reliable quantitative measurement of classroom events. The

sociologists rejected this approach, mainly because of "its lack of sensitivity to the ways in which the perspectives of teachers and pupils generate particular patterns of classroom interaction ..." (p.48). To a sociologist, the classroom, he maintains, is no longer "a black box" for simply measuring the input and outputs and ignoring what went on inside.

The anthropologist uses various forms of unstructured observation involving both participant and non-participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher becomes part of the situation he observes and takes part in the activities concerned. His observation, however, is mainly subjective, thus devaluing the reliability of the data observed. To improve this kind of research up to the level of scientific method, Nash (1973) suggests that:

> If participant observation is to gain general acceptance as a scientific method it must conform to some rules of procedure and it must be analytic. In practice, this means that the observer must (1) know exactly what aspect he is investigating and (2) keep systematic notes and indexes. (p.40)

In non-participant observation, the researcher simply observes what is going on. He might interview informants and administer questionnaires, but he does not take part in the activity concerned. In pointing out the procedures used by non-participant researchers, Biddle (1967, p.338) notes that the observer enters a new social system with the intention of taking detailed nonsystematic notes that help him have a good idea about the issues he is looking at. In his presence, he maintains, the mind of the researcher is engaged in recording, encoding, analysing, and synthesizing of the data. Such procedures of non-participant observation have been applied in

content classrooms (e.g. Nash, 1973; Delamont, 1976; Stubbs,1976b; Chanan and Delamont, 1975; Stubbs and Delamont, 1976).

Another procedure used by the anthropologist in the collection and the analysis of the data is called "constitutive ethnography" - a methodology developed by Mehan (1977, 1978). The term refers to the social order established through the interaction of the members. This methodology is concerned, amongst other things, with the study of the "social structuring activities" and the "routine patterns of behaviour" like classroom organization. The methodology it uses is distinguished from other ethnographic work by four respects: first, it employs retrievable data recorded on video and audio-tapes to be re-examined. Second, the data are treated exhaustively in the sense that all the data are analysed. Third, it performs interactional analysis in that it is concerned with the use of words and gestures to structure the organisation of social events (e.g. turn allocation procedure, repair devices in classroom organisation). Fourth, it attempts to ensure a convergence between the researchers' and the participants' perspectives. It is from these last two features that the methodology derives its strength: its interactional analysis principle shows how the interaction is achieved, its convergence principle is the goal of many researchers where the results of the research will be more valid. Constitutive ethnography has been applied in studies of classroom, testing encounters, and counselling sessions (e.g. Bremme and Erickson, 1977; Shultz, 1976; Mehan et al, 1976). It can be viewed as a development of ethnographic work on conversation.

In short, it can be said that the anthropological approach has some points of strength as it has some limitations. Its strength stems from the fact that it gives a comprehensive and a detailed account of the data. However, the approach is limited in so far as it is less objective and more impressionistic.

2.3 Discourse Analysis

Another way to investigate classroom interaction is through discourse analysis.[1] This term, particularly in the context of classroom language, has come to be associated almost exclusively with the Sinclair and Coulthard approach. It is in this, perhaps unfortunately narrow, sense that I use the term in this section.

The main concern of discourse analysis is the study of language in context. The context of classroom behaviour rather than the discrete categories of Interaction Analysis becomes the main focus of a discourse analysis approach.

van Lier (1984, pp.111-112) believes it is insufficient either to look merely at the input and output of classroom talk or to give an impressionistic account of it afterwards. It is also insufficient, he maintains, to use labels, categories, or units to describe such talk. A study of classroom discourse instead, van Lier believes, can be a serious sociolinguistic achievement.

van Lier states that two schools of discourse analysis in classroom research are in existence: one is "classification-oriented", and the other is 'process-oriented." The former is concerned with the structure of discourse. It deals with discourse units, hierarchical relations between units and an accurate finite

mode for coding. In pointing out the limitations of the classifying school, van Lier' sums it up like this:

> Classification models of discourse on the whole do not deal with the phenomena of speaker change and in general find the explication and description of sequentiality problematic. (p.115)

A notable example of this school is, then, the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) model. This model has been employed in many discourse analysis projects which tried to apply it to a variety of discourse fields, sometimes modifying part of it but leaving the underlying principles intact. Some of these discourse settings included business radio interviews (Pearce, 1973), lectures (Montgomery, 1976), dramatic discourse (Burton, 1980). The model has been enriched by the work of Brazil (1975, 1978) and by Brazil et al (1980) on intonation. However, other researchers ignored the model for its static approach to discourse (Barnes and Todd, 1977, Allwright, 1980, Mountford 1975, Widdowson, 1979). The model takes no account of the forces that underlie a coherent piece of discourse; it does not for example handle the mechanism of speaker change, or the use of questioning as a controlling device, topic units or topic change. A central and authoritative criticism of this model is provided in van Lier (1982, pp.59-102).

The criticism levelled against the Sinclair and Coulthard model made it possible for the process-oriented school to emerge as an alternative approach to discourse analysis. Instead of the classification of hierarchical relations between units of discourse, the process-oriented school let the data determine the analysis. It is not interested in the manifested structure of discourse but

mainly in the forces that make it coherent. Some examples of this school are Barnes and Todd (1978), Humphrey (1979), Mehan (1979b), and Allwright (1980). Discourse in this school is described in dynamic terms that denote actions rather than objects. It uses words like "formulating", "closing", "explaining" rather than "transaction", "exchange" and "directive".

In short, the study of discourse analysis came to be associated with the classifying school: unit coding, model, and classifying. Such work does not cover the dynamic nature of the process-oriented school. van Lier (1982) suggests that both schools are important in any study of discourse analysis. His approach aims to employ classification in the service of process analysis. van Lier suggests:

> ...both classifying and process description are essential elements in any research, and ... a balance must be found between these two ways of thinking and organising knowledge. (p.52)

Generally speaking, the discourse analysis approach to classroom interaction has recently emerged as a major field of research in the teaching of second and foreign languages. The first collection of discourse analysis studies on L2 learning and use appeared in Larsen-Freeman (1980). Central research questions in discourse analysis have been discussed in Hatch and Long (1980): the structure of monologues, text analysis, classroom discourse, and conversational analysis. It is of course difficult to summarise the whole field in discourse analysis. For a standard introductory survey to the field, the reader is referred to Coulthard (1977), Stubbs (1983) and Brown and Yule (1983a). A summary of the major findings of the recent development of discourse analysis and the

implications it has for the foreign language teacher is contained in Gardner (1984, pp.102-114).

Finally, it can be said that the discourse analysis approach to classroom research has given us new insights in language teaching. In particular it has emphasised the importance of context in language teaching and has focused on the conversational process of spoken discourse as an interactive ethnomethodological enquiry.

2.4 The Proposed Approach to the Present Research

These, then, are some of the basic approaches that have been employed. The first, represented here particularly by Flanders, is objective and to some degree quantifiable; it is also mechanical and insensitive to functional variation. The second, generally ethnomethodological, is flexible (it views situations ad hoc, not in line with a pre-determined notion) but is necessarily impressionistic and its findings cannot be quantified. The third, represented by the Sinclair-Coulthard model, falls short of capturing the detailed analysis of the language in and beyond the EFL classroom.

This divide is one evidenced in many areas of language study. As far as the present research is concerned, the most satisfactory answer procedurally is the least satisfactory psychologically: there are some purposes for which quantifiable mechanically obtained evidence is useful, some for which it is not. Thus, in what follows I shall attempt to present objectively gathered data in an objective manner, and I shall subsequently attempt to account for it. That is, I shall describe (an endeavour which is potentially objective) and then interpret (an endeavour which is not).

To present this as a final decision is, of course, partly to ignore the work of Sinclair and Coulthard. It is also, a fact immediately relevant from the standpoint of research at Aston, partly to ignore the type of quantificatory analysis being undertaken by colleagues here. I shall now, therefore, briefly discuss these two issues.

Firstly, as for the Sinclair and Coulthard model I have presented some parenthetical criticism during the course of this chapter, and have also alluded to van Lier's excellent critical review. I have not, however, chosen to tackle this issue directly at this stage, preferring to discuss it in the light of my own data (see, therefore, notes on chapters 3, 6, and 7) and I include a quick resume of the model in (pp.56-61). Here, I shall simply preempt my conclusion which is that the Sinclair-Coulthard model is of value in the discussion of classroom language and of limited or no value in situations beyond the classroom: though the work done on doctor-patient interaction (Coulthard and Ashby, 1976) suggests it is able to handle other unequal encounters with a certain amount of success. Indeed my own data are such that classroom language and language beyond the classroom are quite simply incomparable in this light.

van Lier has different points to make, but reaches not dissimilar conclusions. His choice, we have seen, is to reject the "classification-oriented" (therefore analytic) approach of Sinclair and Coulthard in favour of a "process-oriented" (therefore more synthetic) approach through which serious sociolinguistic work can be undertaken. van Lier (1984, pp.111-128) argues with sufficient conviction and authority to make this seem a plausible enterprise;

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but in fact, of course, he too is open to the charge of subjectivity in consequence.

Secondly, as for the work taking place at Aston University, a review of the literature in Discourse Variation is contained in Farag (1986). A quantifiable approach for the study of ESL/EFL spoken discourse has also been used by many (e.g. Gaies, 1977; Hyltenstam, 1983; Henzl, 1973 and 1979; Long and Sato, 1983; Tsui, 1985; Hamayan and Tucker, 1980; and Ellis, 1984b). It will be seen that, in the main, I have chosen to concentrate on classroom-based research with methodological consequences in this review, but I have drawn on some of the techniques used by others.

In short, I follow a discourse analysis approach which takes both quantitative and qualitative procedures into consideration. This approach is perhaps the most appropriate technique for the analysis of my data. This approach which takes both quantitative and qualitative matters into equal consideration is also evidenced in the work of Allwright's classroom study (1980) and the 'pear story' project of Chafe (1980b). It is also described by van Lier (1982) as the "correct procedure for discourse analysis" (p.55).

<u>Notes</u>

1. Discourse analysis is a term used with a wide range of meanings
    covering a wide range of activities. It is, as Brown and Yule
    (1983) point out, used in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics,
    philosophical linguistics, and computational linguistics. In:

    - Sociolinguistic studies, it is used to show how features of
      social context affect interaction.
    - Psycholinguistic studies, it is concerned with issues related
      to language comprehension of written texts.
    - philosophical linguistics, it is concerned with semantic
      relationship between constructed pairs of sentences and with
      their syntactic realisations.
    - computational linguistics it is concerned with producing
      models of discourse processing.

    These various approaches deal with discourse analysis
    differently. However, they call upon one discipline:
    Linguistics.

    Burton (1980) claims that discourse analysis in Britain and the
    USA can usefully be classified in three schools:
    Ethnographically oriented research (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff,
    1968; Turner, 1974; Gumperz and Hymes, 1972); Philosophically
    oriented research on speech act theory and conversational
    analysis (Austin, 1965; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1957, 1975); and
    Linguistically focused research (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975;
    Brazil et al, 1980; Coulthard, 1977, 1979).

    Burton's classification may have been right in 1980, but I
    would have thought a more valid classification consists of: a)
    Ethnography, b) Ethnomethodology/conversation analysis, c)
    Sociolinguistics, d) Rhetoric, e) Speech act theory, f)
    Discourse analysis (what Levinson calls DA), g) Pragmatics
    (although one could place b and g as near relatives), h)
    Narrative "theory", and i) Spoken and written issues.

Chapter 3

Classroom Research: Review and Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider relevant literature in a number of areas. I consider in detail the work of researchers 1) in the content classroom (that is work done with native-speaker children), 2) in the ESL/EFL classroom, and 3) comparative studies of the performance of ESL/EFL students within and beyond the classroom. It is obviously this last category of work which is most similar to my own. It is, equally, the least well-researched area. I begin with a consideration of some older studies - mostly the late 1970's and early 1980's - in an attempt to provide something of a historical perspective, before offering (Section 3.5), a sketch of the present-day situation.

Particularly since the advent of Discourse Analysis, a very considerable amount has been written (though above all at MA dissertation level) about the nature of classroom language, much of it derivative of the Birmingham School. In point of fact the relevance of much of this work, whose force is simply to clarify and adjust details of the Sinclair-Coulthard insights of the mid-1970's, is fairly limited for my purposes. It will be seen later that much of my own findings argue against the use of the Sinclair-Coulthard approach for the analysis of many types of natural language use. I have, therefore, preferred to look in detail at the work of a relatively small number of researchers whose studies I have found of direct relevance, referring to other work only in passing as a means of contextualising them.

3.2 Some Studies of the Content Classroom

Willis (1981) briefly discusses this general area, but she chooses to give a short summary of Flanders (1970), Bellack (1966) and concentrates on Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) rather than presenting a comprehensive summary. Among studies appearing more recently are Chaudron (1983a), and Wesche and Ready (1983). Both of these studies have dealt with teacher-talk in subject lessons involving L2 learners in University classrooms. In addition, Schinke-Llano (1983) conducted a study on foreigner-talk in content classrooms. The study examines the linguistic environment experienced by limited English proficiency students in all-English content classes. More recently, Chaudron (1988) offers both a straightforward list and a thorough description of research to date, which I take up in (pp.89-90).

I would like now to offer brief discussions of two classics of the genre: Sinclair and Coulthard, and Barnes's seminal suggestions on questions in the classroom - a study of considerable significance for the present work. As far as Sinclair and Coulthard are concerned I wish only to make passing reference to some important issues. I shall start with them.

The work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)

Sinclair and Coulthard's work is now too well known to require detailed explication. In so far as the proposed research is concerned, the model was and is significant, partly because of its concern with the sequential patterning of language in use, and with the functional properties of language in classroom contexts. I shall deal with each of these two issues in some detail.

With regard to the sequential use of language, the Sinclair-Coulthard model is based on the concept of a rank scale in which a discourse unit at a given rank consists of structural elements from a unit in the rank below. Five discourse units, it will be recalled, were labelled beginning with the largest: Lesson, Transaction, Exchange, Move, and Act. Of particular interest here is the unit Exchange which presents an important picture of the way classroom communication is structured through successive questioning. This unit consists of "boundary exchanges" and "teaching exchanges". These are linked to the unit below by five classes of moves namely: framing and focusing moves for boundary exchanges and opening, answering and follow-up moves for teaching exchanges. Boundary and teaching exchanges are divided into eleven sub-categories of which six are free and five are bound.

Of particular importance to the present research are the teaching exchanges in which communication is maintained through question-answer sequences and are repaired in case of possible communication breakdown by re-initiations. The sub-category (vii) of the teaching exchange is the bound exchange IRI^{b}RF. This structure occurs when teacher's elicitation fails to receive a response from a class. The teacher then has to repeat the question or rephrase it. An alternative strategy for the teacher would be the use of acts like "prompt", "nomination", or "clue" to get the response required. The other sub-category of the teaching exchange structure (viii) has the following structure: IRF(I^b)RF. Here, the teacher re-initiates after receiving an incomplete response to an elicitation. The teacher maintains the communication through the use of another initiation on the supposition that communication has not yet gone

into serious problems. (See Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), pp. 53-54.)

As for the functional use of language Sinclair and Coulthard in a famous phrase find that there is a "lack of fit" between grammar and discourse. An interrogative or declarative sentence, for instance, may not realise a question or a statement in certain situations. To define the function of utterances, and to handle the "lack of fit" between grammar and discourse, Sinclair and Coulthard used the terms "situations" and "tactics". By "situation" they mean the non-linguistic environment that helps us reclassify items as statement, question or command instead of the grammatical classification categories: declarative, interrogative and imperative. To illustrate this idea, they give an example (since much quoted, p.30).

> Teacher: What kind of a person do you think he is? Do you -
> What are you laughing at?
> Pupil: Nothing.

The pupil's answer makes it clear that the pupil misunderstood the teacher's interrogative and interpreted it as a directive to stop laughing, but that was not so. The teacher ignored his first question and his attention was focused on the pupil's attitude. After a short interaction, the pupil realised her mistake:

> Teacher: Pardon?
> Pupil: Nothing.
> Teacher: You're laughing at nothing, nothing at all?
> Pupil: No.
> It's funny really 'cos they don't think as
> though they were there they might not like it.
> And it sounds rather a pompous attitude.

Sinclair and Coulthard find that "the girl's mistake lay in misunderstanding the situation not the sentence" and the example,

they maintain, "demonstrates the crucial role of the situation in
the analysis of discourse". It demonstrates the double function of
an utterance.[1]

The other notion that helps us understand the function of
utterances is "tactics". This term is used to handle sequence
relationships in discourse; ie, this means a focus of attention is
directed to the linguistic items that preceded the discourse in
question and those which are expected to follow and what actually
follows. In the above mentioned example "What are you laughing at?"
the teacher changes the course of the discourse abruptly, thus
ignoring what has been said before. The notion of "tactics" can be
further illustrated by citing the following example (p.35):

> T. What about this one? This I think is a super
> one. Isobel, can you think what it means?

The notions of "situation" and "tactics" are fundamental to any
study of classroom language, and no doubt to any study of
interactive language use. It is in this general area that van Lier
(1982) expresses his doubts about how well the Sinclair-Coulthard
model in fact copes with the sequentiality of language use. I
mention them here only to bring to the foreground the terms
"situation" and "tactics", which are useful in any study of
discourse.

One further point of considerable importance which can be made
here in a discussion of research into the content classroom is the
difference between this sort of classroom and one in which EFL is
being taught. In a content classroom, emphasis is placed on the
content of the lesson, whereas in an EFL classroom the focus of

attention is directed to the use of language to serve both as a subject matter of the lesson and as a means of instruction.

To take just one instance. In the Sinclair-Coulthard model, a directive is supposed to request a non-linquistic response, whereas the function of an elicitation is to request a linguistic response, although the response may be a non-verbal surrogate such as a nod or a raised hand. This sort of distinction seems to fit the content classroom where an emphasis is placed on the content rather than on the form of the response. In the EFL classroom, which is the concern of the present research, the content of the response might have already been given, for example, by means of some visual aids, and interest is typically focused on the display and practice of certain forms of language rather than on their uses for communicative purposes. In other words, a point invariably made about classroom discourse, language is not a resource for meaning. This is likely, one would imagine, to be more true the nearer to beginner standard learners are. And, in fact, the classroom language discussed in detail in the present thesis is almost all of this kind - a fact I try to capture and quantify in my analysis. [For a detailed distinction between the content classroom and the EFL classroom see Willis (1981) which is discussed below, pp.68-69.]

The Sinclair-Coulthard model has attracted the attention of many researchers who tried to adapt the system to various contexts inside and outside the classroom. It is worthwhile, in this connection, to mention some of those earlier studies that adapted the model to the EFL classroom: McTear's (1975) study deals with informal lessons taught to elementary students newly arrived in Britain from

Venezuela; a study by Mehan et al (1976) which deals with an EL2 classroom in California, and focuses on the social organisation of the interaction; Chaudron's (1977) study adapted part of the model to deal with the corrective feedback of learners working in a second language environment in French immersion classes in Canada; more recently, Tsui's study (1985) adapted part of the model to deal with input and interaction in the ESL classroom and Willis's study (1981), deals with the description of an informal EFL classroom discourse for students of a low intermediate standard of English.

Some of the above are worth considering in more detail, and it is to a detailed discussion of these writers that I now turn.

The Work of Chaudron (1977)

Before moving on to a consideration of Barnes (1969), a note on one of the studies mentioned above might be in place; though its particular focus (correction cycles) is not of immediate relevance. Chaudron (1977) [he has since published widely in the field, with his ideas being summed up in Chaudron (1988)] gives clearly the flavour of interaction in a language-oriented class. Chaudron developed a model for corrective feedback to learners' performances. He based his model on content classroom interaction in French immersion classes for English-speaking students in Canada. These students were learning French through other subjects. All instructions (in French, Science, Mathematics, History and Geography) are given in French. This context was deliberately chosen to serve as a guide to the teachers' corrections for both

linguistic errors as well as subject matter knowledge and other discursive interaction. However, the corrections seem to be more language errors than content errors.

Six lessons were recorded, twice early in the year and again late in the year. On the basis of this recording, a model of analysis was derived. The model is intended to direct the students' and teachers' attention to the role of corrective techniques and the function of various kinds of feedback in the learning process. The various types of "repetition" and "response modeling" given as examples of corrective acts are intended to illustrate which types are more successful in the corrective treatments of learners' errors. More than thirty features and types of corrective reactions are classified in the model of discourse, thus determining the choice of moves at each stage. Chaudron considers repetition with no change except question emphasis a common reaction among the teachers in his study and possibly elsewhere, but, as Willis (1981) says:

> "Chaudron gives no explicit description of the
> structure of the most common corrective cycles,
> apart from saying that repetition of various kinds
> is the most common form of reaction" (p.38).

Chaudron's system is a synthesis of the Sinclair and Coulthard descriptive system at the rank of moves only (Opening, Answering and Follow-up moves) and Allwright's (1975) suggestions for basic options open to the teacher in corrective reactions. In Chaudron's system, Sinclair and Coulthard's basic moves (opening, answering and follow up) are intended to constitute a cyclic correcting exchange which make up a transaction. Chaudron's acts, however, seem to be

different in two respects. Firstly the teacher's initial follow-up move may be followed by many corrections of the students' errors that block the flow of the cycle of interaction. Nevertheless, if the teacher elicits a new reply, there may have been little information about the error or its proper rectification, thus devaluing the new initiating move. Through numerous cycles other corrections or teacher's "treatment" might continue until correct responses occur. Secondly, while Sinclair and Coulthard's follow-up moves are simple (teachers accept, evaluate, or comment), Chaudron's evaluative moves are complex and too elaborate to comprise repetition with no change, repetition with no change and emphasis, and so on.

Chaudron's work is still the most consistent attempt to identify and specify types of correction. It is of interest primarily perhaps because it draws attention to the many and various ways in which the flow of interaction lays itself open to interruption in a classroom where correct language use is at stake, and therefore to the impetus of teacher correction on the shape of the EFL classroom language in general. It is in this respect unlike other classroom language (where, typically, content only is corrected), and this in itself is substantially different from other occasions on which language is used. Chaudron exemplifies more clearly than any other writer, perhaps, the artificiality and display nature of the language of the classroom.

The Work of Barnes (1969)

Barnes based his study on recorded data of lessons experienced by eleven-year-old children in a comprehensive school in Britain. He

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was interested in studying the whole language environment of the lessons. His data includes lessons from Mathematics, History, Physics, English, and Religious Education. Extracts and examples from the recorded data are presented and analysed. Barnes makes it clear that "the purpose of this initial study was to find what consistencies could be perceived which would link patterns in the teacher's linguistic behaviour to patterns in the children's learning" (p.16). His data analysis deals with teacher's questions, pupils' participation, the language of instruction, social relationships, and language and other media.

What is relevant of Barnes' work for the present research is the analysis and classification of teacher's questions in the seminal study. Barnes classifies teacher's questions into four categories with different sub-categories as follows: (see p. 17).

1. Factual ("What?" questions)

    (i) naming (ii) information

2. Reasoning ("How?" and "Why?" questions) .

    (i) "closed" reasoning - recalled sequences

    (ii) "closed" reasoning - not recalled

    (iii) "open" reasoning

    (iv) observation

3. "Open" questions not calling for reasoning

4. Social

    (i) control ("Won't you ...?" questions)

    (ii) appeal ("Aren't we ...?" questions)

    (iii) other

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Barnes, famously, distinguishes between "closed" questions which have "only one acceptable answer" and open questions where "a number of different answers would be acceptable". He goes on to point out that "open questions might be factual in some circumstances ... where the range of choices open to the pupil is unusually wide". (p.17) Barnes thinks that "it is necessary to check apparently open questions by examining the teacher's reception of pupils' replies, which may show that he will accept only one reply to a question framed in apparently open terms. Such questions might be called 'pseudo-questions'." (p.17)

If we look at Barnes's classification of questions, we find that there is something of an overlap. Some of Barnes's categories include subcategories of "open" and "closed" questions. The category of reasoning, for instance, includes: "closed" reasoning recalled sequences, and "open" reasoning where there is a possibility of a wide range of answers. But closed or factual categories of questions have only one possible answer. Thus it can be said that Barnes's classification of questions is not entirely consistent. As Willis (1981) says: "Barnes does not offer us a system that is sufficiently watertight". (p.32) And indeed, in general, Barnes's system is easy to criticise: it has perhaps proved sufficiently influential for people to subject it to a more rigorous examination than it was designed to undergo. Barnes's work is an impressionistic (see p.47) rather than an objective systematic study. Stubbs (1976a), and this is another way of putting the point I have just made, notes that his work is "intended to be of practical use to teachers rather than a contribution to theory", but

he goes on to say that this is not necessarily an outright condemnation. He calls the method "insightful observation" (p.80).

Unlike Barnes's work, the present research deals with EFL interaction rather than content classroom interaction. One aspect of particular interest, therefore, is Barnes's distinction between "pseudo-questions", where the answer is already known to the teacher and "genuine questions" that can be found in actual conversation. The former type of questions can be classified as "closed" while the latter can be classified as "open". This is similar to the classification and application of "display" and "referential" questions in the present research where a distinction is made between "display" questions to which the questioner already knows the answer and "referential" questions to which the questioner does not know the answer beforehand or has no precise response in mind.

The insights, of course, are of real value. And the distinction between open and closed questions is one that is central to the study of classroom language, with only the former being, as we would say, "interactive". At a more general level the notion of classroom language being somehow conditioned and shaped by the teacher's questioning is no less crucial. It is a truism, and has been since early behaviorist studies in this area, that the classroom centres on question-response sequences. It is, however, the work of Barnes which enables us to see that question-types might be very different and have very different consequences. It is for this reason that I have considered question-types in some detail in this study. (In

this I follow other studies which are discussed below, particularly Long, 1980b).

3.3 Some Studies of the ESL/EFL Classroom

As is recounted by Mitchell (1985) researchers on L2 classroom processes turned to a detailed study of particular features of classroom processes which may contribute to a global understanding of classroom interaction. This shift of emphasis from a comprehensive analysis of classroom interaction to a detailed examination of single issues grew out of the realisation that a theoretical understanding of the overall processes of teaching and learning a second language has not yet been found.

Thus studies of classroom interaction came to deal with a range of more specific issues: simplification of teacher talk, errors and error handling, classroom management language and management strategies, questioning strategies, metalinguistic classroom talk, classroom talk as a subset of native/non-native speaker discourse, learner interlanguage in the classroom, communication strategies in the classroom, and code switching in the L2 classroom (for a detailed review of these issues see Mitchell, 1985).

I will only review the most relevant of the many studies. In this section I deal firstly with five theses which I have found interesting and influential for this present study. Each of these pieces of research deserves discussion in isolation. I then move on to a discussion of various published papers in the field.

The Work of Willis (1981)

The work of Willis, from which I have already quoted is concerned with the description of the discourse structure of an informal EFL lesson. For the system of analysis, Willis uses the system proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard with certain changes to suit the foreign language classroom where an emphasis is placed on the production of the language forms rather than the transmission of knowledge. Her system includes eight types of free exchanges instead of six, and six bound exchanges instead of five. She also adds three new acts: "monitor", "meta-statement: interaction", and "direct verbal". Of these, "monitor" is perhaps the most useful. It refers to the way in which teachers encourage students to continue. It consists, therefore, of words or fragments like: "yes", "uh-huh", "go on" and so forth. Willis points out incidentally that the act "monitor" has no effect on move structure. This is not really true since any teacher can testify to the likelihood of student-talk coming to a halt without such "monitors".

Willis distinguishes between the outer layer of discourse where language is used for genuine communication and the inner layer of discourse where emphasis is placed on the use and practice of language forms which constitute the subject matter of discourse in a non-interactive way. In the "inner" structure, Willis distinguishes between the dependent structure which derives its existence from the "outer" structure, and the independent structure which can be temporarily independent of the "outer" structure. This latter form of structure can be noticed in situations that result in student-to-student interaction controlled by the teacher which Willis labels "quasi-interaction". She considers, for instance, activities like:

pair work, role play, and problem solution activities as "inner"
independent.

This general distinction is of great value, and captures neatly
the distinction in an EFL class between language which is used for
the purpose of learning and language used for the purpose of
communicating. A similar distinction is that in common currency
between "practice" and "use": though Willis's usage of the terms
helps to remind us of the link between this aspect of the language
class and similar distinctions in the content class.

A distinction is being drawn between initiations that require a
pre-determined reply and those that require a genuine interactive
reply. The distinction between "referential" questions which are
considered to require unknown information in a genuine interactive
way and "display" questions which are simply to display known
information in a non-interactive way has been investigated in the
data of the present research.

The great interest of Willis's work is that it is a thorough
attempt, one which is generally uncritical of the model, to apply
Sinclair and Coulthard under different circumstances, and one which
carries only partial conviction, principally because of the non-
interactive nature of what takes place.

The Work of Bowers (1980)

Designing a simple and easy system, Bowers set out to examine the
function of language and the sequence of interaction in the EFL
classroom. Teacher and pupil talk were analysed according to the
following categories: Organise, Direct, Present, Elicit, Respond,

Evaluate, Sociate. Within the general context of classroom discourse study all of these labels are self-explanatory, perhaps with the exception of "Sociate". Bowers glosses this as:

> An utterance has the primary function of sociating if it is designed solely to strengthen social relationships without performing to any degree the functions of organising or instructional utterance as specified by the previous categories. (p.108)

Lessons given to sixteen different student groups in three separate institutions in four target languages at three distinct levels of study were recorded and transcribed. Utterances were assigned to the above mentioned categories. For quantifying purposes, a conventional unit of one-half-line of transcript of text within a category is established. Where a speaker change occurs the transcript commences on a new line. Where a stretch of discourse constitutes a part-line or less it counts as a unit as 'well. The function and sequence of utterances were examined in each category. Use of the target language is also described.

Bowers' system is simple and gives a clear indication of what happens in the classroom for it describes all the utterances used in the EFL classroom. However, the discourse structure of lessons is not precisely described. Criticising Bowers' system, Willis (1981) states:

> The part-time unit is often arbitrary, unlike the more precise units used in the S & C model where the acts, moves and exchanges of the hierarchical system give a more precise picture of the discourse structure. (p.44)

Bowers' system also does not handle what Bowers terms Sinclair and Coulthard minor acts like marker, starter, and prompt. It may well be that successful interaction depends on these acts.

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Of particular interest here, however, is Bowers' classification of elicitation types. Bowers recognises the following sub-categories of questions which are based on a substantial body of work which he reviews in depth (in Appendix 1.). Perhaps because he is trying to distil the work of so many others, he has arrived at what seems to me to be an over-large and therefore clumsy inventory of elicitation types which I have reduced in my own work. The following categories show Bowers' classification of Elicitation types: (p.75)

1. Echoic   1. repeat   1. immediate model

                 2. extend   2. remote model

                 3. operate

                 4. read

2. Expressive   1. belief

                 2. emotion

3. Epistemic   1. Referential   1. meaning - translate

                 2. evaluative   2. meaning - define/describe

                                   3. meaning - use

                                   4. state - recall

                                   5. state - recognise

                                   6. explain - regret

                                   7. verbalise

Responses to these questions can be free or restricted. Free responses need not correspond with any specific model predetermined by the elicitation. Restricted responses must correspond with one member of model responses pre-determined by the elicitation. Responses are further categorised as genuine responses and vacuous

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responses. Unlike epistemic evaluative and echoic elicitations which require vacuous responses, the expressive and epistemic referential elicitation require genuine responses.

This is in some ways similar to the classification of questions into epistemic: referential, and display questions in the present research. The over-insistence on detailed sub-classification, however, makes it difficult to derive meaningful general patterns, and at times difficult to assign a particular elicitation to a particular category with any certainty. I have, therefore, not wished to seek such fine distinctions in my own work.

The Work of Oduol (1987)

The work of Oduol is a thorough attempt to investigate the sources of communication problems in classroom interaction at primary school level in Kenya. The corpus of the study consists of audio-recordings of English, science, and number work lessons. Relevant data samples of these lessons were examined.

_ The study examines the problems of communication during the change-over period from Kiswahili to English medium. It also examines the language resources which were employed by teachers to maintain participation when communication breaks down.

Oduol locates the sources of a breakdown in communication in the use of some specialist items of vocabulary in teacher's elicitations, teachers' demand of a full-sentence response, the use of inference-based elicitations, the use of open elicitation which requires more than a single-word response, the use of non-context based elicitations, the use of non-clued elicitations, the use of

role play which creates certain problems in communication, and over-reliance on the native language which hinders communication. To maintain communication, Oduol suggests that the teacher could reestablish communication through the use of modified, preparatory, or a replacement elicitation.

Of particular interest to the present research is the way Oduol's work handles breakdown in communication. It will be seen that part of my data examines this issue. However, Oduol's work is confined to the breakdown and maintenance of communication inside the classroom, whereas the present research deals with a wider range of issues of NSs-NNSs communication in and beyond the EFL classroom.

The Work of van Lier (1982)

The work of van Lier (ie. up to 1982, for a review of van Lier, 1988 see below pp.90-91) is an attempt to find "principled ways of studying interaction in classrooms". The attention to the theoretical underpinnings of classroom interaction in this thesis makes it an extremely valuable contribution to the field. Although it deals with the ESL classroom, the intention is to make the methodological procedures outlined in the study relevant to deal with other types of classrooms.

van Lier set himself the goal of better understanding of classroom interaction and classroom life. Therefore, he departs from previous models and systems for analysing classroom interaction:

> The point of departure is the widespread belief that most past and present systems and models for the description and analysis of classroom interaction are inadequate, since they do not lead to a significant

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improvement in our understanding of what actually goes on in classrooms. (Abstract)

To argue his case, van Lier critically and exhaustively examines two previous major studies: Sinclair and Coulthard's classroom discourse analysis and Mehan's constitutive ethnography (see van Lier, 1982, Chapter 4). Therefore, a different methodological frame of reference has been stressed. van Lier points out:

> ... an interactive methodology is proposed which
> regards classification and process as the two basic
> components of thought, with the suggestion that in
> classroom research the former be placed in the service
> of the latter, since an understanding of interactive
> processes is the central concern. (Abstract)

This quotation, by the way, with the abstract terminology and casual reference to "thought" gives the flavour of this highly intellectual work, a study whose weakness is perhaps that it sometimes seems rather removed from its data. This is true despite van Lier's overtly scientific approach, which avowedly concerns itself with the analytical evidence in the interaction itself rather than relying on secondary sources and unobservable phenomena.

The study examines the issue of turn-taking in some depth as the central focus of an interactional investigation. A detailed examination of the concept of participation or initiative is also presented. The concept of topic, activity, sequencing and repair is not exhaustively described in the thesis, but an attempt is made to show how these can be studied and interrelated. The presentation of the issue of repair in this study suggests an alternative approach to other studies in error analysis, one that is meant to relate to a practical classroom methodology. It is not, however, van Lier's aim to investigate this fully. It is an interesting possibility and of

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course takes traditional "error analysis" (which has now in any case been superseded to some extent by interlanguage studies) beyond its fundamental weakness, that it is sentence-based.

However, van Lier is aware of the limitation of his thesis for it has isolated the classroom as the sole environment for his research. He is aware that the study of classroom interaction in isolation from other settings is insufficient for a better understanding of classroom language. van Lier believes that:

> The study of classroom interaction itself can hardly hope to provide answers to basic problems until it is combined with other modes of research in comprehensive ethnographic studies (p.463).

As a suggestion for further research, van Lier considers the importance of comparing in class and out of class interaction as "a rich field of study, hitherto unexplored to my knowledge". He takes the point of view of Mehan (1981) who suggests that educational research should not treat school in isolation from the community at large. He takes the suggestion that a comparative study of settings will be a general trend for future work which will be certainly welcomed.

The Work of Warren (1985)

The work of Warren is concerned with the assessment of natural discourse in the EFL classroom. His work is based on two sets of activities: communicative activities representative of the communicative approach to language teaching exemplified by games, tasks and role plays, and discourse-based activities devised to incorporate the principles of discourse exemplified by story discussion, showing likes or dislikes of fashion photographs, and

assembling activities used for organising and cooperating in the completion of a particular task devised by the writer.

An attempt is made throughout the thesis to compare and contrast these two sets of activities to see which of the two is the most likely to produce natural discourse. It was found that discourse-based activities rather than communicative activities are responsible for the creation of natural discourse. Therefore, he suggests a methodology which promotes types of discourse in as wide a variety of natural settings as possible should be incorporated in the classroom.

Warren's work is significant for the present research in that it has attempted to create natural discourse in the EFL classroom. This clearly reflects a contemporary demand for "authenticity". It is of importance to the present study primarily because of its awareness that classroom language and "real" language (that is, language used for communication rather than practice) might be very different things. A central aim of my own study is to determine to what extent what actually happens in the EFL classroom resembles other language occasions: that is, to what extent the EFL classroom corresponds to "natural" language use, in so far as a generalisation can be made. And, more particularly, to see whether classroom language use resembles some out-of-class language occasions more than others. Warren's work is, therefore, of evident interest: and it is anyway significant in reflecting a recent understanding that "communicative activities" per se (here I use the word in its regrettably standard sense of non-grammatical) are not automatically natural.

Some Relevant Journal Articles

I now turn to the consideration of some relevant journal articles dealing with two matters of considerable significance in the present study: the nature of input in the classroom (that is, simply, the nature of what the teacher says), and the nature of questions in the classroom.

The importance of these matters is obvious enough to anyone who has concerned themselves with classroom language research, and some of this importance I have already tried to make explicit. As regards teacher input what matters, it seems to me, is the extent to which it is measurably different (perhaps simpler, perhaps more in charge of discourse and so on) from other types of language use. And this matters most, for my purposes, because of the possible consequences such differences may have for the learner exposed to a type of language use unavailable except under the special and, as it is often described, artificial circumstances of the classroom. As regards questions in the classroom what is at stake here is first (as we have seen in our discussion of Barnes, to whom all subsequent work in the area owes a debt, acknowledged or not) the extent to which these questions are like questions·beyond the classroom, and second the extent to which and the manner in which these questions constrain classroom interaction. The general centrality of the question in the classroom including the language classroom has been accepted since the days of Behaviorism, and subsequent changes of fashion in teaching have not removed the question from its pivotal role.

However, all work in this area must also have, as an underlying theme, the considerable methodological difficulty of describing, classifying and/or measuring classroom language. Any study feels the need not simply to report and draw conclusions, but to justify a procedure in a field where, as we have seen, a variety of procedures have been attempted and found satisfactory only in part.

I shall consider first Gaies (1977), and Hamayan and Tucker (1980), two studies which concern themselves with the nature of input.

Gaies' study (Gaies, 1977) is concerned with the linguistic and communicative strategies which might influence the language learning task. In particular, the study examines the issue of whether the input to L2 learners in the L2 classroom involves linguistic and communicative adjustments similar to those of the adult input in first language acquisition. Gaies makes reference to relevant studies, particularly to Drach, (1969); Granowsky and Krossner, (1970); Snow, (1972); Kobashigawa, (1969); Slobin, (1971).

The syntax of the oral classroom langauge of eight ESL teacher-trainees was investigated. A corpus of twenty-four classroom tapes was analysed. Syntactic analysis consisted of the first 500 words contained in utterances of sentence-length. Repetition, prompting and prodding, and modelling strategies which lead to linguistic simplification as a means of facilitating comprehension were investigated.

The findings of the study report that "repetition" strategy was used most frequently at the two lower levels of instruction, and not

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at all at the advanced level. Prompting and prodding strategies, which were used to afford the child practice in using the language, can also be observed at the lower levels of classroom language instruction. The modelling strategy, which is used to supply the appropriate lexical item(s) to a child, was most evident at the lower levels. The strategy found most evident at all levels was teachers' expansions of students' utterances - another form of modelling strategy. In short, the study reports that speech addressed to ESL beginners is less complex syntactically than speech addressed to advanced L2 learners.

This is an unremarkable finding, but it needed saying. Procedurally, the identification is interesting though no doubt the most natural choice. However, it may be presumed that any alterations in the teacher's language behaviour are designed not so much to render less complex (which suggests a specific type of difficulty) as to render more comprehensible the language used. Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that teachers might place artificial restraints not just on syntax but on lexis, on idiomatic usage, and indeed on everything from the extent to which they use metaphors to the pace at which they speak; and partly, in consequence, to the frequency and consistency with which they use verbal contractions and phonological weak-forms.

However, Gaies' study is of value in itself and relevant here in so far as it brings out one particular way in which classroom language is noticeably different. The similarity to, or difference from, adult-young children interaction is largely beside the point, except perhaps in the vague sense that some teachers "treat students

like children". But the fact that the conditions of the class change the language is important; and the fact that the manner in which the language changes can be subjected to measurement is of considerable interest.

Gaies, then, is representative of a particular type of procedure in classroom language research. Hamayan and Tucker (1980) focus more narrowly on the characteristics of teachers' language in the classroom and their teaching behaviour. The study examines the frequency of occurrence of certain linguistic structures in the speech of teachers and the extent to which these structures were produced correctly by the students. It examines in particular the following nine structures: indirect question, subjunctive, contraction, preposition contraction, adjective, gender agreement, subject verb number agreement, auxiliary etre, and reflexive. Its orientation, therefore, like Gaies', is grammatical rather than discoursal. However, it also investigates the teaching strategies employed by teachers like: questioning, repetition, modelling and teachers' reactions to errors made by students.

The sample of the study comprises six teachers in two different schools teaching two different classes of students: native and non-native speakers of French.

The findings support the hypothesis that "the frequency of occurrence of certain syntactic structures in teachers' speech is related to the rate of learner production of those structures". (p.466) As far as teachers' behaviour is concerned, it was found to be characterised by the frequent use of teaching strategies such as questioning and commanding. Although some teaching strategies were

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used more than the others (questioning with open-ended response was used most frequently, whereas reinforcement and modelling were used least frequently), the occurrence of each of the teaching strategies did not, interestingly, vary as a function of group or grade level.

The importance of Hamayan and Tucker's study stems from the fact that two major factors in the ELT classroom are examined: input to NSs as well as NNSs of French, and the teachers' strategies in the classroom. What makes the study even more important is the way in which evidence has been provided to relate the frequency of occurrence of certain syntactic structures in the teachers' speech to the rate of learner production of these structures. However, the study is limited in its scope in that it deals with formal language input provided only in the classroom, a limitation explicitly recognised by the writers themselves. Therefore, a more comprehensive study which deals with the nature of input in an informal situation is needed and this is what the present research is trying to investigate.

I now move to consider the other matter of importance investigated by journal articles in the field, and one I introduced in the discussion of Gaies and Hamayan and Tucker: the nature of questions in the classroom. I consider two more recent relevant studies in this area: White and Lightbown (1984) and Brock (1986).

The former study is based on a detailed analysis of the question and answer exchanges between teachers and students in four ESL classes in a French secondary school near Montreal. Few of the students had contact with English outside their ESL classes.

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The study reports the fact that most teachers' questions are of the closed type; that is there is always a specific acceptable answer which does not require much explanation. The most striking features of the findings were that teachers asked almost all the questions and did not give sufficient time to the students to formulate their answers before the teachers repeated, paraphrased or asked another question. A comparison between the findings of the study with observations of other researchers for other classes was made. It was found that ESL teachers in this study resemble other teachers in many ways: they dominate the class; they know the answer of the questions beforehand; and they help the students to produce them. A discussion of some of the reasons behind the teachers' strategies suggests that some of these were attributed to the length of the syllabus and the influence of the audio-lingual method on teachers' practices. Finally, some suggestions about asking and answering questions in the ESL classroom were provided for language learners and teachers. It is suggested that the introduction of activities which involve a genuine exchange of information, that is an activity in which the questioner does not know the answer beforehand, will promote and enhance the students' experiences in asking and answering questions.

White and Lightbown's study is concerned with the classification of questions according to their sequences, repetitions, or paraphrasing. This kind of classification of questions falls short of capturing the dynamics of the interactive nature of questions where questions are used to seek clarification or check comprehension of the meaning of the message, a factor which is believed to have an important effect on L2 acquisition (Pica, 1987;

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Long, 1980b) and is investigated in the present research.

With the work of Brock (1986), to which I now turn, we come closer to the type of quantitative techniques used in the present study and in other Aston work. Brock based her study on Long and Sato's findings (see below, pp.87-88). The purpose of her study was to "determine if higher frequencies of referential questions have an effect on adult ESL classroom discourse" (p.47).

The findings of the study report that the treatment-group teachers, who were provided with training in incorporating referential questions into classroom activity, asked significantly more referential questions than the control-group teachers who were not provided with such training. Students' responses in the treatment group were found to be significantly longer and more syntactically complex and contained a greater number of connectives.

Brock's study provides the evidence that referential questions increase the amount of speaking produced by learners in the classroom. This finding, Brock believes, is relevant to one current view of second language acquisition, an argument based on Swain (1983) who considers output as an important factor in successful SLA. If this is so, Brock argues, then referential questions may be an important tool in the language classroom. In addition, the use of logical connectors by learners in the treatment classes has important implications. Since successful communication depends on the relationship expressed between propositions the use of connectives is important to oral communication. If this is so, then

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it might be necessary to know that the use of referential questions provides increased practice in their use.

The work of Brock is important for it has added a new investigation to the few cases of studies on ESL questions. On the lack of these studies, Brock reports:

> Despite the growing interest in classroom processes (Long, 1980a) and the apparent pervasiveness of questions in ESL classroom discourse, only two studies have examined the use of questions in ESL classrooms, and only one of these (Long and Sato, 1983) looked at the forms and functions of ESL teachers' questions in the classroom. (The other study, White and Lightbown, (1984), counted 427 questions asked by an ESL teacher in a single 50-minute class.) (p.48)

The work of White and Lightbown has already been examined. The study of ESL classroom questions conducted by Long and Sato will be considered below (pp.87-88).

Brock recognises the limitation of the study in that it deals with a small number of teachers, (four ESL teachers). She expresses the need for further research "to investigate the effects of group size and proficiency level and to determine to what extent the effects of training persist in teachers' questioning patterns". (p.56) One added limitation of Brock's study, similar to a limitation of White and Lightbown, is that it has confined itself to the examination of questions only in a classroom situation. Further research is needed to see whether referential questions are predominantly used in natural or informal discourse, one goal which the present research has set out to investigate. At any rate, the results of Brock's study suggest the use of "an easily implemented cost-free technique" which may have substantial effects on ESL acquisition.

3.4   Some Comparative Studies of Performance in and out of the

      ESL/EFL Classroom

In the previous sections of this chapter, attempts have been made
to show the limitations of the previous studies to classroom
discourse. Suggestions have been proposed to study classroom
discourse as a part of a wider scope of ethnographic research.
Contrastive studies of the performance in and out of the EFL
classroom, as far as I have been able to discover, are few in number
and much research is. needed in this area. Two studies of particular
relevance will be considered: Long (1980b), and Long and Sato
(1983). I shall deal with each in turn.

Long (1980b) conducted a study which investigated the
relationships among linguistic input, conversational interaction and
second language acquisition. His thesis evolves around four general
questions:

> (1) differences in the structure of native speaker-
> native speaker (NS-NS) and native speaker-non-native
> speaker (NS-NNs) interaction; (2) differences in the
> linguistic input to NSs and NNSs; (3) relationships
> between task-type and differences ascertained under
> question (1) and (2); and (4) relationships between the
> relative frequencies of items in the linguistic input
> to NSs and NNSs and the previously established order
> for the accurate production of those items by second
> language acquirers. (p.xiii)

The subjects of his study were adults, 48 NSs of English and 16
NNSs from a variety of first language backgrounds. Controlling for
the sex and prior FL experience, the subjects were assigned randomly
to form 32 dyads: 16 NS-NS and 16 NS-NNS. Each dyad performed six
tasks in the same order: (1) spontaneous conversation; (2)
vicarious narrative (3) instructions (4) a communication game (5) a

second communication game, and (6) a discussion of the supposed purpose of the research.

The main findings of the study show differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS performances across all tasks. However, the study shows better evidence for modifications in features of NS-NNS interaction than in input.

In order to investigate that part of the study which attempted to test the relationships between the degree of modification of input and interaction features and the nature of the tasks involved, the six tasks were grouped into two sets of three: one group which required the exchange of information by both speakers (tasks 1, 4, and 5), and the other group which did not (taks 2, 3, and 6). It was found that differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS interaction were greater on tasks requiring the exchange of information than on tasks not requiring this in nine of 11 cases.

The work of Long is of central importance for it explores input and interaction in NS-NNs conversation, and the effects such issues have on L2 acquisition. Considering the importance attached to input and interaction in language teaching and learning, the present research has set as one of its major goals the investigation of these two factors with different types of discourse. It is worth mentioning that the sample of NNSs of Long's study was a heterogeneous group who were learning English as a second language; whereas the sample of the present research is a homogeneous group learning English as a foreign language. They speak the same native Arabic language and have the same levels of education and foreign language experiences. Moreover, the study of the present research

deals with NSs-NNSs discourse during interactive tasks different from those recounted in Long's work. The suggestion that this should be done is also proposed by Long himself who advocates at the end of his thesis that:

> Further manipulation of task and setting variables could help distinguish features related to NS-NNs interaction as opposed to teacher-student interaction in the classrooms (Long, 1980b, p.169)

In the main the present research tries to compare and contrast formal classroom interaction with more informal or natural type of interaction.

Long and Sato (1983) conducted an exploratory investigation of the forms and functions of teachers' questions in ESL classrooms and in the speech of NSs in informal NS-NNS conversation outside the classroom. They were also interested in issues concerning the relationship between patterns of teachers' questions and other characteristics of linguistic input to NNSs and of the interactional structure of NS-NNS conversation.

Subjects for the study of the ESL classroom comprised six ESL teachers and their students. The students were ESL learners who came from a variety of first language backgrounds. Subjects for the study of conversation were thirty-six NSs and thirty-six NNSs who met in dyads. Subjects who had no prior acquaintance with one another were asked to have a five-minute conversation in English about anything they liked.

Long and Sato adapted Kearsley's (1976) taxonomy of question functions to the analysis of both ESL classroom and conversation data (see below 6.2.1). The findings of the study show that six

teachers were found to ask significantly more display than referential questions during ESL instruction. The ESL teachers were also found to ask more display questions and fewer referential questions in comparison to NSs in informal NS-NNS conversations. ESL teachers were also reported to use fewer questions, and more statements and more imperatives in T-units in comparison to the speech of the thirty-six NSs outside the classroom.

On the whole, the findings of the study seem to contradict the suggestion advocated by many writers on language teaching methodology. While these writers, as Long and Sato report, have encouraged teachers, for the last twenty years, to focus more on communication, the evidence in this study confirms the belief that ESL teachers continue to emphasize form over meaning, accuracy over communication. This is clearly manifested in the preference for display over referential questions and in the difference of the interactional patterns of NS-NNS conversation in and outside the classroom.

Long and Sato came to the conclusion that "NS-NNS conversation during SL instruction is a greatly distorted version of its equivalent in the real world". They put forward the following suggestions at the end of their study:

> Further research is needed to determine whether, as one suspects, this difference is important, and if so, how the interactional structure of classroom NS-NNS conversation can be changed. (p.284)

The present research has set as one of its goals the investigation of the interactional structure of NS-NNS conversation

in and beyond the EFL classroom during different types of interaction.

3.5 The Present Picture

Two major recent studies have emerged in 1988 (after the bulk of the present thesis was complete). These are Chaudron (1988) and van Lier (1988). van Lier in particular has confirmed some of my own lines of thought, and I have found the development of his ideas since van Lier (1982), which I have also drawn on, stimulating and encouraging. I shall, however, deal first with Chaudron, whose book is an admirable attempt to draw together and evaluate relevant research in the field.

The Work of Chaudron (1988)

Chaudron offers, in essence, "a comparison of methodologies and results of different classroom research and (a) focus on the theoretical foundations for the investigation of classroom processes" (p.xvi). This general air of being a review which the book has is invaluable, and Chaudron's careful and cautious assessments give a great deal of confidence in their general reliability.

What is researched deals primarily with the 'process' variables within the (classroom) ..., that is, research on the nature of teacher and student behaviour in real classrooms. His method is, essentially, to isolate four major research areas (teacher talk in second language classrooms, learner behaviour in second language classrooms, teacher and student interaction in second language classrooms, and learning outcomes), and discuss salient research in the light of relevant "classroom research methods". He identifies

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(compare my own list in Chapter 2) four traditions, as follows: the psychometric approach, the interaction analysis approach, the discourse analysis approach, and the ethnographic approach. Chapter two, incidently, contains an interesting summary of the relationship and relative usefulness of quantitative and qualitative approaches (compare with the present research 2.4.)

Given the overall value of this book, however, it is perhaps a little disappointing that Chaudron concludes his review by saying:

> Despite the obvious increase in amount of classroom-oriented research in recent years, few of the suggestions offered here can be made with great confidence, for the existing research is difficult to synthesize. It has been shown that research is a) lacking in consistent measures of classroom processes and products, b) sometimes inadequate in design to address critical research questions, c) inexplicit or incomplete in quantitative or qualitative analysis, and d) in need of greater theoretical specification of the constructs and relationships to be investigated.
> (p.180)

The Work of van Lier

van Lier's work is concerned with a) identifying the problems of the place of classroom research within language acquisition study, and b) offering a well-documented guide for researchers in the classroom context. These two major issues are interwoven in the text throughout.

Second language acquisition studies, according to van Lier, have separated themselves from classroom research. Such issues as learner interlanguage, classroom interaction, learner strategies, instructional evaluation, learner-hearer behaviour variation are all important in the language classroom.

One of the problems in classroom research is the obscurity of the relationship between classroom behaviour and language learning and teaching. van Lier identifies possible research trends to lessen the effect of this problem. He advocates the interpretation of utterances in the context of their production in the classroom. Moreover, classroom language analysis must take the social factors of the classroom into consideration and relate it to the social bodies governing the school.

As an attempt to explore classroom language profitably, van Lier focuses on three major issues: interaction, participation and repair. (Compare my own investigation of these particular issues, see especially Chapter 6 and 7). Moreover, van Lier combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of interaction, looking not only at the distribution of turns but also at the quality of their performance in teacher-learner interaction.

A fundamental point that van Lier emphasises repeatedly is that the role of the teacher should change. The teacher too (he cites the Bangalore project as an example p.231) should undertake research, and of this research, he argues, "the only proper answer ... is to let the data lead the way" (p.87: emphasis in the original).

On the whole, I have found the book stimulating and interesting confirming and justifying the procedures followed in the present research.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the scope and limitations of previous research to classroom interaction under a number of areas: the content classroom, the ESL/EFL classroom and comparative studies of performance in and out of the ESL/EFL classroom. A critical evaluation of all these studies has been made during the course of this chapter. In the main, I have tried to suggest that despite their relevance and significance to the present research, these studies are either limited to classroom situation in scope or insufficiently exhaustive in their treatment of other non-classroom situations.

The need for further research which deals with interaction in and out of the classroom was pointed out as this area has not yet been fully explored. Taking all of this into consideration on the one hand and my awareness of the need for a better understanding of classroom FL teaching and learning on the other hand, the present research has set out to explore EFL discourse in and beyond the EFL classroom as an attempt at a more comprehensive ethnographic endeavour.

Notes

1. It should be noted that the 22 discourse acts of the model operate essentially as mutually exclusive entities. An utterance is seen to perform one function at a time that can be coded as a particular act. In natural communication this does not apply because utterances perform more than one function at a time (Stubbs, 1983).

Chapter 4

Data: Methods of Research

4.1 Introduction

At this stage in most research it is common simply to describe the experiment, the subjects, and the circumstances under which the experiment has taken place. I have preferred, however, not merely to do this, but also to explore the logic behind some of the distinctions I have attempted to make. As a result, this chapter includes a discussion of the nature of formality and informality as I am using the terms in the present thesis, and a sample of my results.

4.2 Subjects of Research

The subjects of the research were fifteen Algerian students in their early twenties (age 21-26). They were all, with the exception of one, graduates of Civil Engineering Faculties in Algerian Universities. They were engaged in a 900-hour, one-year course at the Language Studies Unit of Aston University designed to take them from beginner/elementary level of English to a level sufficiently good to undertake a postgraduate qualification in the field of Civil Engineering at a U.K. University - typically, therefore, students were supposed to achieve Band 6 on the British Council ELTS test (moving from around Band 1-2). At the time of the experiments the students were about one third of the way through their course. They were given EGP rather than ESP lessons, since the level of General English at this stage was so low that a great deal of elementary EGP was necessary. In any case, it was not my intention to compare "General English" beyond the classroom with

specific purpose language within it.

The first language of these particular students is Arabic (by self-definition), though they are influenced by French to a great extent due to the major role of the French language in their educational system, as described in the following sub-section.

4.2.1 Subjects' Educational Background

Since the sample of the research undertook their undergraduate studies in the Algerian educational system, a brief introductory review of the structure of this system is not out of place. Belblidia (1985), describes this system as follows:

> This system consists mainly of three broad levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The child enters the first level, called 'Ecole Fondamentale' at the age of seven. There, he is given a basic general education defined by a centrally prescribed national syllabus. After nine years, at the age of sixteen, he takes an examination ("certificat d'Etudes Fondamentales") which allows him to accede to the secondary school (or "Lycee").
>
> The secondary level consists of three years. The curriculum is established according to three major streams: Art, Science, Mathematics. At the end of the third year all students take an examination according to their stream. The examination is centrally set and administered on a national scale. Students who pass the examination are awarded the "Baccalaureat" which is roughly the equivalent of the British "A" level. This enables them to enter the University or join one of the many parastatal institutions. There they are eventually granted the "licence" (or degree equivalent to BA or BSc) or an Engineer's degree in a given field of study. (pp.4-5)

As for the position of English within the system, Belblidia states:

> A great majority of the school children have to take English as a foreign language from the eight year of the primary school to the last year of the secondary school. It is however a second foreign language if we consider that French is introduced

as a foreign language as early as the fourth year of the primary school.

At the tertiary level, English is taught as a main subject to students specialising in English language teaching or in translation. Although English is not the medium of instruction in other faculties, in many cases, a reading knowledge is required especially in the scientific branches.

We cannot consider the status and the role of English without comparing it to that of French. Although they officially both have the status of a foreign language, French is still used at the secondary and tertiary levels as a medium of instruction in many scientific disciplines. In addition it is still used outside the educational system (Brahimi, 1984, Morsly, 1984).

Thus French is frequently referred to as either "a foreign language with a particular status", or a "functional language" or the "language of science and technology". It seems that it is about the third status that English and French are competing. I think however that both languages could for the time being play complementary roles. (pp.5-6)

This educational background clearly demonstrates that the sample of the research had very limited experience with the English language throughout their academic career.

4.2.2 Size of Sample

In working with natural speech data, no rule of the size of data seems to be absolute. In discourse analysis, the purposes of the research determine the quantity of data. In quantitative research, measures of significance depend on the quantity of the data. However, the size of the corpus must be modest (otherwise it becomes unworkable) but not too limited. I have tried to hit a happy medium, and have based my study on a total of 5 x 35 minutes (i.e. 2 hrs and 55 minutes) of data.

I initially transcribed and worked with almost double this amount, but found that the results reflected in the smaller sample

were simply being repeated on a larger scale, and were, of course, much more time - consuming to extract. I therefore chose to restrict myself to a more detailed study of a smaller, though still very substantial, sample.

4.2.3 Homogeneity of Sample

To be able to reach general conclusions, similarities across the data are essential. For the present data, similarities can be found under the headings of group size, participants, and occasion. Group Size: Under all circumstances the students' language was studied in small groups: in the formal and informal classrooms there were 12 and 14 students respectively and one teacher, for the discussion 10 students and one teacher, and for the conversation 11 students attended (although not all participated) and two native speakers neither of whom was a specialist language teacher. The one exception was the formal interview, at which only one student and one teacher was present at a time. Clearly, in the interests of authenticity - and because the interview was an occasion, potentially, for confidential discussion - there was no alternative.

Participants: Native speakers participated on all occasions, ensuring that English was the natural channel for communication. The non-native speakers involved were the students. The crucial point here is that they all came from the same country, the same language background and were products of the same educational system. Their standard of English, as assessed internally by the Language Studies Unit of Aston University, was approximately equal; and they were studying for the same purpose: to gain admission to postgraduate study in a British University in the field of Civil

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Engineering.   I must also include myself here, though intentionally I contributed as little as possible - in fact virtually nothing - to the discourse.

Occasion: I am using the word "occasion" as neutrally as possible, to include everything regarding the circumstances in which English was used. A language "occasion" therefore is the totality of all circumstances on which interaction took place. Evidently the occasion of all types of interaction was one in which English was being used between native and non-native speakers.   "Occasion", however, is the significant variable for the present study.

4.2.4 Heterogeneity of Sample

Heterogeneity   is not less desirable than homogeneity,   as generalisations are based on the degree of the heterogeneity of the sample to a greater or a lesser degree.

Language occasions in the present study were made as varied as possible to capture variability in NNSs output.   Thus, under the heading of participants, though the NNSs being studied remained the same, the NSs with whom they were invited to interact were changed. A total of 4 NSs were invited to be involved in the experiment: one very experienced teacher of ESL/EFL, age 34, one teacher of EFL near the beginning of his career, age 24, and 2 non-English teachers of about the same age as the students.

As regards occasion, a detailed description of each of the occasions, and the manner in which they were designed to be different from each other, is given below (4.3).   In brief, however, these occasions are: 1) formal interview (FI), 2) formal

classroom interaction (FCI), 3) informal classroom interaction (ICI), 4) informal classroom discussion (ICD) and 5) informal conversation (IC).

A short digression: van Lier (1982) gives an exhaustive list of the logical possibilities of studying varying participants and varying occasions (he uses the word environment). These are:

1. The same participants in the same environment do the same things.
2. Different participants in the same environment do the same things.
3. Different participants in different settings do the same things.
4. Different people in different environments do different things.
5. The same participants in the same environment do different things.
6. The same participants in different environments do different things.
7. Different participants in the same environment do different things.
8. The same participants in different environments do the same things.

van Lier gives examples of research undertaken under these various categories. Interestingly, he "found it difficult to find instances of possibilities 5-8", though he does not exclude these as possibilities. The present research viewed in this light would presumably potentially fall into areas 4 and 6. That is, if and when the input of NSs was considered, we would be looking at area 4; and where the output of NNSs was concerned, we would be looking at area 6.

4.3 Variety of Types of Interaction

It was mentioned earlier that this research is concerned with the analysis of spoken discourse in and beyond the EFL classroom. Therefore, data has to be collected from various settings before

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subjecting it to a detailed analysis. In addition, though I have concentrated my attention on the detailed analysis of language on different occasions, I have also attempted to gather information not merely by recording and transcription. I have therefore also attempted a small-scale questionnaire to discover the attitudes of teachers to the issues of "formality" and "interaction" which are at the heart of the present research.[1]

In order not to undermine the value of the discourse analysis of the interaction itself, however, I used the data of the questionnaire as a secondary source of information. That is, to classify the types of interaction according to different categories and to support my argument at a few points in the process of the analysis of the interaction itself. In this I go beyond the data into the opinions of the participants.

In what follows, I present a description of data collection. It should be noted that all types of interaction, with the exception of the IC, were audio and video-recorded. This is because audio data only may be quite adequate in the IC where unobtrusiveness and naturalness is required. Video-data is sometimes useful and helpful as a back-up resource for non-verbal behaviour and the allocation of turns, where audio-data is central. Anyway, I have found it possible to transcribe all types of interaction with reasonable accuracy since the group of students is small and I am quite familiar with their voices through personal communication. I felt that I needed to have recourse to recorded data. It was important, therefore, that the students got to know me before I started

recording their classes in order not to constrain the classroom interaction.

A portable cassette recorder was used for recording the different types of interaction. This had the advantage of moving the equipment around rather than confining it to a static position. In addition, a video-camera was used to record the data on video-cassettes at the same time. It was felt that, since I was running the video recording and since the students already knew me, this would not act as an obtrusive element in the process of interaction. The following types of interaction form the data of the present research. It should be mentioned that each type of interaction lasted for 35 minutes. These were later transcribed and analysed.

4.3.1 Formal Interview (FI)

At the end of term two, that is after three months' tuition, the same Algerian students were interviewed by their teacher, John Skelton, who is the Director of Studies at the L.S.U. at Aston University, and who is also supervising the present research.

Seven students were interviewed. The first 5 minutes of each interview were taken as a sample of this type of interaction. In total the interview lasted for 35 minutes. The content of the interview included questions about students' application to British Universities, their speciality of specific research field, the assessment of the English course they were undertaking at the L.S.U. of Aston University, whether the students' language has improved since they arrived at Aston or not, and whether they feel confident to do a course in civil engineering the following year or not. The interview was conducted in a very formal setting where students were

interviewed one by one: a bit like a visit to the headmaster's study. Nobody was present apart from the student and the Director of Studies.[2]

4.3.2 Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)

This lesson was taught by John Skelton. It was based on teacher-made materials and activities. The actual technique used is described in Skelton (1984). This lesson, as the analysis will later show, exemplifies very strongly the "Stimulus-Response-Feedback" of the Behaviourist School. In fact, much contemporary language teaching is still like this. Indeed a central lesson of Sinclair-Coulthard based on Initiation Response and Feedback (IRF) is at the core of classroom interaction.

4.3.3 Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)

This lesson was taught by an MSc student with around two years ESP experience. The lesson was based on a textbook. In fact, the analysis of this lesson will show that it is very much less tightly structured in terms of direction - there is little "shape" to the lesson, and little decisive teacher intervention.

4.3.4 Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)

In an informal sort of interaction in which all participants sat together around the tables, the same Algerian students described above discussed informally the question of marriage in both Algeria and England with the same teacher who gave them the informal lesson described above. The interaction took place within the physical confines of the classroom, and in classtime. It was therefore ostensibly "a class". However, the teacher's task here was simply

to approximate a discussion. As it happened, large sections of the discussion were teacher-led.

Both the teacher and the students became animated - indeed, highly excited - in the course of the interaction. Upon the teacher's call for me to join in the discussion, I tried to stimulate further the discussion with the minimum participation. And in any case my contribution was excluded from the analysis to exclude any possible bias.

4.3.5 Informal Conversation (IC)

Data for this part of the study consists of a conversation between two native speakers of English at Aston University who were not ELT teachers (one a PhD student, the other an MSc student) and the same Algerian students described above. The conversation was conducted naturally and freely in a coffee room. The aim here was to create a natural conversation. The topic of conversation was left to the participants to decide so that they could feel at ease and this would enhance the freedom with which they spoke in a genuine discourse. It turned out that the conversation centered around the question of marriage in both England and Algeria. This was fortunate enough as the topic did really provoke disagreement between representatives of U.K. culture and an Arab culture and got them involved in the conversation in a manner in which they forgot the artificiality of the context. As far as one can judge, and this is certainly the feeling one derives from the transcripts, the conversation was entirely natural.

In order to stimulate and keep the conversation going, I made some remarks regarding the topic being discussed only when I felt it

was necessary, trying at the same time to keep my participation in the on-going conversation at its lowest level. At any rate, once more, my remarks were excluded from the analysis of the data to exclude any possible bias.

4.3.6 Criteria for Classification of Types of Interaction

Riley (1985) states that:

> There is no generally accepted typology or taxonomy for discourse. ... Among the oppositions and clines which have already been identified are: spontaneous/prepared; oral/written; formal/informal; authentic/non-authentic. ... A further such opposition - but one which has been largely ignored until very recently - is interactive/non-interactive. (pp.49-50)

In what follows, I will be discussing the criteria upon which the different types of interaction have been classified according to formal/informal, or interactive/not-interactive parameters.

Questionnaires were given to a group of MSc and PhD students at the Language Studies Unit, Aston University (previously teachers of ESL/EFL) to assess the different types of interaction described above for their level of formality and for their level of interaction (the full questionnaire is at Appendix 2.). The intention here was to find out what people who had substantial teaching experience and who were sensitised to making definitions through their postgraduate work, understood by these terms.

Video-recorded extracts of the lessons and other activities included in the data were displayed. Teachers were asked to rate these extracts in those terms by putting a circle around the number they chose on a seven-point scale of two contrasting adjectives ranging from very formal to very informal and very interactive to not-interactive. This would allow the subjects to make quite subtle

distinctions from a wide range of alternatives. Moreover, the fact that the subjects were restricted to choosing only one of the seven points on the scale makes it possible to use quantitative methods in comparing judgements. (For the application of this kind of test for investigating linguistic variability see Hudson, 1980, p.203.) Hudson considers this sort of Subjective Reaction Test the "most straightforward and widely used method." (p.202). Furthermore, subjects were asked to provide their general comments about each extract.

Scores for each occasion on the formal\very informal parameter were as follows:

Types of Interaction	Very Formal						Very Informal	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Formal Interview (FI)	4	7	3	1	0	0	0	2.06
Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	4	4	2	1	2	2	0	2.93
Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	0	0	0	1	0	7	7	6.33
Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	0	0	1	0	5	4	5	5.8

Table 1: Teachers' responses on the very formal/informal parameter.

Scores for each occasion on the interactive/not interactive parameter were as follows:

Types of Interaction	Very Interactive					Not Interactive		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Formal Interview (FI)	0	5	1	8	1	0	0	3.33
Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	1	5	1	4	2	2	0	3.46
Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	4	5	1	2	2	0	1	2.8
Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	6	3	1	1	2	2	0	2.73

Table 2: Teachers' responses on the interactive\not interactive parameter.

It will be seen from the above figures that there is a high level of agreement about what the term formality can be assumed to mean. It is interesting, however, that FCI shows such a spread of marks - an indication probably that some respondents were looking at the careful teacher control of the lesson (a type of formality) while others were looking at the relaxed atmosphere in which the class took place (a type of informality). A similar phenomenon occurs in the figures for the interactive/non-interactive parameter - a broad spread of marks tending slightly to find the lesson on the interactive side. One could speculate here that some respondents were looking at the degree of teacher control (which is "non-interactive"), while others were looking at the frequency with which students were invited to speak (a measure of the "interactive").

In both cases, I would argue, there is a confusion of substance with presentation. The substance of this lesson was rigidly controlled, but great efforts were made to present the lesson in a manner that was ostensibly informal and interactive. This illusion is at the heart of a lot of teaching.

The other noticeable point with regard to the interactive/non-interactive parameter is the generally broader spread of figures. This suggests a degree of confusion about what the term actually means: in this respect it is interesting that no one scored FI as 1, although it was only this occasion that was entirely authentic, and only here that there was a genuine and necessary exchange of professional information.

When asked to give their opinions on what a formal or an informal lesson looks like, the respondents seem to associate formality of

classroom interaction in terms of the structure and the interaction of the lesson. Formal classroom interaction, according to the respondents, reflects: a clear structure to the lesson; questions based on content rather than personal experience; pseudo-questions dominate the interaction; students only speak when asked; the teacher dominates the classroom interaction and allows no comments from the students outside the topic of the lesson; and the teacher stands and students sit behind desks. On the other hand, the respondents associate informality of classroom interaction with: a relaxed atmosphere inside the classroom; students participate in the interaction and the teacher plays a minor role; open-ended questions predominate in the interaction; and the teacher does not isolate himself from the students and moves about.

Certainly, in the informal classroom, teachers address the whole class as is the case in the formal classroom. Therefore, there must be some criteria to distinguish the two situations. Indeed "sociologists, at least, those concerned with education and classroom studies, rarely define exactly what they mean by 'formal' and 'informal'." (see Willis, 1981, p.6). Adams and Biddle (1970) associate formal with predictable and informal with "open", "less, teacher-centred". Boydell (1975) considers an informal primary classroom as a place where children interact with each other as a group and learn by doing.

It can be said that the question of formality and informality can be associated with the two basic roles of the teacher: as an instructor and as a manager respectively. As an instructor, the teacher presents or elicits language, as a manager he sets up

situations for students to interact in by themselves. The following diagram, adapted from Willis (1981, p.11) shows the cline of formality running from left to right according to the role of the teacher.

Role of EFL teacher

instructor   manager

Presents   Elicits   Directs   Directs
information   information   discussion   teaching games
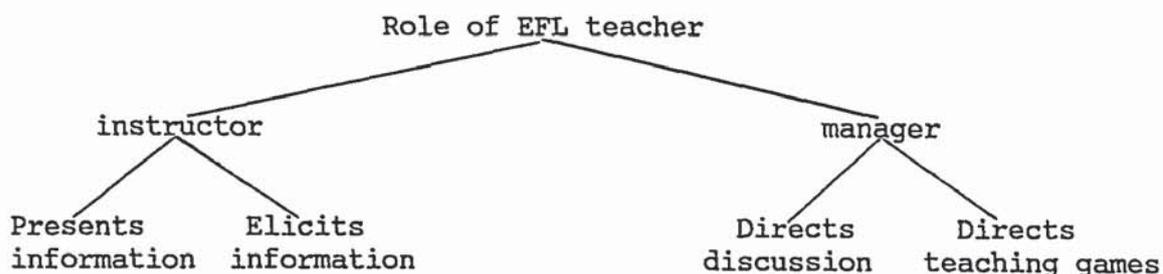
Figure 2: The two basic roles of the teacher.

Thus formality is usually associated with the role of the teacher who acts as the sole determiner of classroom discourse by presenting and eliciting information. When the teacher acts as a manager by either chairing a discussion or directing some role play games he is introducing an informal type of interaction. It can be said that the very end of informality is when the classroom interaction becomes similar to that used among friends outside the classroom, where participants feel at ease to say whatever they like. In the classroom it is difficult to achieve this degree of informality. However, a similar sort of interaction such as ICD can be incorporated instead, though the teacher has always the right to interrupt and bring things to a close.

It seems to me that the formality of classroom interaction reflects that type of discourse in which the teacher dominates the classroom procedure of turn-taking and topic-change, and allows little participation on the part of the students in the course of the interaction. Display questions rather than referential questions are pervasive in this type of interaction. On the

contrary, informal classroom interaction is that type of interaction in which a relaxed atmosphere exists and the teacher plays a minor role allowing the students to participate and initiate in the discourse.

With regard to the question of "very interactive" and "non-interactive", Holec (1985) concludes:

> ... very often the distinction between interactive and non-interactive is ignored in descriptions of discourse which results in attempts to compare the incomparable or to use the same model for the description of all kinds of discourse. (p.30)

The present study, therefore, attempts to elucidate the distinction between these two types of discourse. As the study reveals, the respondents to the questionnaire regard a very interactive lesson to be characterised by: students' participation and involvement in the lesson; students talk most of the time; teacher does not dominate the interaction; students initiate and elicit the information; and a relaxed atmosphere exists inside the classroom. On the other hand, the respondents view a very non-interactive lesson to be characterised by: teacher-centred interaction, and the students play a minor and a passive role. These views seem to regard a very interactive lesson as having the characteristics of an informal type of interaction, and a very non-interactive lesson as having the characteristics of a formal type of interaction.

Holec (1985) believes that the notion of interaction is not restricted to mean two or more participants influencing one another, nor is limited to the fact that one speaker takes into account the presence of other participants. Instead, Holec believes that a

definition of interaction in discourse analysis should be based on an analysis of the types of roles played by participants. Discourse is interactive when it is the mutual responsibility of all the participants in producing a coherent series of contributions. In other cases where a single participant is responsible for the whole of the discourse, it is non-interactive. As Riley (1985) puts it:

> By interactive discourse, we mean discourse which is the collaborative construct of two or more participants mutually engaged in other - directed communicative behaviour. To put it more simply: is the discourse produced by one person or more than one? How many sources or contributors are there? (p.50).

Taking all these matters into consideration, the different types of interaction in the present research have been classified to be either formal or informal, interactive or non-interactive. As for the conversational type of data outside the classroom, it has been classified to be very informal and very interactive according to the views discussed above, as it was difficult to apply the questionnaire procedure to an audio-taped recorded data. It will be seen later that the process of the analysis of the interaction itself particularly in chapters 6 and 7 will confirm these views.

4.4 Transcription of Data

Generally the transcription of recorded data is a time-consuming process. I found it particularly tiresome to listen and make changes in the transcription until I reached a stage of transcription whereby I judged it to be accurate for the purposes of the present research. Labov and Fanshel (1977) have already referred to the importance and the laborious work of the transcription of spoken discourse:

> An important part of any microanalysis is the preparation of an accurate version of the text - that is, of the words and other segmental units. It has been noted before that this is an open-ended process, and after 9 years we find that we still are making corrections that are by no means trivial on repeated listenings. (p.355)

Before displaying my system of transcription, it is worthwhile to briefly outline the previous systems adopted in other research projects. Some of the transcription systems employed in other studies are summarized in van Lier's work as follows:

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975):
no assignment of individual speakers beyond teacher-pupil distinction, no overlaps, no intonation (except for some sporadic markers)
Little or no non-verbal information.

Brazil et al (1980):
Detailed intonation, apart from that, similar to Sinclair and Coulthard.

Conversational Analysis (CA):
Detailed pronunciation (though impressionistic), hesitation, gap and overlap features, no non-verbal information.

Goodwin (1977):
As CA, plus detailed gaze information

Kendon: Detailed kinesic information

van Lier (1882): Similar to CA, but more orthographic.

A system of transcription is usually dictated by the purposes of the research at hand. As my research was not concerned with intonational or pronunciation information, I followed an orthographic system to transcribe the data in the most possible accurate form. I found it easier to transcribe from audio tape as it was difficult to wind and rewind the video tape quickly and repeatedly. However, I used the video tape to give me some clues about some non-verbal behaviour and to enable me to single out individual speakers.

Untranscribable words were marked as (xxx). Unfilled pauses were marked by three dots (...). Clarity was my prime concern. In my opinion, a good transcription should be easy to read and should show the interaction of events.

In short my system of transcription shows:

1. Clear orthographic transcription.

2. Filled and unfilled pauses,

3. Individual speakers.

4. Non-verbal behaviour information marked by (NV)

5. Learners mistakes were transcribed according to their pronunciation.

(The reader is referred to Appendix 1 for examples.)

Notes

1. I have not, in the present thesis, wished to go too far beyond the research methodology described in this chapter. The use of a questionnaire, however, in research so closely concerned with quantitative matters raises the possibility for future research of attempting a more qualitative judgment. The pedigree for this type of activity is of course very good. It is known formally as "triangulation". Denzin (1970) discusses in some detail, and it is also mentioned by Stubbs (1983), who remarks:

> The term triangulation is used in different ways, but essentially it refers to collecting and comparing different perspectives on a situation. Thus survey data might be checked against ethnographic observation, and more generally quantitative data might be checked against qualitative reports, and vice versa. (p.234)

See also in this context Labov (1972) on the phenomenon of convergence. And for an example of the study of interaction being supplemented by the secondary data of a questionnaire, see Faerch and Kasper (1980) - though of course there are many such examples.

2. The following table presents the identity of NSs who acted as interlocutors to NNSs (the Algerian group described above) according to the various types of interaction.

Types of Interaction	NSs	TESOL Experience
Formal Interview (FI)	John Skelton	12 years
Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	John Skelton	12 years
Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	Tony Cornish	18 months
Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Tony Cornish	18 months
Informal Conversation (IC)	Ian Lawrence / James Cordeaux	PhD Student / MSc Student

Table 3: Identity and experience of NSs.

Chapter 5

Input and Output in NSs-NNSs Discourse

5.1 Introduction

My intention in the present chapter is to offer a discussion of such terms as "input" and "output", in particular, but also of such concepts as "foreigner talk". The reason for this is to contextualise my own subsequent use of the terms, and in addition to remind the reader of the general parameters of the discussion. Thus I begin with a brief study of aspects of Krashen and others, but later (Sections 5.2.4 and 5.3.1) present some of my own results.

For convenience I deal here only with input and output (terms I use to refer essentially to matters of linguistic features: syntax and lexis. By input I mean the language addressed to non-native speakers and by output the language produced by them). In Chapter 6 I concentrate on interaction (that is essentially discoursal features).

The analysis of input involves only an examination of the native speakers' (NSs) speech, whereas the analysis of interaction takes the non-native speakers' (NNSs) speech into consideration as well. Examining the interactional features such as identification of turns, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetitions, expansions etc. is only possible by considering the relationships between preceding and following utterances including NNSs utterances. Long (1981a) considers this distinction between input and interaction in NSs-NNSs conversation important:

> ... both theoretically, in order better to
> understand the second-language acquisition (SLA)
> process, and in practice, when considering what is
> necessary and efficient in SL instruction . (p.259)

However, this distinction between input and interaction does not mean permanent separation; several features of the two are often related (see Long, 1983a). Input and output are related parameters; the oral output of NNSs will affect the subsequent input from NSs. Sharwood-Smith (1981) notes that the learner's output acts as an input to his own language processing mechanism. Thus, a study that considers only the NSs input without considering the oral output of NNSs will be limited in its scope. As Ellis (1985) puts it "it makes little sense ... to consider the contribution of native speaker independently of that of the learner." (p.138) It follows that both input and output should be jointly investigated. This method of investigation is what Ellis describes as discourse analysis.

In what follows I will deal with each of these parameters in turn. It should be noted that the term output covers both the linguistic features of NNSs speech and/or the interactional features. In this chapter the former sense of the word will be considered leaving the latter to be investigated in Chapter 6.

5.2 Input in NSs-NNSs Discourse

The study of linguistic input in language classrooms has an additional focus on second language acquisition (SLA) research. These types of studies are generally referred to as "classroom-centered research". Such studies were motivated by an attempt to look at the classroom as a setting for classroom language acquisition and learning in terms of the language input provided by

the teacher's talk (Gaies, 1977). Issues investigated included the nature of teacher talk, feedback, studies of learner strategies in classrooms, classroom interaction and learner participation (for further explanations and references on these issues see Richards, 1985, pp.71-72).

5.2.1 Characteristics of Optimal Input for Language Acquisition

Krashen (1982) presents a set of requirements that should be met by any activity aiming at subconscious language acquisition. I wish to discuss Krashen in a little detail, since I have used some of his phrases and particularly "comprehensible input" liberally in what follows. Krashen's requirements are (I use his own slogan-like headings):

1. Optimal Input is Comprehensible.

Krashen considers comprehensible input the most important characteristic for language acquisition, and he regards (naturally enough) incomprehensible input as a factor that hinders L2 acquisition. This, Krashen believes, explains why educational T.V. programmes fail to teach foreign languages unless the acquirer speaks "a very closely related language". These factors have led Krashen to define the good language teacher as "someone who can make input comprehensible to a non-native speaker, regardless of his or her level of competence in the target language" (p.64). This leads us to pose the question of how comprehension is to be aided. Krashen points out that this can be done in two ways, by linguistic and non-linguistic adjustments to NNSs speech. I will deal with these two factors upon examining the data of the present study during the course of this chapter and the one that follows.

2. Optimal Input is Interesting and/or Related

Optimal input focuses on the message and not on form. Krashen believes that the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even "forget" that the message is encoded in a foreign language.

3. Optimal Input is not Grammatically Sequenced

This condition means that it is not essential to present language in a sequential order. When we focus on grammatical considerations, there will be less genuinely interesting input.

4. Optimal Input must be In Sufficient Quantity

Krashen finds it difficult to say how much input is necessary to achieve a given level of proficiency in L2 acquisition due to a lack of data. It seems clear to him, however, that much time should be devoted to supplying comprehensible input, and that would stimulate more rapid second language acquisition in that the acquirer can get more of the target language.

These, then, are the conditions for optimal input proposed by Krashen and are very briefly outlined here. Of these, comprehensible input is given prime importance in L2 acquisition. Indeed, it has been found that linguistically modified texts or lectures promote NNSs comprehension of information more than those in unmodified versions (e.g. Blau, 1982; Chaudron, 1983b; Johnson, 1981; and Long, 1985a). Moreover, evidence has been provided that comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition (Krashen, 1980, 1982; Long, 1981a, 1983c, 1985a).

5.2.2 <u>How is Input Made Comprehensible?</u>

If the comprehensibility of input is essential for L2 acquisition, the question of how input is made comprehensible becomes crucial. Studies that tackled this issue focused on the form and function of speech addressed to NNSs. Such studies examined the ways in which the language addressed to NNSs are rendered more comprehensible by syntactic simplicity. They also examined the interactional features that play a part in this comprehensible input. These studies were pioneered by Ferguson (1971) who investigated the structure of "foreigner talk" discourse, and Snow (1972) who considered what she called "caretaker speech" addressed to non-proficient language learners. Ferguson defines "foreigner talk" as:

> ... a register of simplified speech ... used by speakers of a language to outsiders who are felt to have very limited command of the language or no knowledge of it at all. (p.1)

Ferguson (1975) lists some features that characterise English foreigner talk discourse. In phonology, it is characterised by a slow rate of delivery, loudness, clear articulation, pauses, emphatic stress, and exaggerated pronunciation. In lexis, it is characterised by occasional use of words from other languages, substitutions of items by synonyms, or paraphrases. In syntax, modification is presented through omission, expansion and replacement or rearrangement. Omission is exemplified by deletion of articles, coupula, inflectional morphology, conjunctions and subject pronouns. Expansion is illustrated by the addition of unanalyzed tags to questions ("OK"?, "Yes?" "No?") and insertion of subject pronoun "You" before imperatives. Replacement and rearrangement include such features as forming negatives without

auxiliaries ("no like"), replacing subject with object pronouns ("him go"). For a detailed review of similar studies which investigate the characteristics of foreigner talk discourse, the reader is referred to Long (1980b, pp.24-48).

Ellis (1985) also lists the principal input and interactional adjustments which have been identified in a number of studies (e.g. Ferguson and Debose,1977; Hatch, Shapira, and Gough, 1978; Long 1981a, 1981b, 1983a; Arthur et al, 1980; Hatch, 1980) in two tables. The first includes input modifications in foreigner talk (pronunciation, lexis, grammar) and the other interactional modifications in foreigner talk (discoursal features) (see pp.135-136). Ellis reports that three types of foreigner talk can be identified:

> 1. foreigner talk consisting only of interactional adjustments (i.e. there are no formal simplifications);
> 2. foreigner talk consisting of interactional and grammatical input adjustment (i.e. there are no ungrammatical simplifications);
> 3. foreigner talk consisting of interactional adjustments as well as both grammatical and ungrammatical input adjustments. (pp.133-34)

Ellis notes that the occurrence of a particular type of discourse depends on various factors concerned with the "proficiency of the learner and the role relationships between the participants." (p.134). In general, he points out, (1) appears to be more common than (2), which in turn is more common than (3).

It should be noted that a number of studies have investigated the different variables that influence the input and the interactional adjustments in foreigner talk. Scarcella and Higa (1981) compared the foreigner talk discourse addressed to child non-native speakers with that addressed to adolescents. They found that the former type

of speakers received more simpler input in a more supportive atmosphere. The input they received was characterised by shorter utterances, simplified vocabulary, and more clarification requests.

The fact that foreigner talk can be influenced by many variables such as the topic of conversation, the age of participants, and the proficiency of the learners suggests that we cannot take it for granted that foreigner talk is a static list of features. Instead, it must be considered as dynamic, changing according to various situational factors. As Gass and Varonis (1985) put it:

> ... foreigner talk is not a monolithic phenomenon. Rather it forever changes as a function of the NNS interlocutor's ability to understand and be understood in the L2. (p.56)

It should be noted that the simplified input of foreigner talk discourse can be said to bear some resemblance to motherese. On this Ellis (1985) states that:

> Foreigner talk closely resembles motherese, but there are notable differences in both input and interactional features. Ungrammatical adjustments are very rare in motherese, but they can occur under certain conditions in foreigner talk. (p.134)

Ellis also refers to Freed (1980) who found that motherese displays a high proportion of instructions and questions; whereas foreigner talk has a higher proportion of statements. The main function of motherese, Freed suggests, is to direct the child's behaviour, whereas the function of foreigner talk is to exchange information.

In short, it can be said that studies of foreigner talk discourse have emphasised the simplicity of NSs speech as an important factor in rendering the input more comprehensible to NNSs. We shall see in the course of this chapter under which type of interaction this

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important condition is presented and the form in which it appears. Before a descriptive analysis of the data is given, it is essential first to consider the strengths and limitations of applying a particular unit of analysis for measurements of syntactical features.

5.2.3 Identifying a Unit of Analysis

To try to analyse the data of the present research in terms of the notion of sentence structure would be difficult. The data yielded stretches of discourse that could not be analysed in this way. This was not unexpected; the notion of applying the concept of a "sentence" to spoken language is notoriously problematic. Difficulties, for instance, arise in handling incomplete sentences, changes of direction of discourse, hesitations, and the treatment of one word utterances. In addition, decisions about where an utterance ends, which are sometimes arbitrary, have to be made. In point of fact, linguists and researchers have investigated the difficulties of segmenting spoken discourse in terms of sentences. They have pointed out that sentence boundaries in spontaneous speech are not always clear-cut, and any attempt to make them so will be arbitrary. (See Chafe, 1976; Kroll, 1977; Crystal, 1980; Svartvik, 1982; Stubbs, 1983; and for a full discussion Farag, 1986).

Recently the idea unit has been proposed as a unit for the analysis of spoken discourse (Tannen, 1980; Chafe, 1980b, 1982; Beaman, 1984; Michael and Collins, 1984; Hildyard and Hidi, 1986). On the use of the idea unit for the analysis of spoken and written discourse Farag reports:

> For Chafe, a prototypical idea unit has the
> following properties: (1) it ends with an

.intonation contour that might be called clause-final; (2) it is preceded and followed by some kind of hesitation (filled or unfilled pause); (3) it is a clause, consisting of one verb phrase with whatever accompanying noun phrases are associated with it. Chafe (1980) however, emphasises that all three criteria (intonational, pausal and syntactic) are not always present, nor does the presence of any one of them necessarily signal the boundary of an idea unit.

It is important to note that although Chafe's notion of "idea unit" has been discussed by a number of researchers, none of them used it in their frequency count. Both Chafe and Beaman used a frequency index to measure the occurrence of a particular feature (the number of occurrences per 1000 words). (p.53)

It seems to me that Chafe's concept of the idea unit is problematic. As is mentioned above, Chafe's version of the idea unit has three criteria (intonational, pausal and syntactic). At the same time, this does not mean that all three criteria must be present, nor does the presence of any one of them signal the boundary of the idea unit. This hardly reaches the status of a definition. This fact of the lack of objectivity of the idea unit has led Chafe, I believe, to use other measures for his research and has led Farag to suggest that "in developing a counting system of occurrences of any single feature one has to rely on a clearly defined and identifiable unit." (p.53) Looking for objectivity, Farag adapted Kroll's (1977) concept of the idea unit which is mainly a syntactic unit that can be objectively identified to her data. For Kroll an idea unit:

... represents a chunk of information which is viewed by the speaker/writer cohesively as it is given surface form. Thus it is related more to the psychological reality for the encoder than to a grammatical analysis of its form. (p.90)

Farag used an operational definition of the idea unit adapted from Kroll as follows:

1. Subject and verb counted as one idea unit together with (when present) a) direct object; b) mark of subordination/coordination; c) prepositional phrases; d) adverbial element.

2. Full relative clauses (when the relative pronoun is present).

3. Prepositional phrases when in head position and when intonationally marked in speech or set by a comma in writing.

This makes her use of the concept of the idea unit seem more reasonable as it gives her the opportunity to examine both the prepositional phrases and relative clauses as idea units by themselves. It also gives her ample opportunity to examine the linguistic structure of narrative discourse in finer detail. One can perhaps say that the idea unit is an appropriate one for the analysis of narrative discourse where chunks of discourse are related to one another by coordination and subordination devices, but of less value with different types of discourse, especially that of the EFL classroom where language use is constrained. For this reason, Farag's adaptation of Kroll's definition of the idea unit does not seem to fit the purposes of the present research.

In adopting a unit of analysis one should always bear in mind the nature and the purpose of one's research. The present research is not concerned with a detailed analysis of the linguistic structure of the spoken discourse. The main purpose of looking for a unit of analysis is to measure the occurrence of certain features of spoken discourse. For the purposes of this sort of research, the concept of the idea unit appears to be less sensible. (Compare Chafe, who, as we have seen, abandoned the idea unit and used a frequency index to measure the occurrences of particular features.)

To measure the syntactic complexity of utterances, some researchers (Gaies, 1977; Long, 1980b) adopted the T-unit put forward by Hunt (1970). A T-unit is defined by Hunt as "one main clause plus any subordinate clause or non-clausal structure that is attached to or embedded in it" (p.4). On the validity of the T-unit for syntactic analysis, Gaies reports:

> This unit of syntactic analysis is objective and easy to compute, and in the last ten years it has gained increasing recognition as a far more valid index of syntactic complexity than other measures, including sentence length. (p.208)

For a syntactic analysis of the complexity of utterances, it seems to me that the T-unit is the least equivocal unit for the purposes of the present research, mainly for its objectivity as a measurement of the syntax of utterances. It might be, therefore, sensible to adopt Hunt's definition of the T-unit for the analysis of NSs as well as NNSs speech under different circumstances. It is noticeable that NSs speak more or less in complete sentences. This makes it easy to divide their utterances in terms of T-units.

However, the data offers, particularly in formal and informal classroom interaction, some stretches of NNSs discourse to which the T-unit cannot be applied. Quite often the NNSs provide one-word utterances or incomplete utterances as a response to the NNs questions. Consider the following examples:

E.g. 1. t. Is Tony happy or sad?
       s. Sad
       t. Quite right, sad.

E.g. 2. t. What is he?
       s. Unemployed.
       t. Unemployed, no, he is not unemployed, no.
       s. Student.
       t. Quite right, he is a student. He is very poor because he is a student.

In this sort of situation neither the concept of the idea unit nor that of the T-unit is appropriate for the analysis of NNSs speech. The difficulty here is that notions such as these seem to have doubtful validity when language use is constrained; that is when the speaker is limited in what he may say not only by the normal conversational constraints but also by the additional limitations imposed by the classroom (principally that the speaker cannot easily initiate). This is reflected in the use of questions; it is the nature of questions that they constrain what the speaker will say next to a greater or lesser extent. Neither the idea unit nor the T-unit is the appropriate way of handling closely constrained and frequently one-word utterances. Such utterances will be dropped altogether when counting the number of T-units in NNSs speech, but will be used for other purposes of investigation.

5.2.4 A Quantitative Analysis of NSs Input to NNSs

Research in recent years reports at least forty studies of speech by native speakers addressing NNSs in language communication (for a review, see Long, 1983c). In most of these studies NSs are reported to use a simplified variety of language in order to render the input more comprehensible to NNSs. Disputes arise as to the appropriate form of linguistic simplicity. Among the common features are: shorter utterances in T-units (Long, 1980b; Arthur et al., 1980; Caies, 1977), and syntactically less complex utterances [e.g. containing fewer adjectivals, adverbials, noun clauses, and less subordination per T-unit (Gaies, 1977), also containing a lower number of S-nodes per T-unit (Long, 1980b), and less varied vocabulary (Henzl, 1973)].

The present research presents partly a further effort in this area. The question which the present study seeks to investigate is whether the simplicity of the linguistic input to NNSs varies according to the type of interaction. Certain measures are used to examine the degree of complexity of NSs speech as well as NNSs speech in various types of interaction. The tests used for this purpose are the average length of T-units in number of words, the average number of subordinate clauses, the average number of S-nodes, and the average lexical density per T-unit.[1]

The following table presents a quantitative account of NSs input in various types of interaction.[2]

Types of Tests	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Class-room Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Mean T-unit Length in Words	10.70	5.93	7.03	8.47	12.80
Mean Subor-dinate Clauses per T-unit	0.10	0.02	0.06	0.10	0.32
Mean S-nodes per T-unit	1.47	1.14	1.18	1.30	1.74
Mean Lexical Density per T-unit	47.02	38.25	41.15	37.97	42.48

Table 4: T-unit measures for NSs input.

The table shows that NSs speech is characterised by longer T-units in FI, ICD, and IC settings. However, on the average number of

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subordinate clauses, and the average number of S-nodes per T-unit, NSs speech does not show any substantial difference among the various types of interaction. On the lexical density measure, NSs input varies according to the type of interaction. The variation, however, does not seem to follow a particular pattern ranging from formality to informality or otherwise. The FI setting, for instance, provides the highest average of lexical density among the various types of interaction. Both ICI and IC settings show almost identical figures of NSs input of lexical density. On the other hand, the FCI and the ICD show almost identical figures of NSs input of lexical density.

On the whole (though it will be recalled that the number of NSs is small), it can be suggested, from the evidence of the data, that NSs input to NNSs is characterised by its simplicity among the various types of interaction on the various tests. This has been measured by a low frequency of subordination, a low frequency of S-nodes, and a low frequency of lexical density per T-unit. The simplicity of NSs input to NNSs can be seen in the following examples taken more or less at random from the various settings to give the reader a flavour of the type of language use contained in the data:

FI: /You think you have/ or are you certain?/

FCI: /Is it a man's head or a woman's head?/

ICI: /Redha, what's a whale?/

ICD: /It wasn't that./It was something/
      It is about Britain./ Some statistics have
      been brought up./

IC: /It seems natural to us./So what do you do in
      Algeria?/

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Modification of input can again be illustrated by the following example:

> T. Anybody knows what a whale is?
> S. Mammals.
> T. It is a mammal yes.

The example shows that the exchange is typical of observational studies of foreigner talk in which the input is made simple. The teacher uses an uninverted question lacking auxiliary verb "does".

It is through simplified input that language learning becomes most beneficial. It is under such conditions that the classroom can be of a great benefit for L2 learners. It should be noted that the value of the L2 classroom does not lie in the grammar instruction, but in the simpler "teacher talk". Also, for the informal environment to be of any use, the language addressed to NNSs should be simple and comprehensible.

It could be argued, however, that the main difference between the input provided in the classroom and that in non-classroom settings is that the input in the former situation is largely "contrived" and "artificial", whereas in the latter it is "natural" and generated by the needs of the participants.

5.3 Output in NSs - NNSs Discourse

It is now well established that input plays an important role in SL acquisition. Krashen (1982), for instance, suggests that:

> ... it is hypothesized that we acquire via input what we read and hear, and not via output, actual talking and writing. Output does have an indirect role to play in encouraging acquisition, however. (p.57)

Krashen points out the arguments in favour of the Input Hypothesis which puts much emphasis on the acquisition of spoken

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fluency by listening and reading and not by practising and talking. Krashen believes that "it is, in fact, theoretically possible to acquire language without ever talking" (p.60). He refers to the Lenneberg study to support his claim. Lenneberg (1962) found that a boy with congenital dysarthria, a disorder of the peripheral speech organs, who was never able to speak could understand spoken English perfectly when he was tested. He had acquired "competence" without ever speaking. However, Krashen assumes that the child would have acquired the language somewhat faster if he had been able to speak "due to the indirect contribution speaking can make to acquisition" (p.60). Thus Krashen believes that output can contribute to language acquisition in an indirect way: "... the more you talk, the more people will talk to you!" (p.60). It will also affect the quality of input directed at the acquirer by receiving a more modified input. Krashen believes that "engaging in conversation is probably much more effective than "eavesdropping" for language acquisition" (p.60-61). To participate in conversation means that there must be some output from the learners and this is where the output plays an indirect role in L2 acquisition. Krashen illustrates the indirect contribution of the oral output to language acquisition in the following diagram:

Input ⟶ Language acquisition ⟶ Output

Conversation
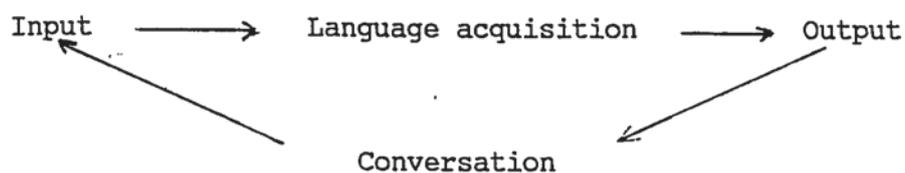
Figure 3: How output contributes to language
acquisition indirectly

To this figure Krashen adds that:

> Comprehensible input is responsible for progress in
> Language acquisition.
> Output is possible as a result of acquired

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competence.
When performers speak, they encourage input (people
speak to them). This is conversation. (Krashen 1982, p.61)

Further evidence of the role of oral output of learners in SLA is
expressed by Swain (1983). Swain suggests that the oral output of
learners has the function of creating the necessity for them to
analyse the target language syntactically. Brock quotes Swain's
argument that producing one's own messages in the target language
"may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the
means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or
her intended meaning" (p.249). Thus, Brock (1986), referring to
Swain, states that "output may be an important factor in successful
SLA." (p.55)

With such importance attached to the role of oral output in L2
acquisition, this section will be concerned with the examination of
this linguistic product in some detail. It is obviously another
domain whereby classroom language is different from non-classroom
language. This can be illustrated through the examination of the
kind of discourse produced by NNSs under different types of
interaction and errors made by NNSs and their treatment by NSs. I
will deal with each of these two issues in turn.

5.3.1 A Quantitative Analysis of NNSs Oral Output

Through the examination of NSs input to NNSs in this chapter, it
has been demonstrated that NSs modify their speech when addressing
NNSs in order to make their input more comprehensible. The point
was made that such comprehensible input plays a major role in FL
acquisition. However, NSs comprehensible input is not the only
determining factor. Obviously, there are other variables which

determine the quantity and quality of the oral output of NNSs. Hyde (1977) for instance found a positive relationship between self-esteem and the oral production of second language learners. Moreover, opportunities to use the language and get more involved in the interaction are important factors in determining the oral output of NNSs. We shall see that NNSs produce longer utterances under ICD. and IC. conditions. It will also be demonstrated in Chapter 6 that these two settings are favourable environments for NNSs initiations and participation in the discourse. These settings, we shall see, abound with "reasoning" and "referential" questions which help NNSs talk more freely, provide unknown information, and show their opinions.

The following table presents a quantitative account of the oral output of NNSs under various types of interaction:

Types of Tests	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discuss-ion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Mean T-unit Length in Words	9.63	5.93	5.16	9.12	9.47
Mean Subordinate Clauses per T-unit	0.22	0.01	0.03	0.16	0.23
Mean S-nodes per T-unit	1.53	1.19	1.03	1.45	1.68
Mean lexical Density per T-unit	33.67	38.96	40.64	43.69	41.60

Table 5: T-unit measures of NNSs output.

The table shows that there is a difference of frequency in the length of NNSs oral output among the various types of interaction.

The data demonstrates that NNSs produced longer utterances in FI, ICD, and IC settings more than they did in both FCI and ICI settings. This again reiterates the fact that such settings as ICD or IC are more conducive to NNSs involvement and participation in the discourse. This will lead ultimately to foreign language development, for conversation provides the learner with large units which are incorporated into sentence structure (Hatch et al., 1979).

As for the average number of subordinate clauses and the average number of S-nodes per T-unit, the data does not show any substantial difference in frequency in NNSs speech under the various types of interaction. This may suggest that NNSs use similar language structures under different circumstances. This factor can perhaps be attributed to NNSs limited competence in using a foreign language and this may also explain the fact that NNSs lexical density is also almost identical during the various types of interaction with the exception of the FI, during which the NNSs utterances are characterised by a lower lexical density. This perhaps can be attributed to the nature of the interview in which the NNSs were asked to answer certain questions and respond to them accordingly.

To sum up, both NSs and NNSs produced longer utterances in both ICD and the IC settings. Neither NSs nor NNSs speech shows any substantial difference of frequency in the number of subordinate clauses and the number of S-nodes per T-unit in the various types of interaction. However, on the lexical density measure, NSs and NNSs oral output shows a difference in frequency: NSs oral output, for instance, shows almost identical figures for lexical density among the various types of interaction with the exception of the FI

setting in which the NSs produced the highest average of lexical density among the other types of interaction. In contrast, NNSs oral output shows almost identical figures for lexical density in the various types of interaction, with the exception of the FI setting, in which NNSs produced the lowest average of lexical density among the other types of interaction.

5.3.2 Error and Error Treatment

One of the distinguishing features of classroom discourse which has captured the attention of many researchers is the errors made by NNSs and the way teachers handle them. This is an area where output can play a direct role in language learning in that it provides a domain for error correction. When errors are corrected, learners supposedly change their mental representation of the rule or alter the environment of rule application. (Krashen, 1982, p.61)

The teacher's treatment of learner's errors is a much broader issue than conventional error analysis. van Lier (1984) has put forward the argument that error handling is too restricted to theoretical issues and should be replaced by the wider scope of "repair". van Lier (1982) points out:

> Repair is a term that can potentially encompass a wide range of phenomena, including statements of procedural rules, sanctions of violation of such rules; problems of hearing and misunderstanding the talk, second starts, prompting, cluing and helping, and correction of errors. (p.417)

The relation between repair and correction is made clear in Schegloff et al, (1977):

> ... we will refer to 'repair' rather than 'correction' in order to capture the more general domain of occurrences. Self- and other-CORRECTION, then, are particular types in a domain more

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generally formulated by a distinction between self-
and other- REPAIR. (p.363)

The present analysis is concerned with the specific issue of
correction. Long (1977) reviews the early studies in this area.
Studies which proposed taxonomies for the classification of error-
handling are provided by Allwright (1975) and Fanselow (1977).
Chaudron (1977) presents a discourse model of error correction
exchanges and investigates teacher strategies in handling these
errors. Nystrom (1983) employs the theoretical apparatus developed
by Chaudron to deal with strategies in error-handling in bilingual
primary classes.

With the advance of communicative competence theory, error
analysis and interlanguage studies assumed a broader scope to
include not only the linguistic systems (phonology, morphology and
syntax) but also the interactional and communicative nature of L2
performance. Attention shifted to the functional, pragmatic and
social dimensions of second language use. Studies of L2 performance
and their effect on NSs-NNSs discourse have handled corrections,
repairs, repetitions and other aspects of conversation (Day et al.,
1983).

These studies of error-treatment seem to emphasise that accuracy
of NNSs utterances is necessary, since feedback is considered an
essential component of the language learning process. However, for
real communication to take place equal consideration should be given
to matters of fluency. By fluency I mean the way the NNSs use their
language in a non-evaluative context, such as conversation outside
the classroom.

An examination of the data of the present research reveals that while teachers usually emphasise accuracy over fluency inside the classroom, a shift of emphasis is placed on fluency when the teacher relinquishes his role as a controller and becomes a facilitator of FL acquisition in a situation such as the ICD or IC. It is only then that fluency rather than accuracy is given first priority. The following extracts from the data illustrate the points I am making:

1. Formal Interview (FI)

> NS: Oh, um, there is a problem about the financial quarantee for two-year courses. Do you know about this?
> S: There isn't, no problem when I can't finished, finish my subject for two years, Algerian Embassy will not pays me.
> NS: Do you have the grant for thirty six months or for thirty months?
> S: Thirty six.

2. Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)

> T: Why is Tony sad?
> S: He was boring.
> T. He is bored. No, not because of that. No, he is not bored.

3. Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)

> T: Right, visible characteristics?
> S: Look like a fish.
> T: Looks like a fish is one.

4. Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)

> T: Isn't it isn't it a terrible, isn't it a terrible waste to have women not working?
> Ss: (Laugh xxx)
> S: Our minds not accept this you know, our minds not accept this, for example wife superior than man.
> T: That's very easy to accept.

5. Informal Conversation (IC)

> NS: The trouble is that you have now got the medicine to prevent to a large degree those people dying from those illnesses, so therefore ...
> S: Excuse me, if I interrupt, there are development, developed countries. In a third world,

they have alot of lands which have not used.
NS: Oh, yea.
S: So the developed countries have a technology,
and the third world have a lands.   Why the
developed   countries don't like to have, to have
countries to use their technology to augment the
food and things; they can they can partage, (S2:
share.) They can share, they can share if they
like that, but for example as you say they don't
like this solution. That is very good solution,
very good solution.
NS: Oh, I completely agree with you.

It can be seen from the five extracts above that NSs handle NNSs

errors in different ways: in FCI and ICI settings, NNSs errors were

implicitly corrected; teachers corrected students' errors without

explicitly referring to the errors but simply by providing the

correct model. However, students' errors were ignored in FI, ICD

and IC settings. This might be attributed to the emphasis placed on

the accuracy of language inside the classroom and the focus on the

channel of communication outside the classroom. This is perhaps one

of the reasons why NNSs oral output is much greater in ICD and IC

settings than in both·FCI and ICI settings as was pointed out

earlier.   These settings which encourage NNSs to produce more of

their oral output and use their language freely offer perhaps a

richer environment for acquiring fluency in English.

The degree to which NSs handle NNSs errors inside the classroom

as   distinguished from non-classroom settings can be   further

illustrated by the following table which presents three types of

reactions to errors: ignoring the error, correcting the error

explicitly and correcting the error implicitly.

Reactions to Errors	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discuss-ion (ICD)	Informal Conversation (IC)
Ignoring Error	32	0	0	51	36
Explicit Correction	0	2	2	2	0
Implicit Correction	0	8	5	0	0

Table 6:   Frequency of occurrence of different NSs
reactions to NNSs errors.

The table shows that the actual raw frequency of errors varies
very considerably.   Under more formal classroom circumstances there
are relatively few errors.   Under informal conversation
circumstances or a similar sort of interaction like ICD, there are
many.   There seem to be two reasons why this is so.   Firstly,
because the more formal situation is designed to promote accuracy
and prevent error. Indeed, the FCI (personal communication from the
teacher) was a deliberate attempt to present a roughly behaviorist
lesson from which, according to standard Behaviorist theory, error
was excluded.   Secondly, NNSs utterances under these circumstances
are so short that few errors get the chance to happen.

The data shows the artificiality of classroom language where all
errors are corrected and the authenticity of non-classroom language
- that is when no one is playing the role of teacher - where almost
all errors are ignored in favour of fluency and exchange of
information.   This can be attributed to the fact that in the
classroom emphasis is laid on the instructional function of language

which is reflected in the evaluation of students' responses; learners are expected to produce particular forms upon which the teacher provides his assessment.

It can be said that teachers typically insist on grammatical accuracy in the oral performance of SL/FL learners. As Holley and King (1971) put it (and their comment is probably still true despite the decline - in theory - of the grammatical syllabus) "foreign language teachers have been trained to correct faulty student responses quickly and consistently for grammatical pronunciation errors assuming that correct learning will result" (p.494). Thus, teachers still emphasise "usage" rather than "use" (Widdowson, 1972) despite the lip-service being paid to the importance of communication by English Language teaching methodologists.

Such emphasis on accuracy is absent in non-classroom interaction. In both ICD and IC, NNSs utterances are full of inaccuracies and they often go unchecked: Verb endings, tenses, adjectives, prepositions, nouns, determiners, S-inflections, etc are all inaccurately used by NNSs without affecting intelligibility and the process of communication. This would provide evidence that grammatical accuracy is not always required of FL learners to accomplish communication. Indeed, Holley and King believe that "student communication in the foreign language may be actively discouraged by the instructor who insists upon grammatical accuracy" (p.494). Similarly, Long (1977) does not consider error correction to be vital inside the classroom. He argues that adults do acquire a second language outside the classroom with the aid of little or no formal correction of their grammatical errors. However, he provides

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no empirical evidence. In contrast, Krashen and Seliger (1975) hold a different view of error correction. They consider the correction of errors as an important tool to improve adults' second language proficiency. A similar view is expressed by Hendrickson (1978) who, upon reviewing a number of studies of error correction, concludes that the correction of errors would facilitate adults' L2 proficiency.

It should be stressed that I am not advocating abandoning the teaching of grammatical accuracy. Rather, it is a question of relative importance being paid to communicative effects. Of course learners' errors are irritating and must be dealt with especially if the ultimate aim for teaching a second or a foreign language is grammatical accuracy. However, it is in the end a matter of priority. This raises the questions: which is better for language learning, accuracy or fluency? Which sort of environment is helpful to the students? Is it the traditional learning classroom or a less formal classroom? Should classroom learning be geared to accuracy of language or the free use of language in a more conversational-like fluency?

D'Angelejan (1978) reports that :

> There is sound theoretical, empirical, and
> anecdotal support for the position that verbal
> fluency in a second language is most effectively
> acquired when the learning context corresponds to
> that described for informal learning and where it
> is possible for the language to be acquired rather
> than learned. (p.233)

Recently, the classroom has moved away from traditional lessons involving drill and pattern practice, grammar instruction and corrective feedback. It now includes discussion-oriented, problem

solving activities, and group work. More recently, the argument has been put forward in favour of group work and pair work in preference to the traditional classroom activities (Brumfit, 1980a; Johnson, 1982; Allwright, 1981; Rivers, 1981, 1983; Long, 1975).

Despite these changes which stress the more active, more meaningful types of interaction, classrooms have not provided the optimal environments for successful L2 acquisition and students are still faced with problems in communication outside the classroom (Long, 1983b; Taylor, 1982). This can be attributed to the fact that classroom interaction has been organised around the product (what is pedagogically attractive, not what facilitates its development) rather than on the process (how students can acquire the rules for saying and doing these things). This can be explained by the fact that much is still unknown about the actual process of L2 acquisition despite the extensive research of the past decade in this area. Indeed, many researchers have warned that knowledge about the process of L2 acquisition is far too limited to be incorporated into a coherent pedagogical programme (Hatch, 1978a; Lightbown, 1985; Long, 1985b; Tarone et al. 1976).

Research has revealed that languages are learned not by memorisation of rules and structure, emphasised by traditional classrooms, but through internalising these rules from comprehensible input within a context of social interaction. One of the criticisms advanced against the traditional classroom is that the teacher plays the role of an evaluator and that evaluation is based on grammatical and phonological accuracy corresponding to that of mature, educated native speakers (Warren, 1985). If we wish to

go beyond a definition of language as "grammatical system" then we must define our language teaching objectives in terms of social appropriacy and interpersonal communication. The job of the language teacher should no longer, therefore, be restricted to imparting a knowledge of the lexico-grammatical system of the target language.

It should be noted that the emphasis of the traditional approach on the principle of accuracy is derived from structuralist and audiolingual approaches to foreign language teaching predominant in the 1950's and 1960's which attempted to avoid situations in which the error might be likely to occur. If errors did occur, they were to be corrected immediately so as to avoid the formation of bad "habits". With the advance of the cognitive approaches to language learning and teaching, learners' errors were to be accepted by teachers. Moreover, they gained an important place in language teaching and research. Thus, Corder (1973) states that:

> Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher
> something about the effectiveness of his teaching
> materials and his teaching techniques, and show him
> what parts of the syllabus he has been following
> have been inadequately learned or taught and need
> further attention ... they provide the information
> for designing a remedial syllabus or a programme of
> reteaching. (p.265)

Thus, teachers began to have a tolerant attitude towards learners' errors, especially when the task of learning is an intelligible piece of conversation. Moreover, writers levelled their criticism against previous approaches to language teaching which emphasise accuracy rather than fluency. Brown and Yule (1983b), for example, criticise the educational system which puts great emphasis on "correctness" when speaking a foreign language.

As a consequence, many learners see themselves as failures as they are unable to produce correct language. As an alternative, Brown and Yule offer a more reasonable approach where a more relaxed attitude to "correctness" is adopted. This will help many more students to communicate more freely in a foreign language. It might also help them avail themselves of the opportunity to practise discourse strategies and turn-taking procedures which will be discussed in chapter 7.

In point of fact, this relaxed approach towards learners' errors is one of the outcomes of a discourse analysis approach. In order to promote both accuracy and fluency, discourse activities try to build in the students the confidence of saying something even though it might be inaccurate to some degree. This tendency is supported in the literature by Terrell (1977) who suggests that "if we are to raise our expectations for oral competency in communication we must lower our expectations for structural accuracy" (p.326).

All of this raises the question: which type of activities should be incorporated in the English language course? Littlewood (1984) suggests two components for the language course: 1) Pre-communicative activities and 2) Communicative activities. The first is intended to provide the learners with opportunities to practise specific elements of the language system in isolation through communicative activities. The second is designed to help the learners activate their precommunicative knowledge and skills to use them in real communicative situations.

On the basis of his research, Warren (1985) proposes a third component in addition to those mentioned above. This third

component would cover discourse activities (i.e. story discussion, showing likes and dislikes of fashion photographs, and assembly activities to complete a particular task) that promote natural discourse. Warren argues that:

> The reason for this addition is the claim that communicative activities seem not to meet the aim of Littlewood's second component and that there is a need to provide opportunities for natural spoken discourse. (p.131)

Warren believes that Littlewood's pre-communicative activities would be concerned with the correctness of the learners' language. The communicative and discourse activities should be run as such without much interruption on the part of the teacher to correct the learners' errors and provide the relevant input elsewhere in the discourse. It is often the case that in such types of discourse corrections come from the participants themselves rather than from the teacher.

The findings of the present research seem to support Warren's suggestion. It would be beneficial, perhaps, to incorporate discourse activities such as those proposed by the present research, namely ICD and IC into a language course. It has been demonstrated that such activities provide the NNSs with opportunities to use the language more freely and fluently. It will also be demonstrated in chapter 7 that those activities provide the NNSs with opportunities to use discourse strategies of natural conversation.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has considered in some detail the input to and oral output of NNSs. The findings report that NSs input is characterised by its simplicity on measures of subordinate clauses,

S-nodes, and lexical density per T-unit, though their speech is characterised by a higher average of lexical density in the FI setting among the various types of interaction. It seems likely that this simplification happens in all types of interaction, though as it was not my intention to compare NS-NS interaction, this must remain speculation. The findings also report that NSs produce longer utterances in FI, ICD and IC settings.

As far as the oral output of NNSs is concerned the main findings report that NNSs produce longer T-unit utterances in FI, ICD and IC than in the FCI and ICI. However, NNSs utterances do not vary in simplicity as measured by the low average of subordinate clauses, S-nodes, and lexical density per T-unit among the various types of interaction, though their speech is characterised by a lower lexical density in FI setting. NNSs utterances are also characterised by a wide range of error types, which were handled differently in different circumstances. Unlike non-classroom interaction, accuracy rather than fluency is stressed inside the classroom. The implications for all of this were referred to during the course of this chapter, but I leave the detailed discussion till Chapter 8.

Finally, the findings reported in this chapter are not in conflict with other research findings in the area; but extend known findings to other occasions.

NOTES

1. Long (1980b) defines "S-nodes" as "the number of tensed verbs in T-units divided by the number of T-units containing them." (p.154). Long considers this test as an index of syntactic complexity. This definition has been used to measure the complexity of spoken utterances.

   Stubbs (1986) puts forward a definition of lexical density as follows:

   > We can define the lexical density of a text (LD) as the proportion of L words expressed as a percentage: If the total number of words in the text = T, and the number of lexical words = L, then LD = 100 L/T. (p.33)

   Stubbs provides one important reason for studying L and G words; they can be used as indicators of various contexts in which the text is produced (for example whether the text is spoken or written). Written texts have a tendency to have more lexical density than spoken texts (Ure, 1971). Stubbs attributes this factor to the fact that a written text is shorter, less redundant and has fewer repetitions than comparable spoken text. Since the present research is concerned with the examination of a variety of discourse types, the lexical density test has been used to measure the complexity of both NSs and NNSs utterances under different types of interaction.

2. For advice on this and other tables I am grateful to Dr. P. Coxhead of the Computer Science Department at Aston University. With this table, given the small number of NSs, I am following his advice to "comment on the results with caution". I (and Dr. P. Coxhead) have, however, confidence in the figures in Chapter 5, 6 and 7.

3. It should be stressed that these figures are approximate. The difficulty of quantifying errors in spoken discourse rather than text sentences is well-known. Quantification can become imposs-ible particularly when weak NNSs of English utter long stretches of discourse.

Chapter 6

Interaction in NSs-NNSs Discourse

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the features of input and oral output of NNSs, where important factors which play major roles in foreign language acquisition and language learning were investigated. It demonstrated that native speakers (NSs) modify their speech when addressing non-native speakers (NNSs). It also demonstrated that the oral output of NNSs shows some sort of variation according to the type of interaction.

Recent research on NSs-NNSs conversation suggests that while understanding may indeed be facilitated by encoding in shorter, syntactically less complex utterances, speech modifications alone are not necessarily sufficient for comprehension. As pointed out by Long (1983b), referring to Meisel (1977) and Larsen-Freeman (1979), "what may be easier to produce from the speaker's perspectives may become difficult to decode from the perspective of the hearer." (p.211)

Therefore, the modification of the syntactic structure alone serves the immediate needs of communication but not the future development of the learners. Modification of the interaction in conversation is also necessary for providing better access to the language acquired. Thus, Tsui (1985) reports (using Krashen's terminology) that "it has been hypothesized that input which is comprehensible and interaction which has been modified best facilitate second language acquisition" (p.8). Moreover, Long (1983b) considers modification in the interactional structure of

conversation more important than linguistic simplification in making input more comprehensible to NNSs. Elsewhere, he puts forward the following hypothesis: "participation in conversation with NS, made possible through the modification of interaction, is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA" (Long, 1981a, p.275). Although the hypothesis still awaits further research, it can be concluded that modified interaction is an important factor in L2 acquisition.

Input and interaction are two "distinguishable phenomena" (Long, 1981a). However, an examination of the one can hardly be made without an examination of the other. Long considers them "often related". This chapter will be concerned with features of NSs-NNSs interaction. It is worth reminding ourselves from the outset that modified interaction takes various forms. Thus, Chaudron (1983b) points out (a fact that Tsui (1985) also mentions) that no single form of modification is an appropriate method of presentation. Modification can be more effective through constant interaction and negotiation between the teacher and the pupils.

It is important for any study of interaction, therefore, to look at the integral issues which play a major and a fundamental role in the modification of NSs-NNSs discourse. In what follows I will deal with the following major issues: question types used by NSs which keep the discourse going, which determine the extent to which NNSs are involved in the process of discourse and which play a part in the modification of the interactional structure; patterns of interaction and participation in NSs-NNSs discourse which are determined by the nature of the type of interaction; repetitions by NSs of NNSs utterances which make sure that the discourse is

proceeding appropriately; expansions by NSs of NNSs utterances which modify NNSs utterances and are considered to be a factor in SLA; and conversational frames which signal the boundary of exchanges and organise the discourse. It is, we shall see, through the consideration of these interactional features, rather than the input, that differences between classroom language and non-classroom language become more apparent. An examination of each of these issues under the various types of data is in order.

6.2 Question Types Used by NSs

> Question asking is one of those mundane and everyday activities which we spend considerable time engaged in yet have very rudimentary technical understanding of. (Kearsley, 1976, p.355)

At school level, questions have an important role to play in the classroom. Teachers use a wider range of question strategies to help students understand better. Questions which foster student critical thinking have long been emphasised by educators (Aschner, 1961; Carner, 1963; Hunkins, 1966). French and Maclure (1979) consider that "asking and answering questions on the part of teachers and pupils respectively constitutes one of the central mechanisms of classroom interaction." (p.1)

In this section, I do not propose to review all the research literature on questioning; for a detailed review the reader is referred to Gall (1970); Turney (1973, 1975); Hargie (1978), Wragg (1980); and Hargie, Dickson and Saunders (1981). Guidelines on asking questions in classrooms can be found in Taba (1966), Brown (1978), and Kerry (1982). Instead, I propose to describe the findings of the present research of NSs questions addressed to NNSs and the implications of that for enhancing communication in the EFL

classroom. Before attempting to examine the types of questions used in my data, a brief introductory survey of the classification of questions in previous studies will be illuminating.

6.2.1 Classification of Question Types Used by NSs

In his review of studies on teacher's questioning practices, Gall (1970) states that:

> The findings in studies on teachers' questioning practices are fairly consistent ... It is reasonable to conclude that in a half-century there has been no essential change in the types of question which teachers emphasize in the classroom. About 60% of teachers' questions require students to recall facts; about 20% require students to think; and the remaining 20% are procedural (p.713)

Most first language studies use either Bloom's (1956) taxonomies of questions to look at the intellectual or cognitive level of questions, which ranges from the recall of information to the evaluation of responses. The results of the research indicate the frequency of the lower cognitive levels and the fact that teachers' questions are frequently factual or recognition questions (Gall, 1970).

Several systems have been devised for the analysis of classroom questions. Systems such as those of Bloom (1956); Carner (1963); and Gallagher (1965) are predetermined by limited general categories. One would expect to meet problems of classification arising from the nature of the different contexts. Bloom's classification system of questions, which has a lot in common with others, is based on the cognitive process required to answer the questions. The cognitive-based classification has the weakness that it cannot be observed directly; one has to use inferential tactics. These systems are devised to classify questions that have important

educational objectives. However, the educational objectives in these systems are limited to questions which recall information and develop critical thinking.

Other researchers have approached the study of questions from different angles. In their rank scale hierarchy, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have considered questions which improve on students' incomplete responses. They called them "cues" and "prompts". They have also dealt with other types of questions and labelled them according to their functions: "starter", "elicitation", and "check" questions. Mishler (1975) has approached the study of teachers' questions from a sociolinguistic perspective whereby questions are used as connectors in conversation. Conversation happens by means of the following strategies of questions: "chaining" in which a conversation is extended through successive questions by the initial questioner; "arching" in which it is extended by the respondent's question; and "embedding" in which there are two responses to the question. Kearsley (1976) discusses the linguistic, psychological and social aspects of questions and question-asking in verbal discourse. He classifies questions according to their forms and functions as "echoic", "epistemic", "expressive", and "social control". Following Kearsley, Long and Sato (1983) applied their framework of analysis to the transcript of one lesson in the ESL corpus of their data, whereupon certain modifications were made. These changes were necessitated by, they argue:

> 1)... functions of questions found in the classroom
> data but not captured by Kearsley's categories (the
> subdivisions of echoic and introduction of
> rhetorical), and (2) the elimination of categories
> found in Kearsley's scheme but not exemplified in

the data (<u>attentional</u> and <u>verbosity</u> questions.)

<div align="right">(p.275)</div>

Long and Sato (1983) coded all questions in the ESL corpus of the data of their research using the seven categories in the new taxonomy below (the curious punctuation is theirs):

1. Echoic,

   a. Comprehension checks (e.g., Alright?, OK?;
      Does everyone understand "polite"?)

   b. Clarification requests (e.g., What do you
      mean?; I don't understand; what?)

   c. Confirmation checks (e.g., S: carefully
      T: carefully?; Did you say "he"?)

2. Epistemic,

   a. Referential (e.g., why didn't you do your
      homework?)

   b. Display (e.g., What's the opposite of "up"
      in English?)

   c. Expressive (e.g., It's interesting the
      different pronunciations we have now, but
      isn't it?)

   d. Rhetorical: asked for effect only, no answer
      expected from listeners, answered by speaker
      (e.g., Why did I do that? Because I ...) (p.276)

One can carry Long and Sato's taxonomy of questions a step further and add new categories in order to make even finer distinctions. Long and Sato believe that a system with such finer categorical coding might not result in a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Their additional distinctions were:

> ... motivated not just by the possibilities of
> making them, but by previous research (Long,
> 1980b) showing that behaviour in the new categories
> varies in frequency with the task upon which
> speakers are engaged. (p.275)

It is certainly true in general that taxonomies of this type may be subdivided indefinitely and that there is a point beyond which accuracy of description becomes a meaningless, non-generalisable list. However, it will be seen below that I have modified the categories to some extent to answer the needs of my data. The data has yielded another type of question which might be labelled a "reasoning" question. An adaptation of Long and Sato's coding system of questions with some eliminations and additions will therefore be applied to the corpus of the present research as follows:

1. Echoic.

   a. Comprehension Checks: (e.g., "Do you understand what I mean?", "Are there any words that you don't understand?")

   b. Clarification Requests: (e.g., "What? Sorry", "What do you mean?", "What is the other one?" "Say that again")

   c. Confirmation Checks: (e.g., S. "I think we need some, I think reading." T."more reading?" S. "Yea").

2. Epistemic.

   a. Referential: (e.g., "Tell me something about the institutions of marriage in Algeria"; "How many applications have you made to British universities?"; "Have you ever been to Paris?")

   b. Display: (e.g. "How many people are there in the story?")

   c. Reasoning: (e.g. "What do you think about that?"; "Alright your opinion about that?"; "Why do you have to pay money?").

6.2.1.1 Echoic Questions

The direction and negotiation of information conveyed by utterances is made through acts whose functions are made obvious by means of the modification of the interactional structure which

renders the input more comprehensible to the NNSs. These acts are referred to as comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks. Long (1980b, pp.81-83) defines those terms as follows:

Comprehension checks are:

any expression by a NS designed to establish whether that speaker's preceding utterance(s) had been understood by the interlocutor. These are typically formed by tag questions, by repetition of all or part of the same speaker's preceding utterance(s) uttered with rising intonation, or by utterances like <u>Do you understand</u>? which explicitly checks comprehension by the interlocutor.

Clarification requests are:

any expression by a NS designed to elicit clarification of the interlocutor's preceding utterance(s). Clarification requests are mostly formed by questions but may consist of wh or yes-no questions (unlike confirmation checks) as well as uninverted (rising intonation) and tag questions, for they require that the interlocutor either furnish new information or recode information previously given.

Confirmation checks are:

any expression by the NS immediately following an utterance by the interlocutor which was designed to elicit confirmation that the utterance had been correctly understood or correctly heard by the speaker ... confirmation checks are always formed by rising intonation questions with or without a tag. (<u>The man</u>? or <u>the man, right</u>?) They always involve repetition of all or part of the interlocutor's preceding utterance. They are answerable by a simple confirmation (yes, Mmhm) in the event that the preceding utterance was correctly understood or heard, and require no new information from the interlocutor. (p.81-82)

Before applying Long's definition of these terms to the data of the present research it is worth making two points, both typical of this sort of discourse-based work. Firstly, formal criteria to test whether a particular utterance fits a particular category may be drawn from one or more linguistic levels simultaneously. Thus both

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phonological and grammatical data are called in support here. Secondly, these formal criteria need not necessarily disambiguate the function of utterances on their own. Thus, here, question tags may be a feature of all three echoic questions. Despite the potential here for an unacknowledged retreat into subjectivity, however, my own data was generally fairly clear-cut.

The following examples illustrate these types of echoic questions:

Comprehension Checks

Are you OK over there, no problem?
Do you know of the word "divorce"?

Clarification Requests

Utility, what do you mean by that?
What is your question?
How do you mean?

Confirmation Checks

NS: Do you have the grant for thirty six months
    or for thirty months?
S: Thirty six.
NS: You have the grant for thirty six?
S: Yes, thirty six.
NS: Absolutely sure.
S: Yes.
NS: Absolutely, absolutely sure?

These examples clearly show that the NS or the teacher explicitly checks the comprehension of the learners, asks them to clarify their utterances, and elicits confirmation that their utterances are clearly heard and understood. Clearly these types of questions focus on the channels of communication and for this reason they can be said to have a "contact" function (Hymes, 1962).

A numerical account of the echoic interactional structure in the data gives the following figures:

Types of Echoic Questions	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Comprehension Checks	1	0	6	1	0
Clarification Requests	6	3	8	5	0
Confirmation Checks	12	1	0	1	2

Table 7: Frequency of occurrence of echoic questions.

The Table shows that the use of both comprehension checks and clarification requests is most frequent in ICI. This suggests, in so far as generalisations can be made at all here with such small figures, that those questions which help the modification and the comprehensibility of the interactional structure are more used in this sort of interaction.

This finding is important when we bear in mind that both comprehension checks and clarification requests are good interactional devices to avoid breakdown of communication and to repair the discourse when communication breaks down. This finding is consistent with Long (1980b). Consider the following example of a comprehension check strategy:

1. T. Are there any words that you don't understand?
2. S. Rather like a fish.
3. T. Rather like. It looks quite like a fish. It is a bit like a fish, but it is not completely like a fish. There are some similarities. Some parts of the whale look a bit like a fish, but not all of it, it is rather.

This example illustrates how the teacher explicitly checks the comprehension of the students after explaining the lesson. This sort of checking serves to give the teacher the green light to proceed with the steps of the lesson. The teacher, in Turn (1) wants to make sure that the students have understood the vocabulary of the lesson before proceeding further on the premise that any misunderstanding might otherwise lead to a breakdown in communication. Here the comprehension check device serves a metalinguistic function where the focus is on the meaning of the language rather than on its forms.

Once the communication has broken down the teacher uses the clarification request strategy to repair the discourse. Consider the following extract:

1. T. What is the first paragraph about?
2. S. xxx
3. T. Yes description of ...?
4. T. Mohammad, what was your word?
5. S. Characteristics.
6. T. Characteristics is a good word to use, · but it could be anything, it could be anything.
7. S. External structure.
8. T. Yes, external appearance you would say or, what it looks like, what a whale looks like.

The extract above illustrates the use of the clarification strategy in Turn (4). On the student's part it is used as an attempt to clarify and repeat the word, and on the teacher's part it is used as an attempt to hear more clearly what is being addressed to him. The emphasis here is on the channel of communication or in Hymes's (1962) words on the "contact" function of the language. In this sense, the clarification request is used as a strategy for the negotiation of meaning which occurs in an environment of linguistic trouble[1]. The solution in such a case is not achieved separately by

the teacher or by the learner. It is achieved by the joint effort of both the teacher and the learner to maintain communication. What is important therefore is "the negotiation of an agreement on meaning" (Tarone, 1981). The communication between the teacher and the learners could have gone on without the use of a clarification request strategy, albeit an attempt on the teacher's part was made to hear again what Mohammad had said ("Mohammad, what was your word?") in order not to ignore his contribution to the discourse. Moreover, the teacher expands and reshapes the learner's response into a more acceptable form (Turn 8). In this sense expansion is a form of repair work used as a pseudo-negotiation strategy as we shall see later.[2]

In this sort of negotiation, the conversation moves into the development stage stimulated by the teacher. Further development occurs when the learner requests clarification in a case of mishearing or misunderstanding (e.g. "What?", "Huh?" or echoing part of the teacher's question in order to establish the field of reference. The learner's utterance has a "contact" function to maintain the channel of communication:

1. T. What's a whale?
2. S. A whale?
3. T. What's a whale?
4. S. It is a big fish.
5. T. It is not actually a fish is it?

After the teacher's initial question fails to receive a response he uses an exact repetition of the same question which succeeds in eliciting a response from the learner. The response is not appropriate however and the teacher, therefore, uses a clarification request (Turn 5) so as to invite the learner to provide new information or to recode the information given.

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It must be made clear that this sort of negotiation is of great benefit for foreign language development. As Wells (1981) argues in this respect:

> The sort of interaction that will be beneficial for his (i.e. the child's) development ... is that which gives due weight to the contribution of both parties, and emphasises mutuality and reciprocity in the meanings that are constructed and negotiated through talk. (p.115)

It is by this sort of negotiation that the learner gets information about the target language that enables him to think over his interlanguage system.

Another device used in the data to avoid communication breakdown is the use of other-initiation/self-repair strategy (Schegloff et al., 1977). Here, the teacher withholds the other correction by means of giving repeated clues or prompts. This strategy operates in instances where the teacher attempts to elicit information from the learners:

> T. Has she ever been to Geneva?
> S. Yes, she have been to Geneva.
> T. Yes she ...?
> S. Yes she has.
> T. Yes she has. She has been to Geneva.

The teacher also tries to help out by modelling what he thinks the students should say as in the following example where the focus is on the correct pronunciation. The teacher's language serves a "poetic" function where the focus is on the form of the message. In this sense the language produced is "artificial" and "contrived" for teaching purposes.

> T. So Tony ...?
> S. Think, thought, think.
> T. So Tony, listen everyone, though. everyone ...
> Ss. Thought. Thought.
> T. Lovely. Lovely.

The above table (p.156) also shows that there is no substantial difference of frequency in the use of either confirmation checks and comprehension checks with the following settings: FCI, ICD, and IC; that is to say I have very few examples indeed. However, in the FI, confirmation checks are used more than in all other types of interaction put together. This might be the result of the interviewer's interest in finding out absolutely correct information about the subjects:

1. NS: Which Universities have you applied for?

2. S: Bath, I have been last week. Bath. I think I have a place at Bath.

3. NS: You think you have or are you certain?

4. S: Yes.

5. NS: Are you certain?

6. S: No certainly but I think I have a place.

7. NS: OK, fine.

8. S: I talk with supervisor about my subject and he asked me you must do six month course with undergraduate after you can start.

9. NS: So you do six months with the under- graduates.

10. S: Course after you start your research.

11. NS: And how long will the research continue?

12. S: Half past year.

13. NS: Another six months?

14. S: No another six months. Eighteen months.

15. NS: Eighteen months. So six months with the under- graduates and eighteen months research.

16. S: Only for recapitulation.

17. NS: Yes, yes, and it will be a good

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> opportunity for your English as well,
> actually. That's good, that's good.

In the extract above, we have five confirmation checks in turns (3, 5, 9, 13 and 15). Each of them follows an utterance by the student. They are designed to elicit that the utterance has been correctly understood. This is done by the repetition of parts of the student's preceding utterances.

In short, understanding can be reached when both the learners and their interlocutors modify and restructure their interaction by their requests for clarification or confirmation of each others' input and check on the comprehensibility of their own productions.

6.2.1.2 Epistemic Questions

Epistemic questions in the data comprise "referential", "display", and "reasoning" questions. The terms "referential" and "display" questions are used here in Long and Sato's sense. By "referential" questions they mean those types of questions that require information not known by the questioner. This can be illustrated by examples drawn from the different types of the data:

> How many applications have you made?
>
> What about you, have you been to Paris?
>
> Has anybody eaten anything from a whale?
>
> Tell me something about the institution of marriage in Algeria?
>
> Is it available in Algeria?

These examples show clearly that the NSs or the teachers seek some information which they do not know from the students. In this sense, the negotiation is meaningful. The language is used for

"genuine" or "authentic" discourse. In this sense it has a "referential" (Hymes, 1962) or an "interactional" function.

By "display" questions Long and Sato mean those types of questions that ask the respondent to provide or to display a knowledge of information already known by the questioner (see Brock, 1986 who also adopted the same terms in her study). To illustrate what this definition means, examples from the data are quoted here as follows:

> What's that?
>
> Is it a man's head or a woman's head?
>
> Is he happy or sad?
>
> What's a whale?
>
> What sort of tail has it got Abdullah?
>
> What is the difference between killing and murdering?

In all of these examples, the teacher has already a prior knowledge of the information he is ostensibly seeking to discover from the students. He is simply trying to display this knowledge to the students.

Another type of question found in the data of the present research can be classified as "reasoning". By this I mean that type of question which requires the respondent to think and give an opinion. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

> Can I ask you about the course and about the English course in general. What do you think?
>
> Why is he poor?
>
> What difference will it make if all whales disappeared?
>
> What do you think about that Saeed?

What sort of things do you like in the British
culture?

The above examples show that the NS or the teacher is explicitly
asking the NNSs to show their opinions of the issues raised in the
discourse. The emphasis here is on the exchange of "genuine" or
"authentic" information, and, once more, in this sense the language
used has a "referential" or an "interactional" function.

The following table shows an overall picture of the distribution
of the different types of questions in the various types of
interaction.

Types of Epist-emic Questions	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Referential Questions	64	6	10	8	12
Display Questions	0	77	52	0	0
Reasoning Questions	22	1	2	23	5

Table 8: Frequency of occurrence of epistemic questions

The table shows that "display" questions or what Mehan (1979a)
calls "known-information" questions predominate in both FCI and ICI.
Learners were seldom given the opportunity to show their opinions
freely and express personal experience nor were they encouraged to
raise questions or talk freely. "Display" questions illustrate that
classroom communication is dealing with what Barnes (1976) calls the

"transmission model" of education in which a knower exerts his authority by imparting knowledge to those who do not know (the learners). Macnamara (1973) has observed that teachers and students do not have any genuinely important things to say to each other. The teacher's preoccupation with the form of the students' responses rather than the content does not lead to spontaneous verbal interaction. In this case, the teacher's language is "artificial" and has a "transactional" function (Brown and Yule, 1983a), where the focus is on the transmission of factual or propositional information.

The interaction is a teacher-centered question-answer-feedback during which knowledge is displayed and evaluated rather than considered to be a contribution to the discourse.[3] The teacher has the use of the first and third parts of most three part exchanges. He also controls the acts available for use by the next speaker. Thus, the learner's response is evaluated as a performance not as a communicative act. This is consistent with French and Maclure's (1979) observation that teachers not only predetermine answers to their questions but also shape the form of these answers. It also confirms Bowers' findings (Bowers, 1980) that only a very small proportion of elicits are genuine questions in which the teacher is concerned with the content, as opposed to questions to elicit a response to be evaluated or what Bowers calls "vacuous" responses. Indeed, teachers control the relevance of what pupils say through the process of constant monitoring (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Stubbs, 1983).

Teachers' domination of classroom interaction through the use of "display" questions can again be illustrated by the following example:

```
T:  What's that?
S:  Hair.
T:  A what, sorry?
S:  A hemisphere.
T:  A hemisphere, no.
T:  Hair, somebody's hair?
S:  Hemisphere
    A head.
T:  A head, quite right.
T:  Is it a man's head, or a woman's head?
S:  Woman's.
T:  A woman's head.  OK. Fine.
T:  Is she happy or sad?
S:  Happy, I think.
T:  Happy, you think quite right.
T:  What's her name?
S:  Kate.
T:  You're right Kate.
```

These questions are closed in type and allow only for very specific answers or are limited even to requests for specific words. Here the display questions or the "closed" questions observed by Barnes (1969) control the discourse. The teacher and the learners work on a simple routine of language drills. The emphasis is on the referential force rather than the message (Ellis, 1980). What is required from the learner is to identify the referential field of the teacher's questions. This communicative task is made easier by the teacher's drawings on the board as the focus of reference and by his routinized interrogation. The learners have to do three things: (1) realise that their illocutionary contribution to the discourse is to provide information (2) identify the information required and (3) use their linguistic repertoire to encode their information.

The single-word responses of the students in the above example are not the result of the students' limited competence so much as of

teacher-dominated discourse constraints. This sort of situation must be of limited value for the enhancement of syntactical development (Ellis, 1980).

The fact that classroom language is so constrained does not rule out the possibility of some real communicative exchanges such as those concerned with classroom management or organisational language exemplified in statements of directives: this is a familiar point. Here, for example, language is used narrowly to serve a directive function:

- Stop talking in Arabic and French. OK.

- What I would like you to do now is to have a look at page 26 ...

- I want you read very quickly, read through the whole passage.

- Carry on through the reading.

- Go to number 2. Read the first paragraph and decide on the probable topic of each.

Communicative exchanges also occur when the teacher comments on a particular point in the course of the lesson plan.

T: Has anybody ever eaten anything from a whale?
S: No.

T: No. Alright ... I have, I tried a whale. Someone feels very hungry, you know.

Indeed, McTear (1975) offers an analysis of the different categories of language use in the classroom.

1. Mechanical (no meaning involved).
2. Meaningful (contextualised but not new information conveyed).
3. Pseudo communicative (new information conveyed but in the context of the EFL classroom.)
4. Real communication (spontaneous speech i.e. opinions, jokes, classroom management, teacher evaluation and comments) arising naturally out

of the context, not introduced as a means of instruction.

This is similar to Willis' analysis of classroom language (see p.68-69) with categories 1,2,3 on the "inner layer" of discourse and category 4 on the "outer layer" of discourse. McTear considers this distinction between these types of language use in the EFL classroom important and that it is a limitation of the Sinclair-Coulthard model not to capture such a distinction.

However, it is often the case that there is very little or no two-way exchange of information in real communicative activities in the EFL classroom. Thus, it differs in kind from interaction outside the classroom where the message is the main concern and display questions seldom occur. Indeed, the data gives a figure of zero for "display" questions in both ICD and IC settings while at the same time "referential" and "reasoning" questions are more pervasive. This can be accounted for by the nature of the conversational interaction in these settings where a two-way exchange of information is the focal point of attention of NS-NNS discourse. Participants here are keen to find out information about each other, discuss their points of view, and express their opinions. This sort of situation makes it possible for such types of questions as "referential" and "reasoning" to occur frequently and also renders it extremely difficult to imagine a "display" question occurring. In the FI setting the data provides more instances of "referential" questions than "reasoning" questions. This is obvious, in general, from the type of interview, whose intention is substantially to discover information rather than invite opinion (though the latter does occur as well, for example

when attempts are made to find out what students think of their language courses).

All in all, it can be said that the data provides a clear divide between classroom language (both formal and informal) and informal or non-classroom discourse. The former type of interaction is "artificial". It is characterised by the use of display questions which put great constraints on NNSs responses, deny the learners the opportunity to make a real contribution to the discourse, and make the teacher the sole arbitrator of classroom discourse. The latter type of interaction is genuine or authentic. It is characterised by the use of "referential" and "reasoning" questions which provide the learners with opportunities to enhance their abilities to use the language more freely and increase their oral output. These sorts of questions help the learners put the "referential" or the "interactional" function of language into use.

An interesting question is: why do teachers often deny the learners the opportunity of making a real contribution to the discourse? Willis (1983) refers the reason to the dictates of "orthodox" approaches to language teaching. Such approaches dictate that only the target language should be used in the classroom and that grammatical explanation or explicit "rules" should be avoided. Such articles of faith prevailed during the days of audiolingualism that superseded the grammar-translation method, which depended heavily on the explanation of grammatical rules in the learners' mother-tongue. With the development of transformational generative grammar and cognitive approaches to language teaching, teachers and materials writers gave the impression that they were using cognitive

approaches while at the same time remaining in the behaviorist tradition. Their activities were based on pattern drills, the aim of which is "to ensure that the pupil can produce the correct grammatical forms with promptness, accuracy and minimum conscious thought" (Wilkins, 1972, p.22).

These structural drills appeared to be genuine dialogues that bear a resemblance to the way people talk to each other outside the classroom. But in fact teachers were, under the guise of teacher-student dialogues, offering something very similar to the citation activities of manipulative drills. All they can do is to enable students to develop hypotheses about the form of language. These dialogues mostly consisted of "display" questions and constrained responses. This can explain, then, the reasons why learners are denied the opportunity of making a real contribution to the discourse.

It should be pointed out that these classroom activities do not lead to genuine and meaningful discourse. It follows, therefore, that classroom discourse might profitably be adapted to reflect other types of questions such as "referential" and "reasoning" questions that would enhance meaningful interaction. These sorts of questions would signal to the learners that they could play a more active and creative role in the interaction. They are thus important devices for turn-taking procedures. I shall leave a detailed discussion of this issue to the next chapter.

6.2.2 <u>The Interactive Nature of Asking and Answering Questions</u>

An observation of the structural pattern of teacher-pupil interaction suggests its sequential structure. The teacher (who

already knows the answer, or is a 'primary knower' - (Berry, 1981)
poses a question to which the pupil gives an answer followed by the
teacher's evaluation, and then poses another question which runs
through a similar pattern. This tripartite structure has been
referred to in the literature as Initiation, Response, Feedback or
IRF and is classroom specific.[4] Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)
explain the presence of this sequence in classroom discourse as
follows:

> Having given their reply children want to know
> whether it was the right one. So important is
> feedback that if it does not occur we feel
> confident in saying that the teacher has
> deliberately withheld it for some strategic
> purpose. (p.51)

Sinclair and Coulthard consider this tripartite exchange
structure the basic unit of classroom interaction. About half of
all their data falls into this pattern. The following example
illustrates this:

> T: What makes a road slippery?
> S: You might have rain or snow on it.
> T: Yes, snow, ice.

However, such sequential patterns do not always run successfully.
Indeed, while it is generally considered that the first part of a
question/answer sequence evokes a response from a recipient, French
and Maclure (1979) discovered that this is not so because of the
"sequential and temporal disjunction between a teacher's
question/directive and its appropriate answer/response" (p.5). A
teacher's initiation sometimes fails to receive any response from
the class and this would lead to some sort of breakdown in
communication upon which the teacher would use some repair
strategies. Thus, repair procedures are a central part of the

sequential structuring of discourse and not "side sequences" embedded in it (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff, 1972).

Oduol (1987) distinguishes between "overt communication breakdown" and "covert communication breakdown". The former happens "when teachers' elicitation totally fails to stimulate any verbal response from the class, and is met instead with silence". The latter happens "when a pupil gives a wrong response to a teacher's elicitation because he misunderstood what was expected as an answer" (p.117).

Through the examination of the data of the present research, we have already seen that echoic questions like comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks are used to make sure that the interaction is proceeding well and are sometimes used to repair some sort of breakdown in communication. Upon examining the data, I have also found two other major strategies of questions are employed both to achieve successful interaction and to· repair the breakdown of interaction or in other words to get the "right answers". These strategies are termed "preformulating" and "reformulating" (French and Maclure, 1979). An examination of both of these strategies is in order.

6.2.2.1 <u>The Preformulating Strategy</u>

In this strategy, the teacher tries to orient the pupil to the relevant area of the answer before providing the appropriate answer.

French and Maclure (1979) refer to this prefatory strategy as "preformulating", and the actual linguistic realisation of the preformulating strategy as the "preformulator". The function of the

preformulator is to "orient the child to the relevant area of experience upon which he must draw if he is to supply the appropriate answer" (p.2). A teacher's question which is operationalised in conjunction with a formulator they call the "nuclear utterance". This can be illustrated by the following example from the data of the present research:

Preformulator: What about number four?
Nuclear utterance: Look at the first sentence.
What is it about?

The teacher's initial utterance, the preformulator, serves as a prefatory to direct the pupils to the relevant area for providing the answer by delimiting and focusing on the sentence which the following question, "the nuclear utterance", will draw on. In this sense, the function of the preformulator is similar to the non-question structure outlined by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) called "starter", whose function they define as "to provide information about or direct attention towards an area in order to make a correct response to the initiation more likely" (p.40).

6.2.2.2 The Reformulating Strategy

An attempt is made above to show how the preformulating strategy tries to achieve the conditions for providing the appropriate answer. It should be noted, however, that not all preformulating strategies are successful in deriving the appropriate answers and not all teachers exploit them well.

Therefore, some sort of a reformulating strategy is necessary to repair the breakdown of communication once this has occurred. This device "attempts to obtain appropriate responses by providing in the reformulating questions part of the information necessary for

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an analysis of what may count as an appropriate answer." (p.13).
French and Maclure represent the reformulating sequences as follows:

1. Nuclear utterance   WH-question   Teacher
2. Breakdown   No/inappropriate answer Child
3. Reformulator   More specific question   Teacher

Unlike the preformulation strategies, the nuclear utterance to which the answer is being sought in the reformulating sequences has the form of a wh-question (e.g. "What sort of tail has it got?") This is an added difficulty to pupils of a low competency because the wh- question allows them a wide range of possible answers. The problems facing a student in answering wh-questions have been pointed out by observers of classroom discourse (Mehan, 1974; Stubbs, 1976; Wells, 1978).

When a difficulty faces a student in answering a particular question, the teacher then turns to one of the reformulating strategies to repair the discourse. This sort of reformulation is referred to as pseudo-negotiation (Reynolds, 1985) in that the teacher steers the talk towards the right answers. It is used at the substantive and linguistic levels (see note 7):

1. T: Can you describe a whale for me?
2. S: Shape.
3. T: Describe it in your own words.
4. T: Describe it, what does it look like? Come on.
5. S: It is a big ship.
    It has.
6. T: What sort of tail has it got? Abdullah.
7. S: What.
8. T: What sort of tail has it got Abdullah?
9. S: Tails.
10. S: It is long more than two meter.
11. T: Come on Abdullah.
12. T: Has it got teeth?
13. S: Yes it has.
14. T: Where is it?
15. S: On the top.
16. T: Somewhere at the top of the head. Yes.

In this extract, the teacher attempts to get the "right answer". For that purpose, clues are provided so that the question becomes increasingly specific until the goal is reached. These clues are important factors in the monitoring of classroom talk as it proceeds. However, they lead students to depend more heavily on teacher's clues rather than work out the answers themselves. When the teacher's request to describe a whale does not obtain an answer, he paraphrases the same question and puts it in simple language (Turns 3, 4). Upon the student's failure to give an appropriate response to the initial content question, the teacher reformulates the question to make it more specific by narrowing down its content (Turns 6, 12). He presents particular characteristics of the whale, "tail" and "teeth", and asks a yes-no question. Only then do the students contribute to give the appropriate answer. Each time the teacher reformulates his question specifying the meaning-frame he wants his students to enter and fill out for him.

In this sort of reformulation, the teacher is providing part of the information required for the appropriate answer. Thus the teacher's general question about the description of a whale narrows down to a more specific enquiry about its tail, teeth and colour, thus helping the students to provide the appropriate answer. In this sense, reformulators are similar in their function to Sinclair and Coulthard's "Clues". For them a clue "is subordinate to the head of the initiation and functions by providing additional information which helps the student to answer the elicitation or comply with the directive" (p.41).

Narrowing down the general question and reformulating it into a more specific form is again illustrated by the following example:

1. T: Whales belong to the family. what? What family?

2. S: Mammals.

3. T: Yes.

4. T: Anything more specific?

5. S: Sea-living mammals.

6. T: Sea-living mammals, mammals, OK.

In this example, the teacher is asking the students to give an answer to the nuclear utterance. As a response, the student gives a general answer. The teacher then narrows down and reformulates the question again to put it into a more specific form (Turn 4). Only then does the student provide the appropriate answer.

The fact that both preformulating and reformulating strategies were found in only one type of the data (ICI) suggests that these two devices are basically classroom-oriented. The presence of these two strategies may be accounted for by the language of instruction used in the classroom. In this sort of situation the teacher is always keen to make sure that his students provide the right and appropriate answer. This emphasis on accuracy here, of course, reveals the artificiality of classroom language.

The absence of these two strategies in the FCI, however, may be due to the simplicity of the content of the lesson and the high level of proficiency of the teacher. The style of the teacher is characterised by its simplicity and straightforwardness to meet the needs of the students. Thus, questions are made simple and easy to understand. Consider the following example:

```
T: How many people are there in the story?
S: Two.
T: Two.
T: Who are they?
S: Tony and Kate.
T: OK.
```

These are the sort of questions found in FCI. There is clear evidence here of the simplicity of questions. Therefore, no need arises to employ either the "preformulating" or the "reformulating" strategies.

In the other types of interaction (ICD, and IC) the accuracy of responses is not the main concern of the participants. Instead, NSs here are mainly concerned with the progress of discourse and the exchange of information no matter how appropriate and accurate the responses are. Moreover, NSs can accept NNSs inappropriate responses or no response at all to a certain question as long as the discourse is proceeding well and the exchange of information is going on, even in a different direction.[5] Consider the following example:

```
NS: What sort of things do you like in the British
    culture?
S:  British culture?
NS: Yes, English culture. Would you prefer to say
    something in this country?
S:  What I mean by my question, question is what
    sort of problem you will find after, after
    marriage? What sort of problem you find?
    What kind of problem, when you decide to get
    married? What sort of problem you will find
    if.
NS: I am not really sure that I am understanding
    what you are saying, because it is natural for
    us. Well, natural, the way we do in this
    country is you meet somebody and having got to
    know them, I suppose, you get engaged, and
    then you get married.
```

The context of this extract is the discussion of marriage in both England and Algeria. In this extract, the NS is seeking to know the

students' opinions of British culture. However, the student provides no appropriate answer to his question. Instead of giving a response to the NS's question, the student seeks to discover some information from the NS about the problems of marriage in England. The NS here responds by providing the student with some explanation. Thus, the NS's initial question received no response from the student and the student's question received a response from the NS: instead of the student giving a response to the NS's question the reverse takes place. The NS accepts the topic switch and the conversation goes on.

In this extract the exchange of information rather than the accuracy and the appropriateness of responses is the main concern. It is in this sense that the interaction produced here is genuine and natural. It is no wonder then that these types of interaction do not yield examples of the "preformulating" and "reformulating" strategies.

However, the data on ICD provides instances of other strategies to avoid communication troubles. One such strategy used by NSs is "relinquish topic control" (Long, 1983a). This is a strategy used to pass NSs control of current and subsequent conversational topics to NNSs:

> NS: What do you think? What would you prefer?
>   You obviously ... do you like the way it is
>   in Algeria, or ...?
> S: I like is very good.

Here, the NS makes this explicit to let the learner talk freely. This is similar in some way to the so called "or-choice" questions

(Hatch, 1978b) which offer the learners many potential topics to talk about and suggest many possible answers to the question.

6.3 Patterns of Interaction in NSs-NNSs Discourse

It was made clear earlier that NSs-NNSs discourse varies according to the type of interaction. It was found, for instance, that display questions which require definite responses are a particular feature of EFL classrooms; whereas "referential" and "reasoning" questions which require free responses characterise FI, ICD and IC discourse. These factors might be the reason why NNSs utterances were characterised by short T-units in classroom discourse and longer T-units in FI, ICD and IC discourse as we saw in Chapter 5. In point of fact, Brock (1986) has found that "learners' responses to referential questions were on average more than twice as long and more than twice as syntactically complex as their responses to display questions" (p.55).

It will be seen, in what follows, that FCI, which abounds with "display" questions, restricts NNSs initiations and increases their responses. On the other hand, we shall see that IC which abounds with "referential" and "reasoning" questions increases NNSs initiations. This will be seen more clearly when examining the interactional patterns of NSs-NNSs discourse from the point of view of the balance between "teacher talk" and "student talk" and that between "initiate" and "respond". (For a discussion of figures which may well be typical, see Tsui, 1985. She gives 81.7% and 84.2% for teacher-talking time in two English lessons, with no student initiations in either.) These patterns of interaction in

which the teacher does most of the talking in classroom are also observed by Flanders (1970) and Bellack et al. (1966).

It is believed that opportunities to initiate and use the language in the on-going interaction have important effects on L2 acquisition. Seliger (1977), for instance, in his research on the two types of learners, he calls "high input generators" and "low input generators" has shown that the former type of learners, who practise the language by interacting in both formal and informal environments, have a faster and a better rate of language competency. This notion of initiation and participation in interaction also underpins the work of Schinke-Llano (1983) who found that children of fluent English proficiency participated more in content lessons than did children of limited English proficiency. The quantity and quality of language production of students working in small groups as opposed to a lockstep classroom setting is described by Long et al. (1976): they found that the greater quantity of acts of different kinds were performed by students in the small group. In this group, the students had a greater number of turns available to them.

These studies show that teachers control classroom discourse. The extent to which this control is manifested has yet to be described, and this is what the present study has partly attempted to do as shown in tables (9-11) below:

Table (9) presents the actual number of words spoken by NSs and NNSs as follows:

Word Counts	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conversation (IC)
Total Number of Words Spoken by NSs	2430	1454	1608	1653	1661
Total Number of Words Spoken by NNSs	1527	697	347	1822	1263
% Spoken by NSs	61.41	67.60	82.25	47.57	56.80
% Spoken by NNSs	38.58	32.40	17.75	52.43	43.19

Table 9: Word-count of NSs and NNSs contributions.

These figures are unsurprising. They reflect the dominant role of the teacher in class that is associated with the mere fact of being a teacher, and has little or nothing to do with language problems. Beyond the classroom the situation changes and the ratio of NSs:NNSs talk is almost equal. Notice, however, the topic discussed in ICD and IC is one of which the NNSs have cultural knowledge; the question of marriage in both Algeria and England. We can safely presume that NNSs would have little to say on other U.K. topics such as British tax laws or the local football team. It is easy to imagine that such topics would leave NNSs stranded. It should be remembered, that is, that a knowledge of language system (which might be all that is needed in most types of ESP courses) is insufficient to become a participant in society.

The above figures give an idea of the extent to which NSs and NNSs participate. Of more interest is the way they participate -

the relative extent, for instance, to which they guide the interaction. This can be measured partly by the number of initiating moves (in Sinclair and Coulthard's sense) which are made. This table gives the following figures:

Types of Talk	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conversation (IC)
NSs Initiations	115	105	94	41	24
NSs Initiations per 1000 words	47.32	72.21	58.45	24.80	14.44
NNSs Initiations	3	3	1	48	31
NNSs Initiations per 1000 words	1.96	4.30	2.88	26.34	24.54

Table 10: Frequency of occurrence of NSs and NNSs Initiating Moves.

The following table presents figures for NSs and NNSs responses which are, logically, a good mirror-image:

Types of Talk	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conversation (IC)
NSs Responses	3	2	7	16	24
NSs Responses per 1000 words	1.23	1.37	4.35	9.67	14.44
NNSs Responses	112	126	114	58	25
NNSs Responses per 1000 words	73.34	180.77	328.53	31.83	19.79

Table 11: Frequency of occurrence of NSs and NNSs responses.

The figures in tables 10 and 11 above are, I suppose, entirely predictable. But they are not less significant for that and underline clearly the distinction between FCI talk and informal or non-classroom talk, and therefore the artificiality of the former. The distinction between the figure for student initiation in the formal classroom setting (and the findings of Tsui), and the equivalent figure for ICD is extraordinary.

The reasons for the distinction are perfectly obvious, though no doubt complex, and are concerned with the sociolinguistic role of teacher and student respectively.[6] This general pattern seems also to be true of other unequal encounters such as the interview. What is of more relevance is the extent to which one may suppose one's students will benefit from being constantly on the receiving end of such an encounter. And the answer, surely, is not at all.

It can be seen that it is only in an informal setting, and only where a discussion is permitted to develop (that is, where the teacher abandons the right to speak wherever he wants, to direct the conversation, perhaps to stand where the others are seated, and so forth) that students feel able to initiate. This does not happen under the circumstances of ICI; it can be seen the number of student initiations here is not significantly higher. It is only when the teacher abandons his role as teacher, in other words, that the student may create discourse as well as respond to it. To put it another way, it is only when the classroom ceases to be a classroom that classroom language ceases to be artificial.

At one level this is obvious: at another it brings up a question of definition - a "classroom" being definable, perhaps, as

precisely a place where the role of teacher is taken by somebody. However, it is also a consideration of great importance. It is a consideration, also, which raises the question of how much course designers and teachers can or should take account of these findings. They might ignore them on the grounds that classroom time is better spent on the sort of controlled practice which needs the controlling presence of a teacher. They might say that, however valuable, such findings cannot be implemented because the teacher-training effort involved would be so immense, or they might argue that there is no available methodology of proven effectiveness which permits the teacher to assume a less central, less organising role. I shall leave a detailed discussion of these issues until later (see Chapter 8).

6.4 Repetitions by NSs of NNSs Utterances

One of the interesting communicative strategies employed by NSs in their verbal interaction with NNSs is the repetition of NNSs utterances. It has been argued that this strategy is believed to have a potential impact on language learning. Gaies (1977) states that repetition is "a recurrent technique thought to have potential accelerating effects on language acquisition" (p.206). Long (1980b) has found that repetitions either by the native speaker himself or by someone else are "interactional resources available to the NSs and NNSs to repair the discourse when a breakdown occurs." (p.152)

However, the findings of my data report another function of repetitions. In the data, NSs generally repeat NNSs utterances as a form of evaluation of NNSs responses:

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T:   Has she ever been to Rio?
S:   Yes, she has.
T:   Yes, she has, jolly good.

T:   What do you know about whales?
S:   Whales
T:   Not Cardiff Wales.
T:   What do you know about them?
S:   Dangerous.
T:   Dangerous. OK.
```

This extract shows that the repetition of NNSs utterances is intended to show NSs satisfaction of NNSs responses. It is, therefore, in the third part of the IRF structure of classroom interaction observed by Sinclair and Coulthard that repetitions occur.

Repetitions of NNSs utterances can be either partial or complete, exact or semantic (Long, 1980b). Thus, repetition in my data by NSs of NNSs utterances is coded as any repetition partial or complete, exact or semantic. (It therefore obviously includes a number of questions.) It is intuitively a peculiarity of classroom interaction to allow for a greater number of NSs repetition of NNSs utterances than does any other type of interaction.

The data shows the following figures of NSs repetition of NNSs utterances under various types of interaction. (It will be recalled from Chapter 4 that in each category, 35 minutes of interaction has been considered.)

Types of Talk	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)	Informal Classroom Interaction ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conversation (IC)
Total Number of Words of NSs	2430	1454	1608	1653	1661
Number of NSs Repetition of NNSs Utterances	9	53	21	0	1
Number of NSs Repetitions per 1000 Words	3.70	36.45	13.06	0	0.60

Table 12: Frequency of occurrence of NSs repetition of
         NNSs utterances

Repetitions, then, are almost three times per frequent under the the circumstances of FCI than elsewhere. The quasi-behaviourist nature of much of this particular lesson, with its strong dependence on IRF sequences, makes this fairly predictable. Rather more interesting, therefore, is the almost total absence of NSs repetition in ICD and IC, a single instance in a total of 70 minutes and 3314 words. Here is evidence of a very significant divide between formal and informal occasions, between discussion and other forms of interaction. The occasional uses of repetition under FI may be attributed to the fact that this, like the more formal classroom, is an unequal encounter, or to the fact that the NS is attempting to obtain authentic information from the NNSs and therefore checks where he is uncertain.

6.5 Expansions by NSs of NNSs Utterances

Another communicative strategy in NSs-NNSs discourse is the use of expansions by NSs of NNSs utterances. This strategy is believed

to have the potential for language acquisition. Hamayan and Tucker (1980), referring to the suggestion of Nelson et al. (1973), indicate that "expansions which restate a child's sentences may enhance syntactic development by providing new or alternate syntactic and lexical structures" (p.454). They also point out, reporting on the findings of the research of Brown et al. (1969), that "expansions somehow facilitate language acquisition in young children" (p.465).

In the data, expansion of NNSs utterances takes the form of paraphrasing or adding some information to NNSs utterances. Here we find the NS is trying to shape the NNSs utterances in the appropriate form. In other words the NS cites the model of the utterance and formulates it into its appropriate form. In this sense Gaies (1977) considers expansion as "a more complex form of modeling".

Thus expansion in the data is coded as any utterance by a NS designed to paraphrase and/or add new information to the NNSs preceding utterances. Consider the following examples:

      Ex. 1. T: He has a problem.
              S: Money.
              T: Money, his problem is with money, quite right.

      Ex. 2. T: Utility. What do you mean by that?
                 It is a good word.
              S: For their oil and their meat, and ...
              T: So, utility what you can use them for, yes,
                 excellent.

These examples show how the NS expands on NNSs utterances. The expansion occurs in the third part of the IRF structure. Here, we find the NS recognises the truth value of the NNSs utterances and at the same time demonstrates to them how their utterances are encoded

by native speakers of English. In other words, the teacher reshapes or paraphrases NNSs responses into a more acceptable form. In this sense expansion can be considered as some sort of a repair strategy of incomplete responses. This sort of reformulation is usually accepted by the learners and is evidence of the teacher's superior status. It is used for the negotiation of meaning, and it helps in the development of NNSs utterances.

Expansion then, as reformulation, is an example of pseudo-negotiation whereby the authorised version, the teacher's account, stands. The difference between "the reformulation strategy" and the expansion is that the first works on the metalinguistic level and the second on the substantive level.[7]

Expansions of NNSs utterances, then, are a marked feature of NSs-NNSs classroom interaction rather than any other type of interaction. An examination of the data yielded the following figures:

Types of Talk	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Total Number of Words by NSs	2430	1454	1608	1653	1661
Number of NSs Expansions of NNSs Utterances	5	18	28	3	0
Number of NSs Expansions per 1000 Words	2.06	12.38	17.41	1.81	0

Table 13:   Frequency of occurrence of NSs expansion of NNSs utterances.

The figures here mark clearly the distinction between classroom language (both formal and informal) and that of informal or non-classroom talk. The marked use of expansions of NNSs utterances in the former situation can be attributed to the artificiality of classroom discourse where teachers are more concerned with the accuracy rather than the fluency of NNSs utterances. Here we find NSs paraphrase, reformulate, and expand on NNSs utterances in a more acceptable form. Moreover the absence of the use of this strategy in the IC and the very occasional use of it in the ICD and FI is further evidence of the very significant distinction between the formal classroom and the informal or non-classroom language. This may be attributed to the fact that in the latter case NNSs are mainly concerned with the exchange of information and the flow of interaction rather than the provision of accurate responses.

6.6 Conversational Frames Used by NSs

Another feature of NSs-NNSs interaction is the use of conversational frames to signal the boundary of exchanges. NSs usually use boundary markers such as "well", "so", "OK", "now" which signal the end of a previous exchange or the beginning of a new one. These boundary markers are referred to as frames. They consist of two moves: framing and focusing. Their function is "designed to signal the beginning or the end of what the teacher considers to be a stage in the lesson" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, p.49).

A numerical account of the conversational frames, taken in this sense, has been made to see which type of interaction provides the NSs the opportunity to use them in their verbal interaction with NNSs. The data has yielded the following figures:

Types of Talk	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter- action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter- action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver- sation (IC)
Total Number of Words by NSs	2430	1454	1608	1653	1661
Number of Frames	45	6	11	0	0
Number of Frames per 1000 Words	18.52	4.13	6.84	0	0

Table 14: Frequency of occurrence of NSs use of frames

The figures here show a clear distinction between the classroom language and that of the informal conversation or a similar sort of interaction like the ICD. Here, we find the classroom language is characterised by the use of frames whereby teachers signal clearly the introduction of new activities. The introduction of new topics or exchanges is largely determined by the teacher who is in sole control of the process of interaction:

```
T:  OK.  Here is the story with some words missing
         (T. distributes handouts)
T:  OK.  Can you write the missing words,please.
T:  OK.  Can you look at the punctuation at the
         bottom.  Let's do it together.
T:  Right, you tell me the story.
```

These examples illustrate the teacher's control of the classroom discourse. Every now and then, the teacher is trying to introduce a new activity and makes his introduction clear by using conversational frames like: "OK", "right".

The total absence of these conversational frames under both ICD and IC settings can be attributed to the fact that an exchange of

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information is the focal point of interaction in these types of communicative discourse. The introduction or development of new ideas or stages in the course of this sort of natural discourse is largely determined by all participants rather than considered to be the responsibility of the NSs who control the discourse, as we have seen, in the classroom interaction.

Rather more interesting, however, is the marked distinction in the use of these conversational frames in the interview setting than elsewhere. Here we find conversational frames are almost three times as frequent in the interview than in the classroom interaction (both formal and informal). This can be attributed to the nature of the interview discourse whereby the NS tries to find out different information about the subjects. Thus once a bit of information is given, the interviewer explicitly signals the end of one exchange and the start of a new one to get a new bit of information:

```
1.  NS: Right.  Have you any other interviews?
2.  S:  Now, I haven't.
3.  NS: You haven't had any yet, alright.
4.  NS: Alright, anything else about your applic-
        ation that you want to say?
5.  S:  Ah, ah, ah, for this month I haven't
        contact with other University, but after
        I talk.
6.  NS: OK, fine, right.
7.  NS: Now, what about the course, the English
        course this year?  Are you in general
        happy with it or not happy with it?
8.  S:  No, generally I happy with this course.
9.  NS: OK, fine.
```

In this extract, the NS signals the beginning of the first exchange by the use of the boundary marker "right" and ends it by the use of the marker "alright". He then moves on to get new information from the student about his applications. This is signalled by the use of "alright" (turn 4) and the use of "right"

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(turn 6) at the beginning and at the end of the second exchange. Likewise, to enquire about a new bit of information regarding the English course, the NS signals the boundary of a new exchange by the use of "now" (turn 7) at the beginning of the exchange and the use of "OK, fine" at the end of it (turn 9).

Finally, it could be said that the extremely high relative figure of the use of conversational frames under this category may of course simply reflect a particular user's speech style.

6.7 Summary

Abundant evidence in this chapter has shown that EFL classroom language (both formal and informal) is "artificial" in many ways. This was clearly shown in teachers' "display" questions which constrain learners' responses and restrict their initiations. Attempts were made on the part of the teachers to confirm, check, clarify, repeat and expand on NNSs responses. Moreover, preformulating and reformulating strategies were used in the ICI to avoid or repair a possible communication breakdown. In short classroom language seems to have mainly a "transactional" function.

On the other hand, evidence has been provided in this chapter that both ICD and IC are encouraging environments for NNSs participation and involvement in the on-going communication. This was made possible by NSs use of "referential" and "reasoning" questions ·which require unspecified information and give the learners the opportunity to respond freely and at length. These sorts of questions were also found to characterise FI interaction in which there is obviously a two-way exchange of information. These

findings suggest that the language produced in these settings is "genuine", "natural" and "authentic". Language here has "referential" and "interactional" functions.

The implications of all this were briefly pointed out during the course of this chapter leaving a full detailed discussion till Chapter 8. In particular, implicit in the findings is that language learning results from learning how to communicate in the FL and communicative opportunities are afforded by types of interaction that place emphasis on an exchange of information such as FI, ICD, and IC.

1. The term "negotiation" is used here in the sense used by Allwright (1984) to refer to the process of arriving at agreement between participants when meaning is in doubt.

2. The term here is used in Reynolds' (1985) sense: "Pseudo-negotiation is the process of sharing meanings and achieving interactional ends in which one participant (the power-holder) is both able to and allowed to manage the interaction within his/her own terms of reference." (p.5)

3. Inside the classroom the teacher is engaged in a process of transfer of information to the students with acts of inform-ation, elicitations, directives, and a number of other moves in which the teacher controls the structure and the content of the lesson. On the other hand, in non-classroom conversation no single participant is totally in control of the structure and the topic of interaction. Participants here engage in a two-way exchange of information. Opening up moves coincide with the transaction boundaries of the Sinclair-Coulthard model and follow up moves seem to answer the previous moves and open up the way for a new move. This is evidence that renders the Sinclair-Coulthard model simply inapplicable to the data of the present research.

   Thus it is advisable to look at the dynamics of classroom discourse rather than using ready-made systems of coding and adding another one to hundreds of published systems of classroom research (see Simon and Boyer 1970).

4. One of the differences between classroom interaction and non-classroom interaction is the presence of the tripartite structure: IRF in the former type of interaction and its absence in the latter. The first coding problem, then, for an analyst working on the Sinclair-Coulthard model on non-classroom data will be that the third column for following-up will be empty. The interaction is not restricted to IRF with the teacher performing most I and F moves. Instead, a more complex pattern with IR IRF moves occur in the discourse. Instances also occurred where NSs received follow-up moves from NNSs. A teacher's invitation might not receive any response and the communication goes on smoothly. This cannot be tolerated in classroom interaction based on the Sinclair-Coulthard model. In such cases the teacher would rephrase, or cue his original initiation until a response was obtained.

   It should be noted that Sinclair and Coulthard have later referred to the third part of this structure as follow-up not feedback, since the term feedback is misleading, in that its discourse function seems to be "to let the pupil know how well he has performed" (Coulthard and Brazil, 1979, p.39).

5. Here is evidence of the change of topic in conversation made possible by the students themselves. This cannot be permitted in a classroom interaction based on the Sinclair-Coulthard model

in which the interaction evolves around a particular topic as the agreed agenda.

Here also is evidence of the reduction strategy in which the learner uses topic switching and message abandonment (Faerch and Kasper, 1980).

6. The term here is used in a broad sense to refer to the social context of the classroom in which language is used. In this sense, the classroom functions as a social group within a social context. It is a speech community (Doughty, 1972).

7. Reynolds (1985) describes the asymmetry of classroom discourse working at three levels:

   1) the procedural: referring to the management of the unfolding structure of the classroom event;
   2) the substantive: referring to the exchange and transfer of conceptual meanings, the subject-matter (and purpose) of the event;
   3) the linguistic: referring to all aspects of the medium in which the event is conducted. This level must be sub-divided into 2: metalinguistic activity (addressed to the form and/ or sense of utterances) and metacommunicative (concerned with their force). (p.4)

8. This is another reason why the Sinclair-Coulthard model cannot be applied to the data of the present research. Acts of classroom language such as markers that act as the head of a framing move are not usually used in the same way in non-classroom language. Moreover, many other acts of classroom language such as clue, cue, bid, nomination, evaluate, aside, etc are almost totally absent in non-classroom language.

Chapter 7

Naturalness in NSs-NNSs Discourse

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 dealt with input and output in native speakers-non-native speakers (NSs-NNSs) discourse. It was found, amongst other things, that NNSs produce more oral output in an informal or natural type of discourse such as the Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD) or the Informal Conversation (IC). Chapter 6 dealt with NSs-NNSs interaction. Some features of NSs-NNSs interaction were examined. In the main, it was suggested that NNSs get more involved in communication, mainly by more frequent initiations, when the type of interaction becomes more informal or natural.

In order to secure evidence that a particular type of interaction is deemed to be natural or not, a close investigation of natural spoken discourse is necessary; and this is what the present chapter will deal with. It will be concerned with some features that characterise natural discourse, and therefore some principles, strategies and procedures of natural discourse will be examined in detail.

7.2 Some Principles of Natural Discourse

In spoken discourse, the word "natural" is not easy to define. However, it is usually associated with informal conversation in which the content rather than the medium is the main concern of participants. In this sense, Burt and Dulay (1981) consider "a natural language environment exists whenever the focus of the speaker is on the content of the communication rather than on the language itself" (p.178). Indeed, Brumfit (1984) indicates that

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"natural use for most people is primarily discussion and conversation." (p.87)

When analysing natural spoken discourse, one should bear in mind certain principles that govern its nature. In order to examine the naturalness of the language of NNSs produced under the different types of circumstances, some of the principles of natural spoken discourse put forward by Sinclair (1983) and investigated by Warren (1985) will be used as criteria for establishing the naturalness of a particular type of interaction.

Sinclair believes that natural discourse is "unfolding", "open-ended", and from "multiple sources". These principles will be applied to the different data to see which type of interaction is considered to be natural.

7.2.1 Unfolding

Spoken discourse unfolds as it progresses leaving a variable, but relatively low level of predictability for what is going to be said next. Participants are always aware of what has already been said but not of what will be said. This concept of the low-level predictability of spoken discourse will be developed further when the principle of open-endedness is examined.

It can be said that the type of interaction will determine the unfolding principle of spoken discourse. The following extracts taken from the different types of data illustrate the points I am making.

```
NS:   How many applications have you made?
S:    I think thirteen.
NS:   Thirteen, jolly good.  OK, and what speciality have
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you put for your application?
S: Structure engineering.
NS: Structure engineering. OK.

In this extract, taken from Formal Interview (FI), the NS utterance determines what can be said so that little if any of the unfolding nature of discourse will be produced by the NNS who is left with few chances to do with the discourse as he would like.

A similar sort of interaction can be seen in the following extract taken from Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI).

T: Listen to the story again.
T: Once upon a time there was a very nice man, a very kind man, very honest man called ... ?
S: Tony.
T: Tony, OK.
T: And there was a very rich girl called ... ?
S: Kate.
T: And Tony...?
S: Fell in love with Kate.
T: Tony fell in love with Kate.

This extract presents the students with a semi-completed dialogue with some words of the teacher's utterances missing to be filled in by the students. This obviously means that there is no unfolding as the discourse progresses because the end product is there to be reached.

A similar sort of interaction can be seen in the following extract taken from Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI) where students' responses are largely determined by teacher's questions:

T: Where can you find whales? Does anybody know?
S: In Asia. In the north, in the north sea.
T: North, yes.
T: Anywhere else?
S: Scandinavia.
T: Scandinavia, particularly in the cold water.
T: Khemissi you're very quiet.
S: North pole, the south.
T: Yes, in fact you can find them everywhere.

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It can be said that this sort of interaction does not give the learners the opportunity to improvise and use the English language as it happens in a natural way. It does not allow them to use the "referential" or "interactional" functions of natural language use. Their contribution is determined by the teacher leaving little, if any, chance for students to switch the direction of the discourse.

Extracts in which the unfolding principle of the discourse is presented are given below. Firstly, an extract from Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD):

    T: Before I tell you, could you tell me something
        about marraige in Algeria, who is married here?
    S: Azo, only Azo.
    T: Alright, your opinion about that?
    S: He will marry.
    T: Oh, he is engaged, engaged. Tell me something
        about the institution of marriage in Algeria?
        Tell me something about it.
    S: There are several institutions.

Secondly, one from Informal Conversation (IC):

    NS: If you decided that you wanted to marry some-
        body, and your family your parents say. you
        won't do that or whatever then you won't do
        it, would you? Could you say no, I want to
        get married?

    RA: We can't, we can't be angry with our parents
        for example, because we live together, and
        we are.
    BL: We always depend for our parents not like
        here. I think here, I think here.
    RA: We chose but they, our parents have to say
        him word, the final word.

In these extracts, the students are asked to discuss the question of marriage in Algeria. They show their opinions in different ways. This preserves the unfolding nature of spoken discourse: the ending is not prescribed and the way in which the discourse develops is left to the responsibility of all participants.

It can be concluded from the examination of the different extracts above that unlike FI, FCI, and ICI, both ICI and IC exemplify the unfolding principle of natural discourse.

7.2.2 Open-endedness

The second principle of natural discourse established by Sinclair is that discourse is open-ended. This means that the precise behaviour of the speaker is unpredictable. It is important to note that the unfolding nature of discourse and its open-endedness should not be confused. Unfolding describes the way in which the construction of an utterance is based on an awareness of what has already been said, and open-endedness describes the way the next utterances are unpredictable. Thus, an awareness of what has been said does not predict what is coming next.

It can be said, clearly, that FCI defies this principle in that the interaction is controlled and prescribed by the teacher. In this sense the discourse is non-interactive and artificial:

```
T:  Has Kate, has Kate, has Kate ever been, has Kate
    ever been to Paris?
S:  Yes.
T:  OK.
T:  Yes she?
S:  Yes she have been.
S:  Yes she have.
S:  Yes she has been.
T:  Again?
S:  Yes she has been.
T:  Again?
S:  Yes she has been.
T:  Yes she has been.
T:  Yes she has.
    Has Kate ever been to Paris?
S:  Yes she has.
T:  Good.
T:  Has Kate ever been to Paris?
```

```
S:  Yes she has.
T:  Good.
```

Drills like the above provide a good example of this sort of interaction, which does not produce open-ended discourse. The teacher sets the pattern for the students to follow and once followed the discourse becomes highly predictable. This sort of interaction is highly unlikely to occur outside the classroom. Drills are not the only factor that defies the principle of open-endedness. An interaction in which the teacher or the NS controls the discourse and assumes his role as an initiator, controller, and evaluator (as demonstrated by Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, Willis, 1981, Hewings, 1985) also runs contrary to the production of open-ended discourse. This would simply mean that the setting of interaction determines to a greater or lesser extent the open-ended nature of spoken discourse. Interactions in which the NS relinquishes his role as initiator, controller or evaluator, usually take place in ICD and in IC as we saw in Chapter 6. I have already provided evidence from the data of the sort of "referential" and "reasoning" questions, abundant in this sort of interaction, which requires open-ended responses. I have also demonstrated that NNSs take the initiating role in the discourse in these settings. Thus it can be said that unlike classroom interaction, the interaction produced under both ICD and IC settings is both unfolding and open-ended.

7.2.3 <u>Multiple Source</u>

This principle means that in natural discourse more than one participant takes part in the interaction. It is true that classroom interaction is multiple source, but it is restricted to

certain roles and procedures in a setting whereby the teacher dominates the interaction. To make this sort of discourse more interactive, pairs or group work would presumably have to be incorporated into the classroom. Attempts to make classroom discourse of a more informal discussion type should, presumably, also be encouraged. This type of discursive interaction is found to be more interactive and preserves the principle of multiple source:

> T: What do you think about that?
> RA: We can meet girls before we get married we can walk, we can prepare, it isn't like.
> T: It is much easier.
> LA: No, we can get meeting between men and women, but not like this country.
> AZ: Not like England.
> LA: Not like England, no problem, you can't go in her house.

In this extract, taken from ICD, the students collaborate to express the same idea. More than one student gives his opinion regarding the question of marriage initiated by the teacher to reach a satisfactory answer. Thus, this type of discourse is interactive in the sense that it is the "collaborative construct of two or more participants" (Riley, 1985).

The interactive nature of spoken discourse can again be illustrated by what happens in natural conversation outside the classroom where all participants try to take part in the discourse in a joint effort to express their ideas in a coherent series of contributions.

> 1. NS: It seems natural, it seems natural to us, so what do you do in Algeria?
> 2. MO: No, when you meet a man with woman, meet together we make (... asks his colleague the equivalents of some French words in English xxx)
> 3. S: To know each other.

4. MO: To know each other after, (S: for example)
         before marriage he spend many years together
         and after he decide, they decide to married
         her.
5. RA: For example, in Algeria when we, we to
         get married, we chose the girl, we and we
         ask about family and we ask about (French xxx)
         (S. behaviour)
         behaviour, her behaviour, and her of
         course ... he must be beautiful.
6. S: She must.
7. RA: She, there is three or four conditions which
         we must learn about girl and I think here in
         England when when man want to get married
         he spend like as, like my friend, he spend
         lot of time for decide. I think is
         different.

This extract, taken from IC, provides an example of the
interactive nature of discourse where participants co-operate to get
their message across.   In it, there are some instances where one
student corrects another (turn 3, 6) and more than one student
expresses his idea regarding the question of marriage.

This example demonstrates that natural spoken discourse is a
joint outcome of the participants who cooperate to form the
utterances.   Speaker MO begins to talk about marriage and then asks
his colleague the equivalent of certain French words in English, at
which moment speaker S provides his help.   Then speaker MO carries
on explaining his thoughts.   Speaker RA takes over at the end of MO
utterance and explains the ideas in more detail, and so on.

To sum up, it can be said that the discussion above provides the
evidence that unlike classroom or interview interaction, both ICD
and IC meet the principles of unfolding, open-endedness and multiple
source of natural discourse.   This obviously would suggest that if
these principles are to be incorporated into the EFL classroom,
teachers are required to make their classroom discourse of an

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informal conversation or discussion types.

7.3 Some Strategies of Natural Discourse

Spoken language is often divided into three categories: reading aloud, monologue, and conversation (Abercrombie, 1965). Reading aloud can be exemplified by what takes place on the radio or a recitation by heart from a written text. A monologue is that spontaneous language in which the hearers are not supposed to participate; examples of these can be speeches, sports commentaries, and lectures. It is in conversation that more than one participant takes part in the production of spoken discourse. For Abercrombie, spoken language usually refers to conversation. He claims, reasonably enough, that reading aloud and monologue are not used in every day language and are a specialised form of the total spoken language. This means that our attempt to study natural discourse must be focused on conversation.

Conversation takes place in real-time. It is constructed as the speaker is thinking of what to say next. This is why conversation is marked by such features as pause, hesitation, change of topics, and search for appropriate items. This is also why conversation seems disorganised, repetitious, and ungrammatical. Such features of conversation often pose problems in coding the utterances. Therefore, speakers often use discourse strategies to overcome these difficulties. In what follows two of these major strategies will be considered: holding the floor and self-correction.

7.3.1 Holding the Floor

This strategy is used when a speaker uses a filler or a repetition to overcome the difficulty of finding the appropriate

vocabulary or expression, and to indicate to the listeners that he is still holding the floor as a speaker.

Ex.1.(FI) NS: Anything else about your applications
you want to say?
S: Ah, ah, ah, for this month I haven't
contact with other University, but
after, I talk ...
NS: OK, fine right.

Ex.2.(IC) S: The women we met, we met, after we
spend long, long, time, maybe two or
three or four years, I don't know,
after they get married, officially you
know. (S Why?) why? I don't know.

In the first example, the learner uses fillers ("ah", "ah", "ah") in order to hold the floor. In the second example, the learner twice employs the tactic of repeating words he has just spoken to fill in the potential pause before he proceeds to complete his utterance.

Learners who use unfilled or filled pauses are called "planners" in that they carefully plan their utterances before they start talking again. Perhaps they are looking for the appropriate item in the sequence of their utterances. Learners who start correcting and repeating their utterances before they complete their plan are called "correctors" (Seliger, 1980). This leads us to a consideration of the self-correction strategy.

7.3.2 Self-correction

Speakers use the strategy of self-correction in order to amend words that they wish to replace during the ongoing communication:

Ex.1 (FI) NS: Surrey, Bath or Cardiff. You haven't
heard from Surrey or Cardiff yet?
Have you heard anything?
S: I haven't sent my application for
Surrey because I have, I have my
application, has my application, just

three days ago.
NS: I see, yes.

Ex.2 (IC) S: You can, you can control your birth because when woman has a baby he can stay, she can stay two years.

In the first example, taken from FI, the learner seems not to be sure about the right usage of the auxiliary verb "have". He uses it appropriately repeating himself twice. He then, supposedly correcting himself, uses the auxiliary verb "has" instead. The NS does not correct the learner, but leaves the interaction to proceed[1]. Hence the focus is on the message and the exchange of information is what that matters in this sort of interaction. In the second example, the learner uses the word "he" and then corrects himself and uses the word "she" instead. In both of these examples, the correction is placed next to the item to be repaired (the trouble source). Thus self-correction is used as a self-repair strategy (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, 1977). This self-repair is usually referred to as "a false start" and is initiated by the speaker himself. Schegloff et al. note that:

> When 'errors' of grammar are made and repaired, the repair is usually initiated by speaker of the trouble source, and rarely by others. (p.370)

It should be noted that in the EFL classroom the reverse takes place; errors are usually repaired by the teacher and thus the repair is other-initiated. This factor would make the EFL classroom learners more dependent on other-repair initiations and thus hinders the development of self-initiated repair which is a characteristic of competent L2 learners.

The frequency with which each of the above strategies is distributed among the different types of interaction will now be

examined. Consideration will then be given to the implications of these findings in creating natural discourse in the EFL classroom. The data gives the following figures:

Speaker Strategies	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter-action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter-action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver-sation (IC)
Holding the floor	2	0	0	19	31
Self-correction	3	0	0	3	3

Table 15: Frequency of occurrence of NNSs use of some strategies of natural discourse.

The table shows that the speaker's strategy of holding the floor by repetitions or by using fillers is frequently more used in ICD and IC than elsewhere. This may be attributed to the nature of this sort of interaction where NNSs are given the opportunity to speak and express their ideas more freely thus creating the opportunity for many encoding problems of communication. Learners here are required to produce sequences of complex utterances. The table shows only two occasions of the use of this strategy under FI and a figure of zero under both FCI and ICI. This may be attributed to the nature of interaction in these settings whereby NNSs utterances are restricted and fall into short utterances thus reducing the encoding problems encountered by the speakers.

As for the other speaker's strategy, "self-correction", the table shows a figure of zero of the use of this strategy under both FCI and ICI. This might be attributed to the teacher's constant monitoring of classroom discourse by evaluating the student's

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responses. On the other hand, the table shows that NNSs used this strategy on more than one occasion under FI, ICD and IC. This can be attributed to the secondary role of the teacher or the NS in evaluating students' responses and to the emphasis placed on the exchange of information rather than the correctness of language forms in these settings.

These findings seem to suggest that only in natural discourse settings like FI, ICD or IC do NNSs avail themselves of the opportunity of using these discoursal strategies. Thus the advocation for the incorporation of natural discourse activities into the EFL classroom as part of a syllabus design that would train FL learners to use communication strategies in conversation is implicit in the findings. These communication strategies can be considered as devices used by learners to bridge the gap between classroom interaction and outside of classroom interaction in a way that would increase their communicative competence. As Faerch and Kasper (1983) put it:

> ... by learning how to use communication strategies appropriately, learners will be more able to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning situations, between pedagogic and non-pedagogic communicative situations. (p.56)

Thus, by teaching the learners how to use these strategies, we make them conscious about their use in a creative and appropriate way outside the classroom. It would perhaps be better for the teachers to give the student sufficient speaking time to allow him to hold the floor and express himself fully. It would also be beneficial for the teacher to let the student correct himself thus enabling him forming his own hypothesis about the target language and encouraging his fluency rather than focusing on the accuracy of

the language produced. The strategy of self-correction would also help learners overcome embarrassment when they cannot produce their utterances smoothly.

These communication strategies would also have a positive effect on language learning. When the learner experiences a problem of some sort during the course of communication (a "planning problem" of finding the appropriate item or "execution problem" in that the item is difficult to retrieve and is a problem from the correctness or fluency point of view) and is trying to solve it, he is establishing hypothetical rules about the language (hypothesis formation) and then testing them out (hypothesis testing). These hypothetical rules are either rejected or incorporated into the interlanguage system as fixed rules. In order to have a learning effect these communication strategies should be governed by a sense of achievement rather than avoidance. If learners avoid the problem of communication they encounter, no hypothesis formation takes place and their interlanguage system remains unaffected. (For a good, brief discussion of communication strategies and L2 learning see Faerch and Kasper, 1983, p.53-54).

7.4 Turn-taking Procedures

The study of turn-taking can be related to the following areas: participation structure, initiations, formality and informality and the status and role of participants. These issues have been dealt with in some detail in Chapter 4 and 6. It was pointed out that the investigation of initiations and involvement in the on-going communication would be more apparent through an examination of turn-

taking procedures which involve more than one participant taking part in the course of interaction.

Since the interest of the present research is to promote natural discourse in the EFL classroom, and since turn-taking is a fundamental characteristic of natural discourse, it is important to examine the data to see which type of interaction promotes turn-taking. The various types of interaction will therefore be compared and contrasted to discern if there is any difference of frequency in the use of the turn-taking procedures. Before attempting to describe the data a brief general description of the concept of the "turn", a term I have in fact used earlier in this thesis, and the system of "turn-taking" is necessary.

7.4.1 The Concept of the Turn

A turn in talking refers to the oral output produced by a speaker during the time of holding the floor. It refers to the length and duration of the turn rather than its content. This concept of the turn is similar to Goffman's (1981a):

> a turn ... refers to an opportunity to hold the floor, not what is said while holding it. (p.23)

It has been observed that NSs utter brief, often one-word, utterances while NNSs speak, NNSs in this case seem to continue speaking during and after those brief utterances. Brief utterances of this sort seem to be neutral or positive in that they appear to signal agreement, understanding, acknowledgement and anything which also conveys the general sense of "go on" (see Candlin et al., 1974). These utterances seem therefore to suggest that the person uttering them appears to be content with the role of the listener and to let the speaker carry on speaking. This category of brief

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utterances includes words like "yes", "right" non-verbal behaviour like "hm", etc. and non-vocal actions such as nods, gazes, smiles, etc. Consider the following example:

```
NS:  So, Heriot-Watt has accepted you to do Geotech-
     niques,
S:   Geotechniques, yes.
NS:  But you don't want to do it.
S:   No.
NS:  OK, fine.
```

One can say that two persons are speaking at the same time, or that these are not turns by themselves, or that there are two different types of turns. These brief utterances are referred to in the literature as back channels (Yngve, 1970; Duncan, 1972), OK-passes (Weiner and Goodenough, 1977) and particular subsets of them as bracket confirmations and boosters (Goffman, 1981a) or as listening responses (Erickson, 1979).

One category of Duncan's backchannel is "brief requests for clarification" which can be "accomplished in a few words of phrases":

```
T:  What else can we use its bones for?
S:  What, what?
T:  What other things can you use?
```

Such brief utterances request or encourage the current speaker to go on or to modify his turn. Another type of such brief utterances related to listening responses are "hm", "yes", "OK" made on completion of a current speaker's turn. Such utterances are requested by the teacher.

```
T:  Are you OK over there ?... No problem?
S:  Yes.
T:  OK.
```

Here the teacher elicits a response by means of "no problem?" The elicit is preceded by a brief pause. This sort of elicitation

can be achieved sometimes by words like "alright" and "okay". However, such expressions are frequently employed by teachers within turns and do not receive a listening response at times:

> T: Read the first sentence of each paragraph and
> decide on the probable topic of each okay ...
> So look at the first sentence.

It should be noted, however, that many listening responses may be given by non-vocal means and do not show up on an audio transcript.

All these utterances - back channels, listening responses, repair initiations, and OK-passes are considered to have the function of promoting the current turn to continue as floor-holder. They therefore are of substantial significance in confirming to the current speaker, under different circumstances, his accuracy or his social right to continue. That is, they confirm the legitimacy of his utterance by whatever standard of legitimacy is in operation at the time. (As a result, to recall my earlier criticism of Willis, they shape the move structure of the interaction). Therefore, they are not counted as turns by themselves as they are related to the current turn.

Turns are not linguistic units on their own. They are a sort of procedure used among participants in any sort of interaction. van Lier (1982) concludes:

> It should be clear from the discussion so far that
> the turn is not a linguistic unit, in the same way
> that the sentence, the noun phrase or the word is
> ... the turn can therefore not be employed as a
> static unit for linguistic (at the suprasentential
> level) analysis. (p.212)

This is a reasonable line of argument, though the general point that turns are inseparable from the larger linguistic units which they combine to make up may be made of any postulated unit.

Although turns cannot be used as a unit of analysis at the suprasentential level, turn-taking as an interactive process can be used for such an analysis instead. Turn-taking is governed by certain rules and procedures for its successful management which makes it possible for such an analysis to take place. Thus, we shall talk in terms of turn-taking rather than in terms of turns.

7.4.2 The System of Turn-taking

It is a self-evident fact that turn-taking is one typical characteristic of conversation. It has been observed and commented on by Goffman (1964); Kendon (1967); and Albert (1972). These observations and comments, however, fall rather short of offering a systematic analysis of the nature of turn-taking. Such an endeavour was left to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), who offered the first, the most accurate and "simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation."

Turn-taking is a concept used to refer to two or more people engaged in conversation in which the distribution of talk among participants is not merely random. Instead it is governed by some basic rules that determine who talks, when, and for how long. Thus the turn-taking system organises the transition from one speaker to the next in a systematic way. Sacks et al. offer 14 facts about conversation as follows:

1) Speaker-change recurs, or at least occurs...
2) Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time...
3) Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief....
4) Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common. Together with transitions characterised by slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions...
5) Turn order is not fixed, but varies ...
6) Turn size is not fixed, but varies ...

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7) Length of conversation is not specified in advance ...
8) What parties say is not specified in advance ...
9) Relative distribution of turns is not specified in advance ...
10) Number of parties can vary ...
11) Talk can be continuous or discontinuous ...
12) Turn allocation techniques are obviously used. A current speaker may select a next speaker (as when he addresses a question to another party); or parties may self-select in starting to talk ...
13) Various 'turn-constructional units' are employed e.g. turns can be projectedly 'one word long', or they can be sentential in length ...
14) Repair mechanisms exist for dealing with turn-taking errors and violations, e.g. if two parties find themselves talking at the same time, one of them will stop prematurely, thus repairing the trouble ... (pp.700-701).

These characteristics of turn-taking in conversation are context-free and may well be found in any language (although the extent to which they are universal is not known). These features of turn-taking are of central importance for the investigation of classroom and non-classroom interaction. In what follows, I will deal with some of these features in detail.

Two of these features are central here: "Transition" (from one turn to a next) and "turn order" or "sequence". "Transition" refers to the point where the speaker could stop and the other speaker jump in, whereas "sequence" is related to the allocation and distribution of turns among participants. Allwright (1980) calls the first issue "turn-giving" and the second issue "turn-getting".

These two major features, "transition" and "sequence" in turn-taking, are used in a variety of forms according to the context of discourse or the status of the participants. They are either constrained or less constrained depending on the presence or absence of psycho-social factors such as authority, power, status, and role.

Sacks et al. suggest that different speech exchange systems (SES) have different turn-taking systems. In a classroom situation, for instance, the teacher assumes the dominant role in the distribution of turns while the learners do not usually have such rights (Flanders, 1970; McHoul, 1978). The teacher decides who speaks, when, and about what; while learners are restricted in taking the initiative or changing the direction of the discourse.

On the other hand, in an informal conversation setting, all participants have a wide range of opportunities to construct their turns in a competitive way, hence the nature of conversation allows them to do so. Indeed Speier (1973) defines the term conversation as:

> those cases of talking where there is a state of conversational participation open to all parties, where there are shared rights of communication. (p.72)

Participants here take the chance of any opportunity of a pause or a delay to take the initiative in the discourse. When silence occurs in conversation other speakers may indicate that they intend to speak by making use of fillers such as "erm", "um", "mm" and continue with the utterance. If the next speaker does not begin almost immediately after a pause the previous speaker is likely to produce "a post completor" (Coulthard, 1977).

In a word, both participants and types of interaction have important effects on turn-taking procedures: participants constrain turn-taking through psycho-social phenomena such as authority, status and role. The types of interaction determine particular turn-taking features: bidding for turns, for instance, is a

characteristic of classroom interaction while competition for turns characterises informal conversation. Consider the following examples:

1. Formal Interview (FI)

      NS: Lovely, When was your interview in Loughborough?

      S: When?

      NS: Aum.

      S: After Easter holiday.

      NS: Have you applied for one-year courses or two-year courses?

      S: I think two-year courses.

2. Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI)

      T: And he didn't have money because he ...?

      S: a student.

      T: Yes, OK.

      T: He was ...?

      S: a student.

      T: Lovely, good.

      T: Tell me again. He was?

      S: Because he was a student.

      T: Because he was a student. Right, he didn't have any money because he was a student. OK.

3. Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI)

      T: OK. so, why did they kill whales?

      S: For oil, the skin, oil, wax, clothes.

      T: Yes.

4. Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)

      T: Why do you have to pay money?

      RI: No, it is our religion.

      AZ: Not religion, but tradition.

      RI: No religion, religion, in religion we must pay money but not high price but tradition.

      LA: Between women, women does not like to married with a low money because if not it is a ship.

      T: Oh, dowry, oh, dear.

5. Informal Conversation (IC)

      NS: If you meet somebody like that (S. yea) and you and the girl decided to get married and your family says no,

she is not good enough for you, or
her family say no you are not good
enough for her then that's it?

MO: No, no marry at all. It is
religious. Marriage you know is
religious.
KH: I don't think so, I don't think so.
If I love it I get married with her
without problem. My family ...
S: It depends.
RA: There is a difference between the
north and the south of of for
example for for of Algeria. For
example, in north they can do that,
but in south they can't, for example
...

Extracts 1, 2 and 3, taken from FI, FCI and ICI respectively show

the teacher's stamp of authority by the simple fact that turn-taking

exchanges between the teacher and the learners are rigidly

controlled and governed. The teacher nominates the next speaker or

constrains the next utterance leaving no opportunities for the

learners to select their turns. Here, the equal rights of

communication are suspended: the teacher allocates the student's

turn, the student responds to the call, and then the teacher takes

over again. Thus, the interview or the classroom takes the form of

a dyad between the teacher and the students or a 'rotating dyad'

(Griffin and Humphrey, 1978), when the teacher switches from one

student to the next. Thus students only speak when spoken to
2
(Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). In this sense, the teacher is

postulated as the ruler of classroom discourse. As McHoul (1978)

puts it "only teachers can direct speakership in any creative way"

(p.188). However, this rule may operate in certain classroom

activities but not in others, as McHoul later (1979) suggests.

It should be noted that some classrooms are more controlled than others in terms of turn-taking, depending on the changing role of the teacher from a controller to a facilitator of language learning. This change of status is possible, and is not a priori given of any social situation. It is negotiated, created, manipulated in many ways (Cicourel, 1972). Thus Allwright (1980) argues:

> ... there is no attempt to differentiate a priori between the behaviour of the teacher and that of the learners. Any differences will therefore emerge from the analysis, rather than be built into it from the outset. This point is important enough for classroom research, where it seems best not to take teacher/learner differences for granted, but crucial for any wider application of the turn-taking analytical system. (p.169)

Thus, the teacher and the learners can change their roles according to the type of interaction. This can be seen in extracts 3 and 4 above taken from ICD and IC. In these extracts, turn-taking procedures are the responsibility of all participants in the discourse. Here more than one participant responds to NSs' questions in a highly competitive way. Participants here have a strong sense of listening skills and motivation to take their turns.

Sacks et al. (1974) point out that the "intrinsic motivation for listening" is provided by the organisation of turn-taking in conversation:

> In its turn-allocational techniques, the turn-taking system for conversation builds in an intrinsic motivation for listening to all utterances in a conversation, independent of other possible motivations, such as interest and politeness. In the variety of techniques for arriving at a next speaker, and in their ordered character, it obliges any willing or potentially intending speaker to listen to and analyse each utterance across its delivery. (p.727)

This intrinsic motivation for listening is an important factor in

L2 learning where the chances of learning a language are enhanced by the learners' close attention to the language heard around them (van Lier, 1982). Much of this motivation for listening is lost in the foreign language classroom for the simple reason that turn transition and turn distribution follows a highly predictable procedure, as the following extract from a formal classroom discourse illustrates:

```
T:  He said, he said ...?
S:  He said have you ever been to Paris?
T:  Have you ever been to Paris?
S:  Yes, I have, I have.
S:  Yes, I have.
T:  She said
S:  I have.
T:  Yes I have she said.
T:  She said.
T:  I have been?
S:  I have been dozen.
T:  Dozens?
S:  Dozens times.
T:  Dozens of ...?
S:  Of times.
T:  Lovely, well done.
```

In this extract, the teacher is trying to complete the student's utterance by adding the phrase "she said" and by emphasising it three times. However, the student's preoccupation with his turn and the form of responses as mechanical drills acts as a barrier to his listening skills.

However, van Lier oversimplifies the psycho-social nature of classroom turn-taking. It is obvious that the teacher assigns turns, but the motivation for listening is still retained where the teacher assigns turns randomly rather than round the class in a predictable sequence. Anyone who has sat in a classroom can confirm by introspection the likelihood that learners will be paying attention if they do not know which question they will be asked, as

opposed to the unlikelihood of them listening if they can work out in advance that they will be asked to answer question "9", for example.

Nevertheless, this means that if we have to make the classroom a better environment for language learning we should give the learners the opportunity to practise turn-taking procedures as they take place in natural conversation whereby the motivation for listening to the language is much greater than that in a classroom situation.

This seems to emphasise the role of conversation as a central system from which the other speech exchange systems should derive. Sacks et al. point out:

> It appears likely that conversation should be considered the basic form of speech-exchange system, with other systems on the array representing, a variety of transformation on conversation's turn-taking system, to achieve other types of turn-taking systems. (p.730)

This means that the system of conversation can be used as a basis for other exchange systems which preserve the rules of conversation. These rules can be better adapted in a relaxed setting such as ICD. In order to incorporate the rules of conversation in the formal classroom, teachers should reduce the constraints of the setting on turn-taking procedures. When teachers do that, the interaction becomes more of an informal conversation type. This is why we find FCI different from ICI. The amount of difference depends on the degree of formality versus informality.

It was mentioned above that participants in conversation try to avail themselves of the opportunity of taking turns in a competitive way. This sort of competition may create an overlap in

conversation. Levinson (1983) observes that "less (and often considerably less) than 5 per cent of the speech stream is delivered in an overlap." (p.296) However, I am very curious about this figure. It may be right, but Levinson does not produce evidence. I think it is possible that this is not an accurate representation of face-to-face conversation in a collaborative context; I would expect a higher figure for overlap.

A person who interrupts a speaker and is found to speak at the same time has already begun his contribution at a point of "possible completion" but the previous speaker has not finished yet, thus creating an overlap in conversation:

> MO: About to control birth our president says
> about this this topic, we have to think about
> this problem, because after fifteen or twenty
> years we will have a lot of problems because
> petrol petrol is (S. running out) and after
> twenty years may be we not have at all petrol
> and if we have not many children, and we can't
> ... (S2. feed them) feed them, we can't, yes,
> we can't feed them, we can't (speaks in Arabic
> xxx)(S2. we can't feed them with the minimum
> ratio) not only food, but school, (S2: Ah xxx
>) health, we must, we must know, then, we must
> know, know, we must think about this subject.

> RI: We must think about, to find another solution
> and developed technology.

> MO: He says, our president says if we stop births,
> what do you think first, we have to work
> hardly, and to find best way to arrange if you
> lot of people and the question is (S:open),
> the question is open.

When an overlap occurs, as in the above extract, one of the participants yields the floor quite quickly. In the data under consideration, it is usually the speaker who starts last who is the one to yield the floor (for this and for what follows see Sacks MS and passim). In the extract obove, MO is speaking and suddenly RI

starts speaking. This is an interruption on the part of RI as the point at which he must start speaking is not a point of possible completion. Thus RI backs down and allows MO to complete his utterance.

How does the next speaker know when to speak? Before selecting a turn, the speaker is aware of two factors: What would be a good moment to start and when he and nobody else is supposed to take the initiative. Sacks et al. (1974) associate the first question with rules of transition. They call these points 'transition relevance places' (TRPs) which are predictable to some degree because turns are made up of turn-constructional units (TCU's) which are defined as syntactic in character. Sacks et al. say:

> There are various unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn. Unit-types for English include sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions. (p.702)

Thus Sacks et al. place considerable emphasis on syntactic construction for the identification of possible completion points. However, Duncan (1972) shows that unit boundaries occur at the end of "phonemic clauses" (Goodwin, 1977; Pike and Pike, 1977) or "tone units" in British terminology.

The second question regarding the selection of turns switch points is related to rules of distribution and allocation. In most traditional classrooms, the recognition of the transition-relevance places is made easier through classroom procedures such as nomination, bidding, etc. This is not the case in IC where the allocation of turns is not so explicit and the competition for turns is high. In this case turn-taking depends on the recognition of

TCU's. But how does the current speaker allocate turn-taking procedure in conversation?

Sacks (MS) suggests that the current speaker controls the next turn in three ways:

Firstly, the current speaker can select the next speaker either by naming him or alluding to him. This kind of selection is called "personal solicit" (Allwright, 1980):

> T: What do you think of that Saeed?
> S: Statistics.
> T: What do you think about that?
> S: I think it is a bad for society.
> S: I think ...

Secondly, the current speaker constrains the next utterance or delimits the content of the next turn, but not select the next speaker. This kind of selection is called "general solicit" (Allwright, 1980):

> T: How much does it cost?
> S: One thousand billion.
>
> T: What about the way it is here? What do you
>   think it is?
> S: It is many problem between men and women here.

Thirdly, the current speaker may do neither of the above two alternatives but may leave it to the listener to select himself. To do this, the listener should have a high degree of skill in recognising what Sacks calls "the points of possible completion". He should be able to both understand and analyse the speaker's utterances. He should be able to recognise when an on-going sentence is complete in order to provide his own utterance at the appropriate moment in the course of interaction.

Listeners can tell when it will be possible to take a turn
without difficulty. While the process of turn-taking seems natural,
Sacks et al. (1974) have shown how complex this process is. While
native speakers can easily select themselves, it may be beyond the
competence of many EFL speakers. However, Jefferson (1973) argues
that speakers possess "similar ability to be self-selecting". He
gives three ways in which this might happen. These can be
illustrated by examples from the data of the present research.

Firstly, Jefferson suggests that speakers are able to add to
complete a previous speaker's utterance without a pause:

     DA: Who is interesting for the children in house
          when we have three, four, five, child, and
          in the wrong the man the young man young man
          are don't work. What do you think about
          this problem? Firstly we in Algeria, yes
          I agree with you. Our teacher in Algeria
          are women.
     LA: There is women in Lecture University.
     DA: We have minister of culture, minister of
          national education women, but our idea, we
          think if we follow this way it is not good
          for our culture or our ...

Secondly, a listener may come in at the right time to give his
idea of how the utterance could be completed:

     AZ: In Algeria, the man has all liberty, but women
          is down.
     S: Not very down but.
     AZ: Not very down but
     S: Underdown, underdown ...
     AZ: Man has, not the man has all liberty, but the
          woman usually depend.

Thirdly, the listener is able to predict the ending of a sentence
and tries to say the same thing at the same time:

     RA: In Algeria woman work, but it is not good for
          her. We think it is not good for woman.
     T: Why.
     RA: Because he has children and there is many thing.
     DR: She will feel love with other. It is true you

> know why because mens when he see, he saw his
> wife look for another man he is very angry.

These three ways in which NNSs select their own turns at the end
of possible completion in informal discussion or conversation do not
happen in classroom discourse where NNSs speak in constrained
language. Instead, here learners select their own turns in the form
of initiations after the current speaker pauses or at the end of an
utterance.

Thus, the study of turn-taking can be related to the issue of
initiation and participation in the discourse since it is through
turn-taking that the initiative becomes more apparent. This line of
thought is taken by Allwright (1980) who uses quantitative turn-
analysis. Allwright presents a numerical summary of turn-getting
and turn-giving analysis applied to a case study of one class hour.
The teacher's and other unidentified speakers' participations were
counted. He also presents the raw figures of the distribution of
topics for turn-getting and presents some of the results in
percentages. Allwright argues:

> Clearly a simple approach to the notion of 'active
> participation' will no longer suffice. It is not a
> straightforward quantitative matter, but a highly
> complex qualitative one. Nevertheless, as I shall
> hope to show, it is amenable, in the early stages
> of a case - study analysis, to a quantitative
> approach (p.166)

The data of the present research gives the following figures of
the distribution of turn-taking procedures among the various types
of interaction.

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Turn-taking Procedures	Types of Interaction				
	Formal Interview (FI)	Formal Classroom Inter- action (FCI)	Informal Classroom Inter- action (ICI)	Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD)	Informal Conver- sation (IC)
Current Speaker Selects	1	52	24	3	0
Current Speaker Constrains	117	98	60	24	14
Self-selection in the Form of Initiations	3	3	1	48	31

Table 16: Frequency of occurrence of turn-taking procedures.

The table shows that under FI, FCI, and ICI, the NSs heavily control the discourse by either selecting the next speaker or alternatively constraining the content of the next utterance. Here, the NS or the teacher determines the next turn rather than leaving it to the learners to select their turns. On the other hand, the table shows that under both ICD and IC NNSs select their turns in the form of initiations. Here, NNSs self-selections are more frequently used under those settings than under any other types of interaction. This provides some evidence that both of these types of interaction (ICD and IC) provide the learners with opportunities to select their turns and thus increase their involvement and participation in the discourse in a way similar to what takes place outside the classroom in natural conversation.

Given that turn-taking is a fundamental feature of natural discourse, it should be emphasised that the organisation of classroom activities which fails to promote this feature should be

seriously reconsidered. It should be pointed out that the aim of facilitating natural discourse in the EFL classroom is mainly to enhance the learner's discourse skills. Attention should be paid, therefore, to promoting those activities which provide the learners with a whole range of turn-taking procedures. Activities such as those typified by the present ICD or IC have been found to be beneficial for that purpose.

Finally, it should be made clear that the investigation presented focuses on lexical and syntactic matters. The exclusion of prosody (intonation as a linguistic system, silence and other voice quality effects) is not because it is seen as irrelevant to turn taking, but because it is an area which merits investigation in its own right, and which lies beyond the scope of the present analysis.

7.5 Summary

The discussion presented in this chapter so far has provided evidence that unlike FI, FCI and ICI, the discourse taking place under both ICD and IC conditions was found to be unfolding, open-ended, and involving multiple sources. These settings also made it possible for learners to use some strategies of natural discourse such as holding the floor and self-correction. They also encouraged the learners to use turn-taking procedures of the same sort as natural discourse outside the classroom. Thus, evidence has been provided that these settings exemplify natural use of language.

The implications for all this have been briefly referred to during the course of this chapter, leaving a full discussion to Chapter 8. However, an overall statement concerning these

implications is not out of place here. Looking back on the analysis of chapters 5, 6 and 7, it can be said that the language of the formal classroom is artificial and has its own limitations. To be a better place for language learning and language acquisition, the EFL classroom should provide comprehensible input. It should be a place that helps learners cope with a greater variety of patterns of natural interaction outside the classroom. These may include patterns that range from the controlled structure of the formal interview to the informal conversation, where everyone is competing to take his turn to speak. To reach this goal, teachers must look for ways and means of creating opportunities for natural discourse in the classroom.

Notes

1. For further information about the way learners' errors were handled in the present research, the reader is referred to Chapter 5 (5.3.2).

2. It should be noted that the Sinclair-Coulthard model is applicable in this sort of situation in which the teacher controls the discourse and allocates all turns among participants. The system is deliberately designed for the formal classroom in which the teacher is being in sole control of turn-taking not only deciding who should speak, when, and for how long, but also prescribes the form the answer should take.

   As Sinclair and Coulthard make clear:

   > We decided it would be more productive to begin again with a more simple type of spoken discourse, one which has much more overt structure, where one participant has acknowledged responsibility for the direction of the discourse, for deciding who will speak when, and for introducing and ending topics. (p.6)

   However, the system fails like other systems (Bowers, 1980; Edmondson, 1981) to attend to the dynamism of interaction that involves all participants involved in natural turn-taking procedures outside the classroom.

3. There is no linguistic indication under the FCI of NS selecting the next speaker. It seems likely that there are occasions when the following speaker is kinesically selected - perhaps by an appeal with the eyes to another participant who is felt to be sympathetic and willing to offer backup. This degree of kinesic subtlety, however, I have left unexamined: The only non-verbal information I have permitted myself is the clear classroom signals by a gesture with the hand by which teachers nominate the respondent to their questions.

Chapter 8

Summary and Conclusions:

The Role of the Teacher

This concluding chapter will first present a summary of the main findings of the study. It will then present an account of the implications of the study for FL acquisition, syllabus design, ELT methodology and ELT materials. The aim of these sections is to contextualise my discussion of the teacher's role, which follows. Finally, the chapter points out some suggestions for further research.

Before presenting a summary of the main findings of the study, it is worth reminding the reader of the research. It will be recalled from Chapter 4 that a group of non-native speakers (NNSs) (Algerian students aged 21-26, learning English as a foreign language at the Language Studies Unit of Aston University prior to undertaking postgraduate work in the U.K. in the field of Civil Engineering) participated with native speakers (NSs) of English in various types of interaction. These included Formal Interview (FI), Formal Classroom Interaction (FCI), Informal Classroom Interaction (ICI), Informal Classroom Discussion (ICD), and Informal Conversation (IC), each lasting for 35 minutes. The interaction was audio and video recorded with the exception of IC which was only audio recorded. The recordings were later transcribed and subjected to a detailed analysis.

8.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study can be summarised under three main headings:

1) NSs input to and oral output of NNSs,

2) Interaction in NSs-NNSs discourse,

3) Naturalness in NSs-NNSs discourse.

I should like here to deal with each of these in turn.

1) NSs Input and NNSs Output

The present study confirms both intuition and previous research (Long, 1980b; Gaies, 1977) in finding that NSs modify their speech to NNSs in the classroom. This modification can most usefully be defined as a simplification, given the results of such measurable characteristics as S-nodes, subordinate clauses and lexical density per T-unit.

To this basic confirmation the present study gives figures for the relative simplification that occurs (see Table 4, p.127), from which it may be deduced that, judged purely by the measurable characteristics of such interaction, there are substantial differences, in some aspects, between NSs performance in and beyond the classroom. This finding confirms intuition, of course; the implications for teaching, however, are of central importance. Given that the quantitative measurements one can make of NSs language to NNSs demonstrate a picture of substantial difference in some aspects, it follows that classroom language is highly "unnatural".

This general view is confirmed by the NNSs figures (see table 5, p.132). Here it was found that NNSs simply produce more out of class than they do in it. Again, not a controversial finding, but one which it is useful to have. However, though NNSs produce less

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in class, on the whole, they do not produce simpler language. What most struck me about this data was the remarkable discrepancy (at least, I perceive it to be such) between the brief, hesitant, teacher-controlled language of FCI on the one hand, and the lengthy, fluent, creative language of the "discussion" on the other. The latter, of course, was full of errors: but the students revealed an ability to communicate more than they did in formal classroom performance.

As a footnote to this section: my data confirm an established fact about error corrections. In class, NSs correct more errors, are concerned more with accuracy, than beyond.

2) Interaction in NSs-NNSs Discourse

I chose in this area to concentrate on question-types, both because they are so frequent in the classroom and because I could build on a basis of established research. I wished to take the line that the question was the most significant facilitator of interaction in the types of language occasions I was studying, and on the whole feel that this view has been borne out. The classrooms I studied did indeed proceed by questions, as was expected: the formal interview, usually, also proceeded by questions, as expected. Beyond such situations questions were fewer in number, but I had and retain an impression (which I do not attempt to prove) that the questions in ICD in particular have a crucial role to play: they advance the occasion and keep the channel open more than anything else does.

At any rate, question-types varied substantially depending on the interaction type. In common with other studies in the tradition of

Barnes (1969) and his successors, I found the class to be full of display questions. The level of formality of the class, interestingly, made little difference here: perhaps this may be referred to, or is more evidence of, the distinction made above, between informality of substance and of presentation. That is, the class may be smiling and relaxed to the point of laziness, but the teacher's actual language choice changes very little.

Beyond the classroom, however, as one might expect, question-types change. NSs use "referential" and "reasoning" questions with a frequency which bears no resemblance to the classroom. What I wish to draw attention to in particular here is the extent (which has not previously been measured, as far as I know) to which (mostly) the same teachers change their questions to the same students at roughly the same period of time.

Also within the class, the main functions of the teachers' language were essentially "teacherly", and very seldom anything else. The teacher uses language, in other words, for little other than confirming, checking and clarifying responses, and by repetition, expansion and reformulation putting these responses in a more acceptable form. Beyond the class, once more, this did not happen: and once more I draw attention to the extent to which this happens.

Finally, and perhaps the most important thing, I must emphasise the very great difference in the proportion of talk of students and teachers in class and outside. Beyond the classroom the almost equal roles of the participants enable them to sustain an almost equal share of the language occasion, and this fact is

substantially assisted, I would argue, by the more liberating question forms. Equally, the shifting social role, I found, permits NNSs to initiate very much more than in class.

3) Naturalness in NS-NNSs Discourse

A definition of naturalness, it was suggested, is not easy to achieve: there is a necessary element of subjectivity, and one must avoid confronting too often the presumption that different language occasions are, or should be, or can be natural in the same way. Nevertheless, for the sake of saying something in an area I feel to be of great importance, I have adopted Sinclair's (1983) view. The importance of this area, I suggest, is that it may tell the teacher and course designer a little of what he might possibly mean by casual use of words like "real", "genuine" and so on. "Naturalness", after all, is an important goal of language teaching.

The findings of the study report that unlike FI, FCI and ICI, both ICD and IC were found to reflect some principles of natural discourse. The discourse taking place in these settings was unfolding (with the ending not prescribed by participants), openendedness (with the precise behaviour of the speakers unpredictable), and multiple source (with more than one participant interacting and cooperating to get the message across). The findings also report that unlike FCI, and ICI, learners in FI, ICD and IC settings used some strategies of natural discourse such as holding the floor and self-correction. Moreover, the findings also report that FI, FCI and ICI exemplify the fact that turn-taking procedures between the teacher and the learners are rigidly controlled. However, under both ICD and IC more than one

participant made bids to take the turns in a highly competitive way, in a manner that is typical of natural discourse.

In sum, I wish to argue that my findings represent clear evidence that classroom language is not like other language, and, much more importantly, the extent and nature of some of these differences.

8.2   Implications of the Study

I now wish to turn to the question of implications.   Because my intention in this thesis is to tie my findings as closely as I can to methodology, I wish to consider the purely pedagogic side in some depth.

In what follows, I attempt to clarify what I take to be very obvious points, matters which are more or less common ground among all involved in the profession. My point here is that though we may all agree that, say, "natural" language is a good thing to happen in the classroom, and though my findings suggest that at present it does not, we have no enabling methodology. We have, that is, no successful way of acting on the sort of findings I have reported in the present study.

8.2.1   Implications for FL Acquisition

The significance of simplified input and natural interaction reported in this study lies in the implications for FL acquisition. In a sense, these implications are very obvious and in line with much current theory, if not practice. For language acquisition to be promoted, teaching should provide comprehensible input and involve the use of "natural" language, however this term is

understood: the use, in my terms, of the type of language associated with ICD and IC.

Let us start, then, from the belief that learners can better acquire the L2 through Krashen's (1982) "comprehensible input". This puts a high demand on the English language teacher who must present significant information and knowledge but in a way comprehensible to learners who lack fundamental competence in the target language. Teachers' awareness of these factors would promote their better understanding of effective instructional methods. This is especially important if we bear in mind what Long (1983b) asserts, that:

> There is a considerable amount of evidence to the effect that ESL instruction makes a positive contribution to SLA, both quantitatively and qualitatively (for a review see Long 1982, p.220).

Examination of the oral output of NNSs has revealed that unlike non-classroom language, emphasis was placed on accuracy rather than fluency inside the classroom. Emphasis has been focussed on the form of utterances rather than on the meaningful exchange of information. If acquisition of language has to take place, an emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy should be the main concern of NSs-NNSs discourse. This is the standard argument. Moreover, Krashen (1976) considers formal language learning which focuses on the production of correct utterances as an "acquisition poor" environment.

As for the significance of interactional and discoursal features for FL acquisition, the present study emphasises the importance of meaningful interaction and participation in discourse as an important factor in language acquisition. This line of thought is

supported in the literature by extensive research (Pica, 1987, Hatch, 1978c, 1983; Krashen, 1981, 1982; Long, 1981a, 1983b, c).

Krashen (1981) thinks that speaking the FL promotes acquisition, and conversation in which the acquirer has some sort of control over the topic and in which the other participants exert an effort to make themselves understood provide valuable intake. In point of fact, both ICD and IC can be said to have provided such an intake. The learners produced more of their oral output and participated in the on-going communication, as we have seen, on an almost equal footing with NNSs. This was demonstrated by the learners' use of initiations and turn-taking procedures. The structure of the interaction is no longer typical of most classroom language in which the teacher controls the discourse, and thus, if anything, inhibits successful language acquisition.

Krashen (1981) believes that the best activities for the classroom are those that are natural, interesting, and understood. He claims that if the teaching programme can provide these characteristics then the classroom may be the best place for L2 acquisition, up to the intermediate level. Similarly, Littlewood (1984) states:

> Indeed, it is now often proposed that the ideal input for acquiring a second language is similar to the input received by the child, comprehensible, relevant to their immediate interests, not too complex, but not strictly graded, either. (p.59)

It is interesting to note that both the ICD and the IC came close to meeting these characteristics. The interaction produced under these settings is natural, of interest to the learners because it discusses the question of marriage in both Britain and Algeria, and

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it is simple enough to understand. Similarly, in as far as the FI discourse focused on the learners' preoccupations and their academic careers in a similar type of interaction, the input provided in this sort of discourse is of interest and, therefore, beneficial for FL acquisition.

These factors seem to suggest that if we are to advocate the teaching of spoken discourse which promotes FL acquisition, access to comprehensible input and meaningful interaction as it takes place in FI, ICD or IC must be provided. This suggestion seems to conform to the principles of the natural approach in language teaching advocated by Krashen and Terrell (1983). Thus, Richards and Rodgers (1986) conclude that:

> In the Natural Approach, a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication as well as the provision of the right kind of comprehensible input provide the necessary and sufficient condition for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition. (p.140)

In short, it can be said that classroom language does not meet the descriptions of non-classroom language, which is essential for FL acquisition. However, the classroom can have the potential for FL acquisition. Krashen (1981) asserts that "the classroom may serve as an 'intake' informal environment as well as a formal linguistic environment" (p.41). This potential can only be fulfilled if well exploited. In other words, it needs the full and wise exploitation of the teacher who should be fully aware of the kind of input provided and the kind of interaction generated. If FL acquisition is to be promoted, comprehensible input should be provided. When the teacher modifies the questions, and helps the learners provide the answers, repeats and expands on NNSs

utterances, he is providing comprehensible input. On the other hand, when learners ask questions, or request clarifications they provide the feedback for the teacher to tune his input to the appropriate level for FL acquisition. In addition, FL acquisition can be better promoted if participants share an almost equal role in an informal sort of interaction.

Now, little of what I have said here differs from widely accepted views: it does, however, differ widely from common practice. The reason is clear: to neutralise the teacher's dominant position in the classroom is to risk a loss of class direction - which is not necessarily a bad thing - and of classroom control, which almost certainly is. Our understanding of the nature of acquisition and the circumstances which promote it is, in other words, in conflict with available methodologies. I return to this key point below.

8.2.2 Implications for Syllabus Design

At present two paradigms in syllabus design exist: propositional plans and process plans (Breen, 1987a, 1987b). The formal or grammatical and the functional syllabuses are representative of the well established paradigm for propositional plans. In such syllabuses teaching is viewed essentially as the transfer of pieces of information from teacher to learner, and the pieces of information involved are bits of language. For a detailed discussion of these types of syllabuses the reader is referred to Breen (1987a); Widdowson and Brumfit (1981); Rivers (1972); Wilkins (1976); Brumfit (1981); Johnson (1983); Candlin and Breen (1980).

Recent changes in linguistics, methodology and views concerning the teaching-learning environments have confronted syllabus

designers at the present time. Process plans, such as Task-Based and Process Syllabuses, emerged as alternatives to the more well established propositional plans. In such syllabuses the notion of transfer of language bits is de-emphasised or abandoned (in this respect the type of work undertaken resembles the ENL class). For a full discussion of these kinds of syllabuses the reader is referred to Breen (1987b); Prabhu (1984, 1987); Beretta and Davies (1985); and White (1988).

It should be made clear that neither the propositional plans nor the process plans will necessarily be by itself a suitable syllabus for foreign language learners. While the former focuses on learning the system of the language, the latter focuses on the use of language, and neither of these aims alone is likely to be sufficient for learning a language.

To reach better effects, attempts have been made to combine different types of syllabuses in a hybrid syllabus. However, it may easily be argued that such compromises are not successful, as there is a basic incompatibility between grammatical and functional syllabuses on the one hand and the process and Task-Based syllabuses on the other. For example, the theoretical principles upon which the structurally based syllabuses and the process syllabuses are based are quite different. In particular, the pre-selection and ordering of structures of the structural syllabus is not easily compatible with the avoidance of such a pre-specification in a process syllabus.

This poses the question: which syllabus? White (1988) recognises that the choice of a syllabus will be influenced by the policy of the educational system rather than principle. In other words, decisions about a syllabus will depend on the values and aims of the language system itself rather than on purely theoretical grounds. These aims may be of two kinds: to acquire a knowledge of the language, and to acquire the ability to use the language. These are different aims which require different designs and procedures. If the aim is to teach the language system, the grammatical or notional syllabuses will be appropriate. If, however, the aim is to develop the process of using the language, the process or Task-Based syllabuses will be preferred.

However, a choice of a syllabus cannot be based on a purely theoretical basis and general aims. Teaching methods based only on what we might loosely call theoretical grounds are not valid; the failure of audiolingualism which is based on linguistic and psychological theory is a case in point here. Indeed, practice in the classroom can run contrary to any predictions based on evidence of theoretical grounds. Thus, a hybrid syllabus based on both theoretical and practical considerations will probably result in a compromise which satisfies the needs of most language learners. But what does classroom practice reveal?

The present study has shown that particular types of interaction such as ICD and IC help the learners produce more of their oral output and use the language more freely. These types of interaction have also provided evidence that learners initiate and participate in the on-going communication using turn-taking procedures and

strategies of natural communication. These factors, as we have seen, have an important impact on language learning. The present study has also shown that matters of accuracy are also taken into consideration to some extent even in an informal classroom where the teacher occasionally corrects students' language errors, though this may be partly due to an inability on the teacher's part to abandon a more traditional role.

From this, it follows that a syllabus designed in the light of this work must concern itself with "fluency" to a considerable extent. It must also concern itself with "accuracy", though this is perhaps of less importance, as it is believed that learners develop their understanding of the grammatical system of the language through communication.

The envisaged syllabus should focus on the provision of communicative activities that stimulate learner's interests and involvement in the discourse and develop their skills for the negotiation for meaning in genuine interaction. And, of course, a syllabus that combines the best of available syllabuses and gives the ideal balance between correct language forms and their appropriate use in actual communication is much needed.

These things are a matter of balance, of course, as is the extent to which the teacher can abandon his dominant role and the extent to which a predetermined syllabus can be devised or used. The present data argue very strongly for a movement in the direction of fluency and for negotiation of content, since it is the circumstances under which fluency is promoted that permit natural discourse, and since it is part of naturalness that content is

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negotiated.

Despite all this, disappointments and frustrations may still arise. Language teaching is not a matter of choosing the best syllabus and the best content. Rather, sufficient attention must be paid to the question of methodology and the practical issues of teacher's role. It is to this question that we now turn.

8.2.3 Implications for ELT Methodology

A Brief Review

The greater emphasis placed on communication in language teaching in recent years has led to a paradigm shift in recent approaches to language teaching. These focus on language in use as opposed to language usage. This is the line taken by all significant commentators in the last ten years or so. The following are instances - writers from different backgrounds with different predilections, but united in the assumption that use is what matters most (See for example, Roberts, 1982; Stern, 1981; Ellis, 1982; Brumfit, 1979, 1980; Widdowson, 1978, 1979, 1983; Burt and Dulay, 1979; Crombie, 1985).

These approaches are influenced by a sociolinguistic model of communication (Hymes, 1971) which handles the formal and the functional dimensions of speech acts relevant to their needs in given situations. A teaching method based on grammatical criteria alone that ignores these factors is therefore commonly perceived as either irrelevant or relatively unimportant. Thus Chomsky's (1965) distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance was discarded for its divorce from a sociolinguistic perspective,

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even though there are elements of the use/usage distinction in his work.

Given that the ultimate goal of teaching the spoken language is to enable the learners to use the language genuinely and put the language they learn to actual use outside the classroom, the question remains of working out the best methodology of attaining that goal.

This is the central issue, and it is both noticeable and disturbing that relatively little attention has been paid to it. Indeed, where methodology is discussed, it too often bases itself on one or both of two assumptions. Firstly, that language items can be isolated for teaching purposes, and that surrounded by broadly communicative methodology, their "use" can be experienced in the classroom. Secondly, that if a syllabus is not isolating but integrative, (that is, if like Task-Based syllabuses, does not teach language incrementally, if it is a process plan rather than a propositional plan) any classroom situation will be an example of use.

Of course, one knows that neither of the above assumptions are valid. The first, typically, results only in a particular kind of largely oral, informal (often slightly frenzied) lesson which may be far removed from usage drills, but is immediately recognisable as classroom discourse, and therefore evidently "unreal". The second assumption collapses the Widdowsonian distinction between "authentic" and "genuine".

This leaves us, then, with no easy answer to the methodological

dilemma: no easy way of enabling use in the classroom. The literature gives little help. Despite often very subtle arguments from capable scholars, the methodological advice often amounts to a fairly trite recognition that different teaching situations require different methodological solutions.

Littlewood (1984), for instance, reports that a number of studies have been carried out to compare the effectiveness of different methodologies in ELT such as the grammar-translation or audio-lingual methods. Such studies are notoriously inconclusive. Littlewood's judgement is that this is so probably because no single methodology is intrinsically "better" than others in all situations. He goes on to attribute the reason for that to the vast number of factors not related to the methodology: personality, skill of individual teachers, motivation of particular groups of learners, and availability of time and resources, (to which one might add, where isolating syllabuses are concerned, the influence of the supposed "natural order"). The conclusion he draws from these studies is that "these other factors together play a more significant role than the choice between one methodology and another" (p.61).

This is a radical conclusion, though it is easy to miss the fact because it is also an obvious one. What matters is not so much how something is <u>supposed</u> to be taught, but how it is <u>actually</u> delivered, and how it is received. I would like to argue from this that what really matters is providing motivation (Littlewood's point), and the assumptions made by the teacher about what his/her role is (this is not quite Littlewood's point). But this is not an

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area which has been followed up.

What tends to be said is simply that the choice of a particular method will ultimately depend on the different goals of language teaching. A formal approach is needed when attention is being paid to the mastery of linguistic features. On the other hand, an informal approach is required when the focus of attention is on natural language use. For this reason, Ellis (1984a) suggests one should not evaluate the various approaches in absolute terms but only relatively:

> A 'bad' approach is one that offers formal
> interactions when informal ones are required and
> vice-versa; a 'good' approach is one that offers
> interactions of the type the learner expects to
> take part in real life. (p.201)

And this essentially is where matters stand.. Thus it must be noted that the introduction of a certain approach into the classroom will largely depend on the policy of the educational system regarding the role that a second or a foreign language is supposed to play in the community. It would be misleading, for example, to introduce an informal approach into an educational system which favours the formal approach where the emphasis of the examination papers is on the "usage" rather than the "use" of the language.

At any rate, no matter what the policy is, and no matter what approach is being adopted, it has seemed to all commentators - and broadly speaking I agree - that the logic of teaching a foreign language is to emphasise both "usage" and "use" with the latter given first priority. In this way, English will be presented for two-fold purposes: as a medium of communication and as the subject of study at both the "outer" and "inner" layer of discourse (Willis,

1981). In the "outer" layer of discourse participants will use the language for meaningful interaction, and in the "inner" layer of discourse they talk about and practise the language.

It can be said that despite its claim to teach the communicative use of language, a communicative approach, such as the notional/functional approach, has its limitations. In an attempt to reach better consequences of teaching the use of language or the achievement of better communicative competence, Widdowson (1979) proposes a discourse analysis methodology:

> What I am certain about is that any approach to the description and teaching of language that claims to account for communicative competence (a very large claim indeed) must deal with discourse. (p.261)

However, Widdowson voices his uncertainty about the way in which such a methodology can be implemented. He is uncertain about the way in which "our understanding of discourse can be applied to the design of an effective methodology" (p.261). Similarly Coulthard (1977) points out the obstacles to be overcome when advocating a discourse methodology. He makes it clear that there were, at the time he was writing, no adequate descriptions of natural discourse, and this remains the case. This raises the need for much research into the nature of natural language in order to provide a theoretical basis for a discourse methodology.

Where does one go from here? The picture as it stands is of a not very certain, not very convincing, mix of syllabus types with no clearly specified links with particular methodologies, and a general unhelpful belief that appropriate approaches vary according to circumstances. Something which is certainly true, but may leave one with the sort of statement expressed by Ellis above: that what is

"good" is what is needed. This does not advance the argument.

What does the Present Research Advocate?

The present research has specified and confirmed some characteristics of natural discourse. It has pointed out that natural language is constructed in real and genuine communication. The discourse is unfolding (with the ending not defined or prescribed by participants), open-ended (which shows how the next utterances are unpredictable), and multiple source (in which more than one participant cooperates to construct the utterances to connect a particular piece of information). The message rather than the form is the main concern of the participants. Learners compete to take their turns in discourse. They take the initiative rather than being on the receiving end of the encounter and produce longer utterances. They also use natural discourse strategies such as self-repetition and self-correction. All these characteristics of natural discourse, it has been found, characterise NSs-NNSs discourse in an "informal" or "natural" or non-classroom type of interaction. This would suggest that, if natural discourse is to be encouraged, a great deal of practice in discourse skills is needed. The process of interaction for real communicative purposes must be incorporated as part of teaching activities.

The fundamental problem in ELT, then, is to enable natural discourse to happen. It is typically presumed that such discourse ought only to happen under circumstances in which the teacher retains control both of the content of the lesson and, on a different level, of the management of the class. And it is typically recognized that the simultaneous maintenance of

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naturalness and control is so difficult that it is almost a contradiction. This returns us to the question of the teacher's role, which I mentioned with respect to Littlewood.

There are a number of directions in which one can go from here. One is to attempt an uneasy balance - the path normally taken. Another is to abandon the attempt at naturalness - the argument here normally being that the class is an appropriate place for some degree of generalisation and therefore abstraction. And a third is for the teacher to abandon control: this, however, is normally perceived both by the teaching profession and the students to be a mark of weakness.

Promoting Natural Discourse: The Role of the Teacher

What I wish to focus on here is the role of the teacher. [For recent work on this area, which is at last being recognised, see van Lier (1988), Richards and Skelton (forthcoming) and Widdowson (1987)]. Johnson (1982), in a well-argued critique of the "deep-end" strategy, advocates limited freedom at what he calls "stage 1" of the lesson. Without control at this stage, he argues, subsequent development of the lesson is necessarily unplanned: and without planning there are dangers. Johnson says, it will be recalled, that a teacher would need "nerves of steel" to work in this way. It is easy to take the point: but it seems to me that a demand for "nerves of steel" is a demand for a little too much. The classroom is not so very dramatic, and, in the hands of a generally competent teacher, the risk of chaos is not that immediate. The difficulty here, I would argue, is not that the teacher cannot, in principle, permit students a substantial degree of freedom from the beginning,

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but that they are neither trained nor encouraged to do so. The teacher's task is, in essence, perceived as the successful conveyance of a limited and pre-determined body of information

Yet this is rather a limiting suggestion. It makes more sense to train teachers to be flexible, to respond to the interests and caprices of their students. Viewed in this light, the teacher's central role is to understand and develop what is going on around him. His major aim should be geared to teach the students how to process and use the language naturally. But how could that happen?

Let me turn now to a thought from Widdowson (1979) and to work being developed by Richards and Skelton (forthcoming). Widdowson advocates a process analysis approach in order to understand how language is used and should be used. However, Widdowson himself is by no means sure of what a process model looks like:

> I am not at all sure myself how far process analysis is possible. The ethnomethodologists seem to make claims that they are dealing with process, with the ongoing accomplishment 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 which might yield information about how the participants see the discourse at a particular point in its development and what controls their choice of options at this point. A process analysis should presumably take an interest not only in the paths that are taken but also in those which are not but could have been. (p.149)

It seems to me that the question of how the participants see the discourse at a particular point in its progress is extremely important, not only for the implicit sensitivity towards the learner it hints at, but the conception it half-conceals, of a stretch of discourse consisting of a series of points. A slightly different

metaphor is taken up in the following sentence, that of "paths": and the two together yield a picture of discourse proceeding from point to point, with the development from each point in turn being a matter of the participants' choice. From this, it follows that an actual piece of discourse (a transcript say) represents one of a number of possible discourses that could have developed from the original opening "point": with at every point along the route, a series of ways not taken. The number of possible discourses, in any moderately long stretch of discourse is, of course, extremely large. Richards and Skelton adopt a different metaphor, but their line of argument is not dissimilar, though more fully developed. Here, a point of potential choice is labelled a "node", and those nodes which are pursued (the discourse choices which are made) are said to be activated, with those left unchosen remaining "dormant".

It is hard to see what a natural discourse is if it is not this. Choices will be constrained by a wide, but probably definable, range of features including matters of perceived relevance, knowledge, and interest (things to do with content), matters of relative social status, confidence, right to speak, courtesy, and so forth (things to do with sociolinguistics and psychology), and - particularly where NNSs are concerned - differential levels of articulacy. This, then, is the sort of situation one should be recreating in the classroom if the purpose of the classroom is to reflect the detail of language use rather than an abstraction from it. If this could be done, it will be seen, the benefits to the students will not be narrowly linguistic: they will not only, or not necessarily, have something in their communicative competence tomorrow which they did not have yesterday, though they may have. What they will certainly

have is practice in, and therefore - or so one hopes - a greater ability and confidence in social interaction in a foreign language. In other words, what is important here is not a series of discrete linguistic items but the way in which students use the language as a resource to contact or change the world about them and define themselves as people to others. The student will have the opportunity to develop strategies for supporting a social role, perhaps, by increasing his fluency, perhaps by learning to manipulate the conversation towards his own areas of interest (as native speakers do: or of linguistic expertise, as he may wish to do), perhaps by learning how to hide the poverty of his linguistic resources, and so forth.

How can this be done?

There are two levels at which this can be done. One is easily defined, and easily comprehensible, and I shall start with this. The key weapon in the teacher's armoury, the most powerful weapon by which he can define his own role and therefore shape those of his students, is his use of questions. _ My research has confirmed once more - not that this has ever seriously been in doubt - that teachers ask questions all the time. It is, perhaps, the outstanding characteristic of teacher-talk, in fact, that they ask endless questions to almost all of which they know the answers. This is the central impulse of most subject and language classes. At a basic level it starts the metronome of the IRF sequence, at a less mechanical level it defines the type of sociological role to be played on both sides.

There are, logically, two possible changes that can be made here.

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One is an alteration in the quantity of questions, the other is an alteration in their quality. Both will result in alteration of teacher role. Fewer questions ought to mean less teacher-direction and therefore - if and when the class begin to comprehend the kind of thing demanded of them - more student control (or student initiation, in Sinclair and Coulthard's terms): that is, students ought perforce to be taking more responsibility for the paths they do and do not take, for the nodes they choose to activate. A difference in quality ought, equally, to alter the balance and type of student talk. Wh-questions, famously, demand longer answers. The work of Barnes, (1969) and his successors, and my own research (see Ch. 6), outline other question-types, and other uses and results. Referential questions, to take an obvious example, invite real information and, at least for the moment, relinquish control.

The present research has shown that particular types of interaction such as FI, ICD and IC are conducive to the use of these questions. Moreover, the ICD and IC are also conducive to the greater number of learners' initiations and participation in meaningful interaction. These types of interaction have also been found to exemplify the use of some discourse strategies and turn-taking procedures that can be found in natural conversation outside the classroom. Teachers are therefore advised to make their classes of an informal type of interaction where learners find the opportunity to express themselves freely and meaningfully without the domineering presence of the teacher who insists on grammatical forms. This natural orientation to language teaching will call for a radical change of teaching-training programmes, instructional materials, and evaluation procedures.

The present research has also shown that FI is a useful procedure for the negotiation of meaning by using echoic questions such as comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks. These sort of questions, as we have seen, are abundant in the FI and they are considered to help learners modify and restructure their interaction towards a comprehensible input, which is a main factor in SLA. Since the learners do not usually have the opportunity to ask questions in the EFL classroom, it would be better for the teacher, therefore, to let his students interview each other. When learners interview each other everyone practises the use of the language and acquires the skills necessary for the negotiation of meaning at the same time. In addition, the interview is useful not only for practising the use of the language, but also for discussing a wide variety of topics.

One level, then, that would ensure the learner's participation in natural discourse is the change of the quality and quantity of teacher's questions. The second level at which the approach might be considered is that of total discourse. A particular microstrategy - and perhaps the most important simple strategy - of the teacher will be question style, and this will be employed at times. But it is the function of questioning style to contribute to the naturalness of total discourse.

The teacher's role in total discourse then is, precisely, to play the part of an ordinary participant in an informal way of teaching. This will mean, sociolinguistically, that he will (try to) abdicate the right to speak at will, to be sole, or almost sole, initiator and so on. It will also mean that, as the person with the best

language skills, it is likely that he will have a lot to say: but that for normal sociolinguistic reasons he will not attempt to monopolise the conversation.

Finally, it should be pointed out that despite the evidence provided throughout the thesis in favour of the incorporation of natural language use in the EFL classroom, the practicalities of classroom life may act as a hindrance for the fulfilment of these ambitions. Anyone who has experienced the teaching profession in any of the middle-eastern countries is fully aware of the sort of problems that confront him. Through my experience in teaching English as a foreign language at the preparatory and secondary schools in Syria, for instance, I found it particularly difficult, though not quite impossible, to conduct a conversation class. Problems arose with the large number of students and the lack of visual aids and teaching materials. For a detailed analysis of these obstacles, the reader is referred to Hasan (1983).

Obstacles such as these make the teaching of natural discourse a difficult task. This is not to undermine the value of the argument put forward for the incorporation of FI, ICD and IC in the EFL classroom. On the contrary, no matter how many obstacles confront EFL teachers, the EFL classroom, if well exploited, can be a successful place for teaching natural discourse. The teacher who is fully aware of the principles, materials, and strategies of natural discourse can provide a better "intake" for his students within the available resources of the classroom.

However, the present research has its limitations: attempts to advocate the incorporation of natural discourse into the EFL

classroom have been made with reference only to formal interview, informal discussion and informal conversation. The introduction of other genuine communicative activities could equally be beneficial for generating natural discourse in the EFL classroom. Activities that require performing a task by getting things done are also important: they too are part of what we must mean by natural discourse. To describe natural discourse, it would be better, perhaps, to observe how FL learners perform certain communicative acts in some situations in the real world: say observe EFL learners buying a ticket at a railway station, buying food or clothes at the shops, asking people for directions and so on.

To sum up then, present discussion on methodology argues only that there is no "correct" way of teaching, but it says little about the relationship between methodology and "real language" beyond the classroom, and little about the relationship between methodology and syllabus design. There is a suggestion (I have taken a particular example from Littlewood, but the suggestion is in the air) that what matters is people - the participants in the learning game: teacher and student.

I have argued that what is of particular importance is the identification of things (typically subject-matters) which will motivate: and an understanding by the teacher of his professional role. He ought to let interaction develop rather than lead it. This of course, may or may not itself be considered a matter for methodology.

8.2.4 Implications for ELT Materials

We are looking, then, at a teacher-role which encourages natural

discourse by enabling the teacher to participate in the discourse as a teacher (Richards and Skelton). This implies a broadly process-based approach, perhaps one centred on topics. In this section, I wish to consider the question of topic-centred materials, and to look closely at some real examples of the type of discourse patterns they may give rise to when the teacher does and does not adopt the kind of role I suggest. Let us begin with a brief introduction.

Language teaching materials based on the grammatical or notional syllabuses and practised by the grammar-translation method or the audiolingual method are largely concerned with grammar, lexis, and phonology. Written forms of the language are given prime importance and relatively little consideration is paid to speech, which is, in any case, set out in idealised dialogues to practise new structures of the language. Little attention, if any, is paid to meaning and natural conversation skills.

Classroom discourse based on such materials is artificial. It has a pedagogical aim: to teach the language. It misrepresents the natural use of language and neglects the essential factors in communication: the use of gestures, facial expressions, false starts and so on which occur in natural discourse. This does not mean one should relinquish textbooks designed by language teaching specialists, but that one should use additional materials which would promote natural discourse in the EFL classroom. To that end, teachers have often tried to teach their students how to use the language in genuine discourse. Their attempts, however, are often unsuccessful: the activities they design for these purposes are often disorganised, without shape and not related to the immediate

concerns of the learners.

This growing interest in natural discourse in the EFL classroom
has led educationalists to examine the criteria for producing
authentic materials that would promote real language use. Ellis
(1984a), for instance, proposes five criteria for determining
suitable materials for fluency work. These are:

1. There must be a communicative purpose. (i.e. not
   merely a pedagogic one) ... If the task is
   evaluated in terms of the behavioural outcome
   rather than its manner of performance, it is
   communicative.

2. There must be a focus on the message rather than on
   the channel; i.e. the interactants must be
   concerned with what they have to say rather than
   how they are going to say it.

3. There must be an information gap, i.e. the speaker
   must not know what the other speaker is going to
   say, although he may often be able to predict it.

4. The communication stimulated by the task must be
   negotiated rather than predetermined. The task
   must allow the speakers to make adaptations in
   content and expression in the light of feedback
   they receive.

5. The speakers must be allowed to use whatever
   resources - verbal and non-verbal - they possess.

In what follows, I have borne these criteria very much in mind.

A similar set of criteria based on the principles of a desire to
communicate are proposed by Ellis (1982) and Harmer (1982). (Note
that materials that serve a communicative purpose can often best be
found in "resource" books rather than "course" books. Resource
materials of this kind can be found in Lake and Stokes, 1983).

I shall go on later to look in some detail at the sort of lesson
generated by the implications of the present research. For the
moment, let us consider some straightforward points, by way of
introduction. The present research has demonstrated that teachers,

if they aim to promote "natural" language, should use certain "activities" that would develop discussion and conversation among participants. These activities should be based on topics related to the learners' preoccupation and their personal interests, such as their specialisations and getting married. Another sort of activity that learners need most for genuine discourse is how to attend an interview. These sorts of "activities" or materials will provide the learners with opportunities to use the language for real communication and the ways for the negotiation of meaning.

The difficulty here, of course, is that of finding enough interesting topics to occupy a whole year's work, or however long the course is. But this kind of topic-based syllabus (rather than a syllabus whose ends can be specified linguistically) has the advantage that it entails the use of a great many linguistic strategies and creates the conditions for the appearance of much that resembles "real" interaction. And it does so precisely because the interaction has the chance to become real.

There is an urgency in much of the interaction collected for the present study, the urgency of a real attempt to communicate across language barriers. There is also a sense of the provisional, a sense that the direction of the interaction is not predetermined and cannot be guessed. Let me illustrate this in action:

> T: Could you tell me something about marriage in
>   Algeria? Who is married here?
> IB: Azo, only Azo.
> T: Alright, your opinion about that.
> S: He will marry.
> T: Oh, he is engaged, engaged. Tell me something
>   about the institution of marriage in Algeria.
>   Tell me something about it.
> Mo: There are several institutions.
> T: You don't have marriage in Algeria. What do

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                  you have then?
        KA: Only women and men.
        T:  Yes, that's what marriage is.
        IB: The marriage in Algeria it isn't like England.
        T:  What do you mean?
        S:  For get marriage you must pay two thousand.
        LA: Yes more expensive than here.
        T:  Why do you have to pay money?
        RI: No.  Its our religion.
        A2: Not religion but our tradition.
      . FI: No, religion, religion.  In religion we must
            pay women, but not high price, but tradition.
        LA: Between women, women does not like to married
            to a low money because it is not, it is ...
        T:  Oh, dowry, oh dear.
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Notice that the original enquiry for knowledge in the above extract is _not_ authentic: it is a directive by the teacher that this is what will form the subject of the class. That this (to take a term from Bellack, 1966) is the classroom game that will be played. But because the topic is of interest the discussion quickly becomes authentic. By the end of the above quotation, real information is being exchanged, and superficially, almost the only inauthentic thing about the interaction is that the teacher's interest in the subject is entirely false (but this is not unknown in "real" conversation either).

But the interaction deserves more than a superficial look. Notice in particular how a wide variety of issues are raised, and then not quite discussed: Azo's marital status, what is meant by the "several institutions" of Algerian marriage, whether religion or tradition is the basis of the dowry, in what sense Algerian marriage is "more expensive" than British marriage and so on.

In other words, the ICD seems to be authentic enough for real topics to be raised, but not authentic enough for them to be pursued: for any single topic to form the basis for a discussion.

No consensus is reached about what direction should be taken. This may be because the teacher sees it as his duty to step back from what one might call "interactional decision-making" (he is running a friendly informal class) while the students feel it is not up to them to direct conversation because the teacher is in charge. The role of the teacher, that is, is at the heart of the matter here. No one is sure what it is, or what conversational rights they have. Therefore the interaction goes nowhere. It is, as here, a series of choices not made. There are lines of potential development there, but they are not taken.

Later in the lesson the discussion becomes so heated that class discipline is almost lost - the rules of the game are changed by the students, and parts of the interaction cannot be recovered from the tape: that is, there are urgent whispers and asides. This has consequences for classroom management of course: but there is no doubt the interaction is authentic.

The present study has also provided instances of the negotiation of meaning in real discourse. Consider the following extract taken from FI:

       NS: Now, have you applied for two-year courses or
              one-year courses?

       S: I would like to do six month course after to
              start my research.

       NS: How do you mean? Which Universities have
              you applied for?

       S: Bath. I have been last week Bath. I think
              I have a place in Bath.

       NS: You think you have or are you certain?

       S: Yes.

NS: Are you certain?

S: No, certainly, but think I have a place.

NS: OK, fine

S: I talk with supervisor about my subject and he
   asked me you must do six month course with
   undergraduate after you can start.

NS: So you do six months with the undergraduates.

S: Course, after you start your research.

NS: And how long will the research continue?

S: Half past year.

NS: Another six months?

S: No, another six months - eighteen months.

NS: Eighteen months. So six months with the
    undergraduates and eighteen months research.

S: Only for recapitulation.

NS: Yes, yes, and it will be a good opportunity
    for your English as well actually. That's
    good, that's good.

Here is real negotiation of meaning, and here the meanings matter
- it is the student's real future which is being discussed. The
teacher needs to know what courses have been applied for, as he is
responsible for the student's welfare: the student needs to have
confirmed that the action he has taken is appropriate. The question
checks (identical with the class of "make sure" acts postulated for
Doctor-patient consultation by Candlin and his colleagues) serve a
real purpose. And of course (in contrast with the previous
extract) no topic is abandoned until all the interesting information
has been exchanged.

But the need for real negotiation of meaning, at this level of
importance, is slight. Students have few topics that matter so

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much, and few chances to discuss them. And even in the informal classroom I considered "real" discourse was relatively rare. And, when real discourse starts, the teacher often does not handle it successfully, typically, as in the first extract above, as a result of uncertainty about his role.

Of course, this kind of real discourse makes learners aware of the fact that their conversation is a collaborative activity involving a number of people taking their turns in a competitive way. At another level, then, there is a need to provide practice in turn-taking procedures: the identification of places where the next speaker can take his turn, ways of nominating the next speaker, polite formulas for interruptions, and how to predict the next turn. The materials should also provide practice in other strategies of communication such as holding the floor and self-correction.

The desire for authenticity is well-established today. It is at the heart, for example, of recommendations to introduce something real into the classroom - for instance a short tape-recording of natural speech which exemplifies the natural aspects of real discourse: hesitations, repetitions, false starts, slips, and so on. The content of the tape should be interesting for obvious reasons. It should involve informal speech designed to acquaint the listener with a variety of utterances ranging from short utterances to extended contextualised ones which would develop the learners listening skills.

Equally, teaching materials should be supported by visual aids as these give extra information about the message. This sort of visual help permits the listeners to see the participants as they interact:

whether they are close while speaking, how they take the floor in discussion, how they use gestures of the hand, shoulders etc. as they speak, and how they pronounce letters and stress syllables. These matters cannot be taught through written forms. Such visual-aid materials would prepare the learners to listen to the radio, watch TV programmes and films, and listen to normal spontaneous speech to native speakers of English.

Further support comes from a transcript of a spoken text. It would be useful to provide the learners with a written transcript of the spoken language so that they can notice the difference between spoken and written accounts. Thus, pauses, "urms" and "erms", laughs and coughs associated with spoken language should be indicated in the transcript.

It follows from the present research that learners need to be sensitised to stylistic variation in order to participate effectively in conversation. They should be aware of the difference between formal and informal styles associated with different types of interaction. This can be done by providing models of language at different levels of formality and used in a realistic piece of discourse.

Teaching materials should provide practice in a variety of things that language is used for in an informal situation in real life: for example, (for appropriate types of students) how to buy things at the shops, to ask for directions, to give route directions to tourists, to use the telephone. Such materials put the learners in contact with natural utterances uttered in real communicative situations. Clearly, such materials would satisfy the needs of the

learners who are keen to use the language outside the classroom.

All this is clear. The general principles are now a commonplace, and the methodological points I have just made are generally viewed as appropriate. But the discussion cannot be left here. Authenticity is not, in the end, a matter of letting people hear a tape-recording: of creating a relaxed environment and so on. What does result in real discourse?

Some Possibilities for Lesson Plans

There are two levels at which this question can be tackled. One is narrowly methodological and concerned principally with the questioning strategies of the teacher. The other is more broadly sociological (Compare my remarks above (pp.251-53) on the two levels at which students can be assisted). In what follows, I shall attempt to demonstrate some lesson plans to illustrate aspects of this difference.

Firstly, let us consider a lesson in which the problem is treated at a purely methodological level. The kind of work exemplified here is commonly practised and well understood. It also fulfils the first four of Ellis' criteria mentioned above, is usually successful in its own terms if well done (that is, students perceive their fluency to have been improved), and is in every respect typical of the sort of "conversation class" that takes place all the time.

By this last point, I mean that there is no overt control over the direction of the lesson, not overt control over who has the right to speak. In fact, however, the teacher typically retains the

right to exert control in both areas; or if he ostensibly does not, as in the first extract above, the result is a lack of direction. In other words, the extent to which "naturalness" may really happen is limited.

I have used my own data as a basis to demonstrate question types. I am presuming a typical lesson shape of referential questions, or pseudo-referential questions, coming from the teacher, ostensibly to bridge an information gap, and perhaps backed up by questions to check understanding:

Topic of Conversation: Marriage in my Country

Stage 1. Teacher prepares the students for the lesson and familiarises them with the topic of conversation. The aim here is to arouse their interests in the topic and create their expectations.

The teacher asks "referential" questions to elicit unknown information from the students about marriage in their country, say Algeria. The following questions are some examples:

- What is the best age to get married in Algeria?
- Does the bride have to pay money?
- Do people get divorced easily?
- Do you have arranged marriage in Algeria?
- Do women stay at home or go for work?

When students find it difficult to give a response, the teacher uses some strategies for the negotiation of meaning to get appropriate responses. He uses "echoic" questions or "reformulating" strategies as in the following example:

1. T: Do people get divorced easily?
2. S: xxx

```
3. T:  Do you know the word "divorce"?
4. S:  xxx ah, ah.
5. T:  Do people get separated after marriage?
6. S:  Yes, no problem.
7. T:  OK.
```

In this example, the teacher uses a comprehension check (turn 3) and a reformulating strategy (turn 5).

This is a standard introduction to a conversation class. The students, by talking, demonstrate the language they need: this is provided by the teacher where necessary, and kept on the blackboard for reference.

Stage 2. Teacher directs the students to listen to a tape about the topic of marriage in a different country to that of the students, say England. The teacher makes sure that the students know what to do. They are going to focus on the message rather than the language of the tape.

At this stage - with the use of the blackboard earlier and the introduction of the tape-recorder here, the extent to which the lesson is really as "natural" as the informal atmosphere might suggest is becoming clear. The teacher shapes the lesson and suggests the language: he invites students' attention to the board and tape, and so on.

Stage 3. Upon listening to the tape, the teacher finds out, by asking "reasoning" or ''referential" questions whether the students' concept of marriage in Algeria contradicts that in England. The following questions are some examples:

- What do you think of what you have heard?
- Do you like the way marriage takes place in Algeria

or in England?
- To what extent do you think the role of women in a British society is differnt from that in Algeria?

During this stage, the teacher writes incorrect responses on the board. He also uses strategies for the negotiation of meanings as described above in stage 1, when no appropriate response is provided by the students.

With the introduction of teacher judgment - "correctness" and "error" - we are, at this stage, firmly back in the classroom. It is easy to see that the actual interaction taking place here would be rather traditional.

Stage 4. Teacher follows up students' answers with feedback. He finds out how well they have done. He checks the answers he writes on the board and draws their attention to language mistakes. Perhaps he devises drills for practising the correct forms.

And here we have stepped right out of the discussion and into the classroom.

How would this lesson normally be defended? Probably as follows:

It can be seen that the above lesson plan contains some of the principles of the Natural Approach to Language Teaching: it emphasises the provision of comprehensible input; it focuses on the content of the conversation rather than the form; it minimizes learners' stress in that the learners are not supposed to say anything unless they are prepared to do so; but at the same time it

maximizes the learners' self confidence in that the learners are expected to answer teacher's questions.

The teacher is the main provider of comprehensible input. His role, it would normally be argued, is no doubt central, but the emphasis on meaningful interaction in this lesson plan allows the opportunity for an informal interaction in which the learners lose themselves in a kind of fluent discourse.

The interaction is of a sort in which there is a low affective filter for learning. This is achieved by techniques not demanding speech from the learners before they are ready; not correcting their errors during the interaction; and by providing subject matter for conversation of high interest to the learners.

The significance of this lesson plan lies in its emphasis on comprehensible and meaningful classroom activities rather than the production of accurate sentences, though accuracy is not ignored completely but given marginal attention at the end of the lesson period.

This sort of lesson has the additional merit - not often brought to the fore - that it is easy to train teachers in the use of appropriate question types and therefore easy to offer them the tools to shape a lesson that might otherwise ramble.

So it would be said. But this line of argument is no longer entirely satisfactory. Dealing with the issue, as I have done here, on a purely methodological level, overlooks too much of what language use involves. My aim here is to demonstrate a point not often made - the sometimes rather uneasy way in which the teacher

drifts from discussion to class and back again. While the teacher does, in the end, exert his right to direct the lesson, even to the extent (as here) that he retains the right to switch from a "Formal Classroom" situation to one of "Informal Discussion", the result is unnatural and may confuse.

One aspect of this is that there are plenty of examples in the data of the present research - and in other lessons recorded at the same time - of the teacher choosing to reject a direction in which the class want to take the discussion.

It is at this point that we come up against what I have called the "second level" at which this issue can be discussed. I should like to spend most of the remainder of this chapter on the broadly sociolinguistic question of the role of the teacher and the nature of the classroom.

Here are some examples of interaction that might be considered.

1. T: Tell me again.
2. S: They say it's a wonderful country.
3. T: OK. Lovely. They say it is a wonderful country.
4. S: They say it's a wonderful country.
5. T: Jolly good, they say it's a wonderful country.
6. T: Please ... ?
7. S: Take, could you take me.
8. T: Please could you take me yes. Please could you take me. OK, right.
9. S: Tony isn't honest man, he talk to his, so is not honest man.
10. T: OK. Here is the story with some words missing. (T. distributes handouts) OK. Can you write the missing words please.

In this example, the teacher is trying to check the students' comprehension of the story of the lesson by evaluating their responses. In turn (9) the student wants to take the lesson into a different direction by evaluating one of the characters of the

story: Tony. In particular, he wants to put his honesty into question. The teacher (in turn 10) ignores the student's attempt and carries on with the other step of the lesson as planned and starts distributing handouts of the story with some words missing to be filled in by the students.

This is typical of the more constrained teacher-centred kind of lesson, one in which a prepared lesson-plan has to be adhered to and completed: the switch from inner to outer discourse is not acceptable.

Another example in which the learners try to steer the direction of the interaction to a different way from that designed by the teacher can be illustrated as follows:

1. T: Do people get killed by whales?
2. S: Yes.
3. S: And I think it is forbidden to kill ...
4. S: Murder not kill.
5. T: Pardon.
6. S: Murder.
7. T: What is the difference between killing and murdering?
8. S: Yes, we kill if we, it is crime.
9. T: It is crime, it is illegal.
10. T: OK. What difference will it make if all whales disappeared.

This is a much more interesting example, because it comes in an apparently different type of lesson, one in which the teacher appears to have a less developed sense of direction, and therefore a more receptive attitude to student initiations, yet he does _not_ in fact permit much interaction.

The example shows the potential for further interaction unspecified by the teacher's initial question. In a reply to a yes/no question, the learners add further information (turn 3) about

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the legality of killing whales. But the teacher does not capitalise on this new potential for useful interaction. Further potential for interaction comes from the student's attempt to distinguish between killing and murdering, which was pursued by the teacher for further interaction.

At the other extreme, the teacher forces the students into directions they do not wish to go, and ignores their pleas for change. In what follows, for instance, the learners do not seem to be satisfied with the teacher's arbitrary decisions to shape the interaction, and try, but fail, to impose their own direction:

1. S: What's the difference between whom and whose?
2. T: I'll explain ... look at this part.
3. S: Here can write who comma S.
4. T: No you don't ... if you write ...
5. S: You could say John's house is near Birmingham.
6. T: Yes you could ... but if I'm saying John's house which is near Birmingham ...
7. S: (Look of despair from the student; slaps pen on desk and looks round.)
8. T: Now there's no word like whose which we're talking about and if we'd wanted to say something like the roof of the house we'd have to do it this way ... It's John's house ... sorry.
9. S: Which its.
10. T: Not ... very good idea but not quite ... John's house ... the roof of which ... the only way we can do it is to say the roof of which ... OK ... the roof of which.
11. S: So can say John's hou - John's house .. er .. which which its door is broken.
12. T: No you can't.
13. S: Why? (slightly demanding, suppressed laughter from other Students, slightly nervous laughter from teacher.)
14. T: In fact because we don't ... we have to say John's house of which the door is broken ... alright ... or John's house which has a broken door ... We'd probably ... we'd probably avoid this (mumbling from class) because it's rather long and rather heavy ... when ... if you can't turn it round and say it another way we'd have to say the roof of which the door of which.
15. S: Yes ... we can't say John's house of which the roof needs ... er.

16. T: No ... er ... we don't do that Abdulla ... we say
        John's house the roof of which.

In turn (5) the student is not satisfied with the teacher's
explanation, and at this point the direction of the interaction
differs from that predetermined by the teacher. The student feels
that the teacher is not correct, and in fact the student offers
(turn 9) an alternative but the teacher rejects it. The student
restates his claim (turn 11) in a more acceptable form, and one
which demands explanation from the teacher who gets confused and
retreats into teaching by fait accompli rather than explanation. The
point here is that an opportunity for real communication is taking
place: the student really wants to know, he wants the information
from the teacher as teacher - but is disappointed. An occasion for
real discussion is missed by the teacher's retreat into authority.

A procedure therefore much harder than simple class teaching is
one in which the teacher steps more genuinely and more completely
out of the picture, and permits the conversation to develop its own
impetus, rather than an impetus superimposed and guided by the
teacher himself. Note that in the sort of lesson plan given above
(Marriage in my Country) the conversation is not likely to be
permitted to develop - the teacher is likely to intervene if the
going gets a little rough. An alternative would be to promote
precisely the sort of lively interaction one finds in, say, the
following interchange (the question is whether women should go out
to work or not). I have omitted from the following transcription
some of the repetitions and background noise, which the participants
do not seem to "feel" as important, to emphasise the sudden impetus
the conversation develops:

```
1.  AZ   Not like England.
2.  LA   Not like England, no problem, you can't go
         in her house.
3.  AZ   The women hasn't right to smoke or to
         drink like English girl, Britain girl.
4.  T    British girl.
5.  AZ   British girl.
6.  T    What do you think?  What would you prefer?
         You obviously ... do you like the way it
         is in Algeria or ... ?
7.  LA   I like is very good.
8.  T    What about the way it is here?  What do
         you think it is?
9.  LA   It is many problem between men and women here.
10. T    What problem?
11. LA   Because the women, women must work in house.
12. T    In Britain you can't afford to, there is, most
         people now, they can't.  Both people go out to
         work because there is not enough money.
13. S    In Algeria.
14. T    Most of the time you can't afford to have one
         person just to stay.
15. RA   In Algeria women work, but it is not good for
         her, we think it is not good for woman.
16. T    Why?
17. RA   Because she has children and there is many thing.
18. DR   She will feel love with other.
19. S    ... (Ss. Laugh)
20. DR   It is true, you know why, because mens when he
         see, he saw his wife look for another man he is
         very angry.
21. T    What happens, what happens if somebody's wife
         goes out with another man?  What happens then?
         (Ss. Laugh)
22. DR   So kill her and or divorce.
23. AZ   Don't believe him.  He is criminal.  (Ss. Laugh)
24. S    He is crazy.  (Ss. and T. Laugh)
```

Notice how this extract starts in a typically class-like manner,
with teacher and students sharing turns more or less equally - and
with the teacher, in fact, offering an explicit correction. Then,
there is a sudden change, at T. 15: the teacher begins to say less,
the students to say more, and the interchange - a point marked by
the frequent laughter - more natural. Notice too the additional
dimension to the conversation, as students begin, for the first
time, to comment in a friendly way on each other (T. 23-4).

Above all, notice how the discussion here genuinely unfolds. A particular point is raised, and is then discussed in a fashion which is entirely normal. This is absolutely different from the first extract quoted, in which various issues were raised and none pursued. This interaction develops a theme; and therefore a life of its own.

This raises the issue of classroom control. There is a widespread assumption, shared by teachers and students alike, that to reduce the level of control of classroom direction is the same as reducing the level of control of classroom discipline. This is a cultural assumption, however, rather than something implicit in the nature of methodology.

Therefore, I suggest in conclusion a reorientation of one's ideas about the classroom, and the apparatus of training that goes into the creation of a good classroom practice.

The Teacher's Role: a Note on Classroom Practice

At the moment, on the whole, teachers are trained to deliver pre-determined syllabuses. The problem with such predetermination, however, is that it can directly inhibit true communication in the classroom. If the teacher controls, then the interaction is constrained and inauthentic: if the teacher does not control, there is a risk of chaos. The point was made by Johnson, as we saw earlier, suggesting teachers need nerves of steel - who talks of what Richards and Skelton call "Johnson's Paradox". Nevertheless, teachers are prepared specifically so that they can work in this kind of situation.

What is needed instead, I would argue, is an appraisal of the relationship between the teacher and the syllabus. Rather than have the former as the servant of the latter, teachers should be trained directly to recognise communication when it happens, to step outside the interaction when it takes off, to note as it takes place purely language points that need subsequent practice, and to devise exercises (or whatever work is appropriate) subsequently. (For a stimulating discussion see in particular van Lier, 1988).

A redefinition of the teacher's role is long overdue (see also Widdowson,1987): the "communicativeness", if I can use the word, of contemporary ELT syllabuses is not matched by a communicative role for teachers. It is not expected of them and they are not trained for it. I would argue for a teacher-training effort to go into making teachers capable of assessing student performance, recognising problems and identifying solutions. They would therefore effectively be undertaking small-scale research in the classroom to answer the fundamental question: "what promotes communication?". These circumstances would be likely to differ from one environment to another; if and when they were identified, such occasions could be promoted.

There are a number of levels at which this might work:

a) Methodological/sociological. This would be concerned with seating arrangements, level of formality, whether work was undertaken with the whole class or in groups, whether students understood and felt happy with what was being asked of them, etc.

b) Classroom Language. This would be concerned with the general types of language that promote interaction - such matters as

question types, relative shares of initiations and so forth would come in here. But an awareness of this level would serve partly to monitor whether communication was genuinely happening.

c) Subject matter. The assumption here is that students will communicate about what they want to communicate about. The teacher's task here is to identify topics.

There are a number of ways in which this system might operate. Under <u>ideal</u> conditions (that is, conditions to which no one is likely to be exposed) it might work as follows, with a small group of - say - half a dozen:

1) Teacher introduces a topic (or, better, students introduce a topic). During this introduction a language <u>occasion</u> (Richards and Skelton) is likely to occur - that is, a moment when participants forget they are in the classroom. At this point, the teacher steps out of the interaction. One of two things will now happen:

2a) The occasion will die. Students will run out of things to say. If this happens the teacher will put a degree of pressure on students asking them either to define more closely, amplify more fully, justify more logically, etc., or, by saying nothing, create a sociolinguistically embarrassing gap in the interaction which it is the students' duty to fill.

2b) The occasion will continue, will develop under its own impetus, and will give rise to other occasions. Subsequently either the occasion will die, in which case the procedure at 2a) is followed, or the lesson will end. This brings us to:

3) From communication to practice. At some stage, either during the lesson or subsequently, the teacher will review the progress of the class quietly, and will prepare work based on it. This work will be given to students, ideally, as part of the class. That is, where a piece of work suggests itself because it arises naturally from the interaction, the teacher will step in and provide practice as part of the continuing occasion.

The above is, of course, the ideal. Under less amenable conditions, the teacher may be obliged to work with large classes, in which case he is likely to find constant switching from lockstep to group and back again. Within the groups, under many circumstances, students would - naturally - wish to talk the L1. A degree of this ought to be permissible, provided always that all lockstep is conducted in the TL. What is more likely to be a problem, rather than an operational constraint (which is what class size is) is the psychological set of mind of the students and teachers alike, both of whom will require training to understand what is happening. But students and teachers have been taught over the years to switch from a preponderance of written to oral/aural work, from structural work to functional and so forth, and there is no obvious reason why this should prove more difficult.

8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The present research has concentrated on three major areas in NSs-NNSs discourse: input and output in NSs - NNSs discourse, interaction in NSs - NNSs discourse and naturalness in NSs - NNSs discourse. Some important issues under these categories were investigated in some detail. However, many other issues emanating

from such an investigation were necessarily left unexamined. These will remain suggestions for further research.

With regard to the input-output dimension the present research has resulted in some suggestive findings concerning the simplification of NSs input to NNSs and the examination of the oral output of NNSs under various types of interaction. What the present study has not set out to do, however, (such a study would require concentration on NSs performance rather than, as in the present work, NNSs performance) is to examine:

1) Whether all types of NSs-NNSs interaction are marked by simplification of NSs speech style. This seems intuitively likely, but cannot be demonstrated without a further level of experimentation in which the same NSs talk to each other and to NNSs.

2) The extent to which the relative degrees of simplification measured in this study under various circumstances of interaction would be the same if NSs were talking to NSs. That is, do NSs students in such unequal encounters as the classroom or interview also simplify their speech style, and do they do so to the same relative extent as NNSs. Again this seems likely, but a further set of experiments would be required.

As for the interaction in NSs - NNSs discourse, further research would possibly deal with a comparison between the FL learners in the EFL classroom and doing things outside the classroom: buying a ticket at a railway station, conversing with people in the street, buying food, etc. Also further research would deal with a comparison between FL learners interacting with each other inside

and outside the classroom. Significant patterns of interaction will emerge from such a study and many interactive problems will come to the surface. Moreover, further research would deal with FL learners interacting with non-native teachers of English in a country where English is only spoken and taught in the classroom. These learners will be faced with enormous problems. A study of their classroom interaction will be of great significance.

Concerning the third area of the present research, naturalness in NSs - NNSs discourse, a number of issues could be made for a further detailed investigation each standing as a major research project. Further research would establish a complete set of principles of natural discourse. A detailed investigation of the precise nature of turn-taking in a wider variety of settings would be another area for further research. Moreover, the study has advocated the incorporation of natural discourse in material and syllabus design. However, the way and the manner in which this incorporation can be accomplished needs further planning and research. Should the focus be on participation in communication right from the beginning or should it be introduced by a preparatory practice of language forms and structures?

Furthermore, the study has labelled various types of interaction either "formal" or "informal" according to the results of the questionnaire described in Chapter 4 and the analysis of the lessons themselves. A further topic for research would be to see how teachers' lessons are classified as being formal or informal by their colleagues from the same and other native language.

Finally, all the above suggestions can be investigated with relation to different variables such as topics of interaction, proficiency of learners, age of participants, and individual variation.

Appendices

<u>Appendix 1:</u> <u>Transcription of Data: Problems and Examples</u>

The difficulties - strictly, the impossibility - of achieving a perfect transcription are well known. The effort of transcribing data is concerned not so much with showing all the words uttered and other aspects (pauses, hesitations, non-verbal vocalisations) of their context. Rather it is concerned with making intelligent and consistent decisions about what to include, what to exclude, and where to admit defeat.

For present purposes, I have been satisfied with a level of data transcription which permits the general quantifications I discuss, and no more. Things I have <u>not</u> attempted to transcribe include inaudible asides from student to student, most non-verbal noise, and most hesitations.

The actual data itself, however, was collected under rather different conditions. The Formal Interview was conducted in a room with just two people talking quietly and without interruption, either from outside or from each other. This yields data which is clear, and a transcription which is inclusive. As the interviews proceeded, the interviewer tended to ask roughly the same questions in roughly the same words, thus avoiding too many of the repetitions and false starts that typify a large number of interaction types. Compare, for instance:

Ex. 1:

```
    1.  NS: I like to see every student at the end of term
            to ask them essentially three questions: firstly
            about applications to Universities, secondly about
            the course, this course, the English course, and
```

thirdly just to check if there are any problems,
perhaps with sickness or accommodation.
Applications first of all.
How many, how many applications have you made?

2. S: Ten application.
3. NS: Ten.
4. S: Ten applications.
5. NS: OK. What, what is your speciality, what speciality
have you applied to do?
6. S: About Civil Engineering?
7. NS: Yes.
8. S: Speciality, stability of construction.
9. NS: Stability.
10. S: Stability of construction including structure
engineering.
11. NS: That is a part of structure engineering?
12. S: Yes.
13. NS: OK. Now, have you applied for two-year courses or
one-year courses.

Ex. 2.

1. NS: Oh, dear, have a seat. AT the end of every term
I'd like to try and talk to all the students
individually, and to ask them really three
questions: firstly about their applications to
Universities, secondly about the English course
this year, and thirdly to ask if they have any
other problems in England.
Applications, how many applications have you, have
you made?
2. S: I think thirteen.
3. NS: Thirteen, jolly good. OK, and what speciality
have you put for your applications?
4. S: Structure engineering.
5. NS: Structure engineering. OK. And how, how are you
getting on with your applications? Have you had
any interviews?
6. S: Yes. Just one.

The similarity - in fact on both sides at this early stage of the

interview - is striking. It will be seen from my transcription that

I have excluded interpretations and disambiguations based on

intonation, paralanguage and so on. Thus, I have not drawn

attention to the the student's struggle for and uncertainty about

the right word at 1, 8, or the (non-engineer) interviewer's

puzzlement and repetition in an attempt to clarify at 1,9. The

actual negotiation of meaning, in other words, (it continues at

1,10-11) I have left out of consideration since it says nothing about quantity or complexity.

. The FCI, on the other hand, because it is a classroom (however strictly controlled, and however precisely the teacher himself knew what language was coming next within the tight framework of the narrative) is altogether more complex. Here, the teacher frequently pauses and makes functional repetitions (in a quasi-naturalistic way, as if hesitating about what to say, or struggling to be heard as in the example below). And repeatedly throughout the lesson there are muttered comments from student to student, or from a student to himself, both in Arabic and English. These I have made no attempt to capture, since the task was plainly impossible. Similarly, I have also not attempted to capture the way this teacher corrects by a) accepting a marginally wrong answer and b) repeating a correct version with emphasis - often accompanied by a nod of the head and eye-contact (as at 3,6):

Ex. 3.

```
1.  T:  When did she go to Geneva?
2.  S:  She went to Geneva last year.
3.  T:  Lovely right.
4.  T:  When did she go to, ah, when did she go to Rio?
5.  S:  She went to Rio at last Christmas.
6.  T:  Lovely, she went to Rio last Christmas.  OK.
        Christmas.  Christmas.  Christmas.
7.  T:  What about you?
8.  S:  Yes, I have been to Paris, twice.
9.  T:  Twice.
10. T:  Have you ever been to, eh, Geneva?
11. S:  No, I hasn't, I haven't.
12. T:  I haven't, I haven't, lovely.
```

A little later the functional repetitions become very clear - an increase in their frequency is associated with an increase in the

difficulty of the work (the difficulty is obvious here from the student's very defective effort at a reply):

```
T:  He was very sad.
    And one day he had an idea.
    He had a good idea, a very good idea;
    he decided to ... ?
    What did he, what did he decide to do?
S:  To take with him Kate holiday.
```

I mention this because it is a strategy which appears in the production of both the teachers I have looked at for this thesis, and also in the production of the other teachers I have recorded. I mention it also because the degree of repetition by teachers in class means that such figures as the total quantity of words used might create a slightly mistaken impression about the amount of meaning conveyed.

It is almost always clear when and what a teacher repeats in this way. On the rare occasions of doubt I have chosen to assume no repetition. On a few occasions this class loses direction, and when direction is lost transcription becomes difficult and dis-ambiguation from written text also are a little harder:

```
T:  And so he ... ?
S:  Ring, rang phone, called.
T:  He rang, he called, phoned, yes.
T:  So he called Kate, he called Kate and he said ...?
S:  Have you been Algeria?
T:  Have you ever ... ?
S:  Have you ever been to Algeria, no, to Paris?
T:  Listen a second.  Paris.  Have you ever been to Paris.
    Have you ever been to Paris.  Good.

T:  Have you ever been to Paris?
    Kate said ... ?
S:  Yes, I have, I have, I have.
T:  I have, yes, I have.
T:  So Tony ... ?
S:  Thought,
T:  Oh, yes, sorry, yes.
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S:  Think, though, think, thought.
T:  Thought, lovely, good.
T:  So Tony ... ?
S:  Thought.
T:  No. Shh.
T:  Listen everyone, thought everyone.
S:  Thought.
T:  So Tony?
S:  Thought again.
T:  About.
S:  His account.
```

An extreme instance occurs at the beginning of ICD, where the teacher displays a quite extraordinary degree of tentativeness, probably to mark carefully the informality and open-endedness of the class, probably to initiation of the normal hesitation associated with setting something forward as a topic of conversation:

```
T:  Um, there's, before we start, there's, there's
    something which, em, which came up on the news.
    I don't know if you d' you watch the news alot?
S1: Yes, yes.
S2: Libyan problem, Libyan?
T:  No, its not that yes that that that was quite that
    that was something that came up that obviously affects
    you quite alot but uh.
S:  ...
```

The Libyan problem referred to - the words are scarcely audible - was the American bombing raid. In this lesson, also, a certain amount of the interaction was lost, but this was mostly in Arabic - as the students misinterpreted the opportunities offered to them and assumed (in the terms I have used in Chapter 8) that a decision not to control direction was a decision not to control discipline. The class, indeed, degenerates substantially, though the teacher is always sufficiently in control to - say - tell students to keep quiet: something he occasionally does.

The difficulties of transcription would be at their most serious with this teacher, who is young, inexperienced and of an informal turn of mind, since so much that is not invited to happen to class does happen. For present purposes, however, this is not a serious difficulty, except that, since the teacher rarely nominates a student to answer a question, many responses emanate more or less simultaneously from several students at once. This can only really happen, however, in the case of one-word responses, which students seem to perceive as being short enough to utter without a preceding nomination; so the fact of the matter does not alter my data significantly. Where an utterance cannot be traced to a single speaker, however, I have treated it as if it does, in some cases.

A more frequent characteristic of ICI, however, is the use of widespread asides in other languages - at times forming a sort of background noise in which the whole class takes place. The picture I have - and this will be seen from the following transcription - is of occasional pieces of English rising above a constant murmuring in French and Arabic. A sense, therefore, of what I have chosen to exclude in my data will be noticed from the following:

```
T:  Anybody knows what a whale is?
S:  Mammals
    Camel
    Fish, fish
    (Laughter, fish and chips)
T:  It is a mammal. Yes. No it is not a camel.
    It is a mammal very, very big fish.

T:  Come on Mohammad, draw me one.
S:  (Draws)
T:  Excellent. OK. That's a whale. Isn't it
    brilliant?

T:  Stop talking in Arabic and French. OK.
T:  Redha, What's a whale?
    What's a whale?
```

```
S:   A whale?
     It is a big fish.
T:   It is not actually a fish, is it?
Ss:  (Speak in Arabic ... )
T:   It is a mammal.  Very, very big.
T:   Have you got any in Algeria?
     Have you got any in the oceans?
     Can you get them in the oceans?
S:   No.
```

Finally, the simplest text to transcribe, apart from the FI, was the IC. Even where the actual grammatical quality of language used is defective, the students show considerable fluency and a considerable degree of decisiveness in what they say:

```
NS:  Twenty one is nothing, free person.
MO:  He is free.  There are one man who young has
     twenty one years he is free free, his parents
     from his parents and his parents, he is free from
     his parents, no contact with his parents.
NS:  No, No, it doesn't work like that.  All what I say
     is, I mean for example.  I went to University for
     three years and I'll move back home in two years ...,
     but it is your choice after you are eighteen.  If you
     don't want to live at home, if you don't  want to get
     married, if you want to live your own life, then you
     can go ahead and do it.  It is not the case of, you
     know, that your family kick you out of the door and
     say: go away.  It is just that you have got the
     choice of being independently whatever life you
     choose when you are eighteen.  It is up to your own
     individual way of doing it.
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It will be seen from the above then, to sum up, that I have attempted a transcription no more delicate than at word-level. That is, I have concentrated on the central discourse: the discourse sanctioned by the teacher. The only form of semantic interpretation I have permitted myself is at the level of punctuation, where I have used ordinary orthographic conventions to impose an order of my own.

Dear Colleague,

The questions addressed to you are for research purposes. I should be grateful if you could answer them carefully.

You will see extracts from ELT lessons and an interview. Assess those extracts for (1) their level of formality (2) for their level of interaction. How would you rate those extracts in these terms? Put a circle around the number you choose. I leave the definitions of "formal" and "interactive" to you.

No.	Extracts on video tapes	Very Formal					Very Informal	
1	Tony and Kate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Very Interactive					Not Interactive	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Do you have any general comments about this lesson?

		Very Formal					Very Informal	
2.	Whales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Very Interactive					Not Interactive	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Do you have any general comments about this lesson?

		Very Formal					Very Informal	
3.	Classroom Discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Very Interactive					Not Interactive	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Do you have any general comments about this Discussion?

		Very Formal					Very Informal	
4.	Interview	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Very Interactive   Not Interactive

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Do you have any general comments about this interview?

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5. What, in general, would you expect a very formal lesson to look
    like?

6. What, in general, would you expect a very informal lesson to
    look like?

7. What, in general, would you expect a very interactive lesson to
    look like?

8. What, in general, would you expect a very non-interactive
    lesson to look like?

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