

2. Speech as a marker of situation¹

PENELOPE BROWN and COLIN FRASER

A review of relations between speech markers and situations runs the danger of becoming a twenty-page summary of most of sociolinguistics. We trust, however, that though necessarily partial and superficial, such a broad review will act as a backdrop to other more specific contributions to this volume, in at least two ways. First, most of the other chapters deal primarily with speech variations associated with the nature of the participants in interaction, and our review should help to indicate what other sources of variation are being ignored and what confusions may result. Second, by pointing to the interrelations of different facets of the total situation and the frequent existence of multiple determinants of speech variations, we may be able to suggest hypotheses about possible determinants which will be alternatives to the emphases on participants *per se* which other contributors favour.

First, we shall propose a framework for analysing situations and discuss our view of the nature of markers. Then we shall briefly review more specific concepts and empirical evidence, ending with a discussion of relations between markers of participants and markers of other features of situations, and the possibility of resolving ambiguities between them by means of further work at both individual and social-structural levels of analysis.

1. Situations and markers

1.1. Situations

Although, as Goffman (1964) pointed out, the systematic analysis of 'situation' has been notoriously neglected by social scientists, it has come

¹ Preparation of this chapter was supported by SSRC Grant HR 3608. The authors are indebted to Stephen Levinson for numerous helpful comments and clarifications, and to Howard Giles and Klaus Scherer for their constructive suggestions.

to be invoked more and more in recent years, and by now many people interested in social aspects of language appear to have something like a shared view of what characteristics can be used to define a situation, even though there is no clear picture of how these identifiable bits and pieces really hang together.

The basic notion of situation as the context within which interaction or 'the speech event' occurs, has several components which can be distinguished. Everyone, we think, would invoke the notion of 'setting'. Thus, interaction in a bedroom as opposed to a church as opposed to a football stadium would be described as involving three different situations. Furthermore, differences in participants and their relationships, for example, bishops or barmen, clergymen or children, friends or strangers, would be sufficient to characterize differences in situations. And a third concept, or set of concepts, also seems common. This is what various writers call purposes, ends, or goals, which in turn are closely tied to notions of task and even of topic.

These three concepts – setting, participants, purpose – more than encompass Fishman's (1972) assertion that 'a situation is defined by the cooccurrence of two (or more) interlocutors related to each other in a particular way, communicating about a particular topic, in a particular setting' (48). And, as Fraser (1978) has noted, the first three major categories of Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING mnemonic are setting, participants, and ends. Unlike his other categories which are much more concerned with the nature of the message in communication, these three clearly deal with the situation, and 'ends' doubtless would have been 'purposes' if 'speaking' were spelled with two *ps*.

For us, purpose is the motor which sets the chassis of setting and participants going, and purpose is interlinked with the other two categories in very intricate ways. In particular, we find it necessary to consider at some length the intersection of setting and purpose in order to deal with a wide range of linguistic markers related to levels of formality. This amalgam of setting and purpose might have been dubbed 'context' had that not been such an imprecise and overused term. We shall call it 'scene'. Thus, situation involves scene (or context) plus participants. In addition, we make use of finer distinctions within our major categories. Figure 1 sets out all of our terms, and we hope this sketch of a taxonomy will help guide the reader through our review of markers of situation, as well as assist in relating discussions in other chapters to one general scheme.

But before that we must consider the nature of social markers in speech (cf. Giles, Scherer & Taylor, this volume: ch. 9, 3).

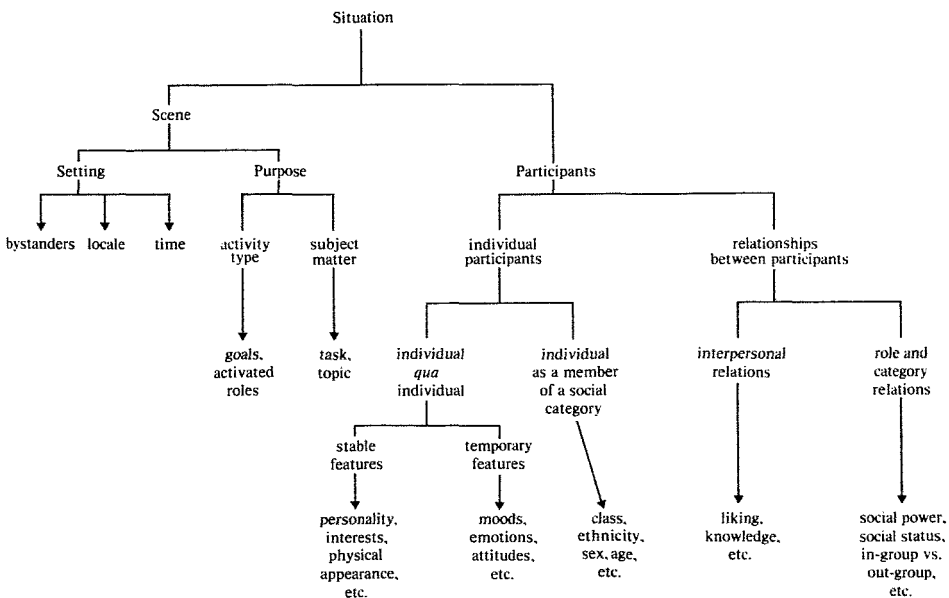


Figure 1. Components of situation

1.2. Social markers

The simplest definition of a marker would treat it as a member of an ordered pair $\langle A, C \rangle$, where a (a member of A) is any definable feature of linguistic form and c (a member of C) is any definable aspect of social context. The a could be any phonological, syntactic, or lexical item whose presence correlates with some social category c , including those described above as components of the situation. A simple example of a marker in this sense would be an address term such as *Dr*, the use of which marks a particular speaker–addressee relationship.

By broadening the definition we can include in A paralinguistic, kinesic, or any other features of utterances produced in interaction. And we can treat the absence of a linguistic item (null elements) or the absence of any linguistic items (silence) as markers too. Thus, in languages with T/V pronoun systems (Brown & Gilman 1960; Brown 1965), the avoidance of a T or a V pronoun may be a marker of a particular state of change in the definition of the speaker–addressee relationship (Levinson 1977).

From the point of view of people, like Labov, who have worked empirically with social markers in speech, this definition of ‘marker’ requires amplification. In practice, the first member of the pair is restricted not to a

category of surface structure elements alone, but to a category of surface structure elements in relation to their place of occurrence in the linguistic structure (cf. Laver & Trudgill, this volume: ch. 1, 2.3). For example, Labov's (1972a) well-known New York variable /r/ is restricted in its linguistic context; only postvocalic, word-final, and preconsonantal /r/s are sensitive to social categories of speakers. So instead of an ordered pair we need an ordered triple $\langle A, B, C \rangle$, where the linguistic form a is matched up with a particular linguistic context b and correlated with a social context c .

But we must expand the definition yet again if we are not to exclude some relevant phenomena, for markers may be defined not only in relation to linguistic context but also in relation to meaning. The archetypal case of this is in fact T/V pronouns, for it is not any old V pronoun which marks the social categories of 'respect' or 'distance'; it is only Vs used to denote a singular referent (cf. Comrie 1975). Similarly, if one wanted to count lexical items as markers of register or formality, then *discipline* meaning 'academic field' is a marker of the academese register, but meaning 'stern child-rearing practices' it is not. And *bad* meaning 'good' can be a marker in Black English Vernacular of speaker-addressee relationship; *bad* meaning 'bad' is not (Halliday 1976). The point is, then, that surface form alone is not necessarily interestingly correlated with social categories; it is surface form in relation to a particular meaning that provides the relevant distribution.

We still need one further expansion. 'Can you play the piano?' used as a request is more polite than 'Play the piano', but used as a question does not carry this implication about the speaker-hearer relation. To handle this, let us allow that some aspects of surface structure can be systematically aligned with social categories only when correlated with particular functions. Indirect speech acts or performative hedges as markers of politeness would be such pragmatically constrained markers; *sure* functioning as 'OK', as in 'Sure, I'll do it' (but not *sure* in 'John is sure to come'), might be a marker of certain kinds of speaker-addressee relationship, and *you know* in certain conversational functions might be a marker of a particular kind of speaking activity, chat (Goldberg 1976).

In sum, we can define a marker, *a priori*, in terms of relations amongst three kinds of categories (each of which contains subcategories). Specifically, we will understand a social marker to denote a relationship between A and C relative to B:

A	B	C
<i>linguistic form</i>	<i>internal context</i>	<i>external context</i>
phonological	phonological	social categories:
syntactic	environment	speaker
lexical	meaning	addressee
paralinguistic	function	setting
kinesic		purposes
etc.		etc.

But how do we actually identify markers in speech? When we attempt to apply the concept empirically, certain difficulties arise. One is that the relations between A and C may be either invariant or probabilistic (cf. Giles, Scherer & Taylor, this volume: ch. 9, 3.2). An invariant marker would be one where the presence of the linguistic item *a* is perfectly correlated with the presence of the social context; an example would be a language, such as Japanese, where speakers use different pronouns for 'I', depending on the sex of the speaker. Perhaps the majority of markers, however, are probabilistic, that is, the probability of their occurrence increases (or decreases) with the presence of the social category. In addition, the influence of linguistic context can be invariant or probabilistic. Of course it may be the case that sometimes it appears to be probabilistic because the investigator has not isolated all the features of internal contexts (*b*) which restrict the correlation of *a* and *c*. It is possible that Labovian variable rules (Labov 1972a, b) in many cases would be less variable if *a* were considered in relation to meaning and function and not just to surface linguistic context. At the same time, it must be admitted that the more one includes meaning and function in B, the more tricky it becomes to quantify, to count up instances of a particular marker and correlate it with *c*, and the more likely one is to consider it probabilistic.

A second major difficulty with markers resides in their tendency to ambiguity regarding which aspect of a social context is being marked. Perhaps the sociolinguist's dream (and the poet's nightmare) is a world where each marker unambiguously correlates with a different aspect of context; Marker 1 marks speaker's class, Marker 2 speaker's familiarity with the addressee, Marker 3 a church setting, Marker 4 the presence of a friendly bystander, and so on. But in reality a given marker is usually multiply ambiguous, and even if strongly linked to one social variable will be less strongly linked to others. Indeed, Labov's rather different definition of marker (1972a: 237) relies on this ambiguity; he restricts the term to 'more highly developed sociolinguistic variables' showing both social and stylistic differentiation. So his markers, e.g. percentage of pronounced /r/ in New York English, are ambiguous between marking social status

(class) vs. marking levels of formality (attention to speech). More generally, the ambiguity between the expression of power and of solidarity first noted by Brown & Gilman (1960) appears to have widespread application; the idiom of 'speaker powerful over addressee' is the same as 'speaker and addressee intimate' in many linguistic respects (Brown & Levinson 1978). The cases where a particular marker is unambiguously correlated with only one aspect of social categories appear to be almost absent from some languages, though rich in others; Haas' (1964) report of features of women's speech in Koasati (where linguistic features unambiguously mark speaker sex) is one well-known case, but languages with elaborate honorifics provide many other examples.

Given the great variety of linguistic forms whose presence or absence may, usually probabilistically and ambiguously, mark some feature or other of the social context, how can the wood emerge from the trees? There are at least two ways in which we might restrict our attention. First, we could decide that it is not sufficient for us, as analysts, simply to correlate form with situation. Doubtless there are etic correlates, such as the rate of eye-blinks studied by psycholinguists, which are beyond the perception of members: as such, they are unlikely to be important in the process of interaction, and hence should be of limited interest to social psychologists and sociolinguists. We should insist that the markers we study do have some emic status, that interlocutors in a particular culture actually attend to the presence or absence of *a* in situated interaction and come to conclusions about the social categories operative in the interaction on the basis of the presence or absence of the markers. This is not to say that members of the culture are continually consciously aware of the markers being used, but only that they are potentially able to bring these markers to some level of awareness and to recognize that they play some part in the interaction. Labov, for example, has tested some, but not all, of his sociolinguistic variables for emic status (after Lambert's tests; see Lambert *et al.* 1960), and we should concentrate on variations which can not only be shown to occur but can also be shown to have specifiable consequences for participants² (cf. Robinson, this volume: ch. 6, 1.1; Giles, Scherer & Taylor: ch. 9, 3.4).

Second, as will become evident in section 2, it is often difficult, or indeed misleading, to concentrate on specific, isolated markers without

² The distinction between *emic* and *etic* levels of analysis was originally formulated by Pike (1964), on analogy with phonemic and phonetic levels in linguistics. Etic analyses are performed in terms of universal (or at least, precultural) grids or frameworks, while emic analyses are in terms of categories and frameworks that are meaningful to members of the society being studied.

taking into account systematic variations which involve the cooccurrence of sets of markers. A reasonable assumption is that socially significant linguistic variations normally occur as varieties or styles, not as individual markers, and it is on those varieties that we should focus. Furthermore, it is likely to be varieties and styles, rather than individual markers, which have the clearest emic status (see Brown & Levinson, this volume: ch. 8).

With regard to situational variations, the term normally used by linguists to describe them is 'register'. For Bolinger (1975: 358), 'a register is a variety . . . that is tied to the communicative occasion', rather than being identified with any geographically defined speech community. Similarly, Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens (1964) and Hasan (1973) relate registers to uses, not users (where user implies habitual user, e.g. a speaker of a dialect as opposed to an intermittent user, such as a doctor, lawyer, parent, etc.). So our review might have been titled 'Situations and registers', which, interpreted liberally, covers a great deal of sociolinguistics.

2. A selective review

We shall start with purpose, go on, in turn, to setting, scene and participants, and as we go we shall try to point to those intersections where markers of one are confounded with markers of the others.

2.1 Purpose

The motive force in an analysis of situation comes from a notion like purpose. What are the participants trying to do; what is the interaction all about? For us, purpose is not unlike the concept of 'plan' (Miller, Galanter & Pribram 1960), and, like plans, purposes come in sets of different scope. That is, certain overarching purposes can continue to operate for considerable periods of time, but within such a purpose there are less sustained purposes, which in turn involve even more short-lived purposes. Whereas big fleas are held to have smaller fleas on their backs, which have smaller fleas on their backs . . . large purposes contain their smaller ones within them, as diverse means to overarching ends.

Let us briefly consider three levels of scopes of purpose, in order to discard two for the present. First, there are maxi-purposes, which may, in a rough and ready way, guide a participant through a whole series of distinguishably different situations. 'A visit to Paris' would be one such maxi-purpose. Even the apparently more limited 'visiting the doctor' would be too gross for an analysis of situation, for more than one situation

is likely to be involved: talking to the receptionist, waiting in the waiting-room, and eventually seeing the doctor. At the other extreme, there are mini-purposes, which involve moment-by-moment changes in participants' intentions. These mini-purposes might be analysed in terms of specific speech acts (requesting something, or soliciting information about something, or promising to do something); thus they are related to different 'topics', if topic is something that changes with every few utterances.³ Within any one relatively stable situation there could be a large number of different mini-purposes.

The unprefix purpose, which is of interest to us here, is of intermediate scope. It directs the activities of participants throughout a situation or over the stretch of time that a social psychologist would expect to be necessary for someone to complete a 'task'. We shall discuss such purposes at two different levels of specificity: (i) in terms of a set of general activity types, (ii) in terms of the activity type plus specific subject matter.

Activity type. There appear to be a considerable number of quite general types of activities which are identifiable virtually irrespective of their specific content matter; for example: buying, selling, chatting, lecturing, conducting a meeting, negotiating, playing a game. Such 'activity types'⁴ are culturally recognized units of interaction that are identifiable by constraints on (a) goals, (b) roles activated in the activity, (c) interactional structure, and (to some extent) (d) participants and setting. In the activity of teaching, for example, the purposes (goals) of imparting information (and/or ways of thinking, attitudes, etc.) and the roles of teacher/student are activated. It is because activity types define or constrain participants' purposes that we are interested in them here. And as 'activity types' we consider them at the generic level for which we have a folk concept labelled by a monolexeme – teaching, games, meetings – without reference to specific content. But such purposes can be more specifically labelled – teaching physics, football games, business meetings – and that level of specific purpose we discuss subsequently under subject matter. It seems quite likely that there are speech markers of such generalized activity types, yet we know of little empirical study of such variations. In

³ The notion of topic, like that of purpose, involves different scopes, e.g. the topic of politics, within which is the topic of current British government policy, within which is the topic of what the prime minister said yesterday, etc. (For formulations of the notion of topic in discourse, see Chafe (1972), Keenan & Schieffelin (1976).)

⁴ This notion of 'activity type' was introduced by Levinson (1972) to label those larger-scale activities within which interaction takes place and which 'frame' the interaction (Goffman 1974). Levinson is currently developing an analysis of the role of activity types in structuring interaction (Levinson 1978b).

the ethnography of speaking, some of the work on analysing particular genres is suggestive, for example the studies of Black English 'rapping', 'marking', 'signifying' (e.g. Abrahams 1975; Kochman 1972; Labov 1972c; Mitchell-Kernan 1971), and Mitchell's (1957) study of the language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica. But such work tends to be about ritual speech activities, not about everyday transactional activities, and the aim is to write rules for conducting such an activity rather than to isolate linguistic markers which distinguish it from other activities.

From our own current work on stylistic variations (Fraser & Brown, n.d.), there appear to be very striking syntactic and lexical differences between the activities of lecturing and chatting, which can, in large part, be captured as 'nominal' and 'verbal' styles. Lecturing is nominal. Even when lectures are spontaneously composed from limited notes, there are lengthy syntactically complex utterances with many filled hesitations. There are very high frequencies of those word classes which are found in prepositional phrases and elaborate nominal groups: that is, nouns, adjectives and prepositions. The speech of the same participants chatting is, in comparison, verbal, being composed of much shorter utterances with a high frequency of finite verbs and personal pronouns. Such frequencies, then, provide markers of the activity type of lecturing as opposed to that of chatting.

Another illustration of an activity type marker comes from an experimental study of Moscovici (1967), who found that in interactions which were intended purely as discussions, without any need for agreement or decision, there was greater lexical variation (as measured by type-token ratios) than in interactions in which participants had the task of deciding something jointly. This would suggest comparable differences between planning sessions and seminars, for example.

A further set of materials from which markers of activity types may be drawn is the work on conversational structure by ethnomethodologists and conversational analysts (Sacks 1967, 1973; Schegloff 1972, 1976; Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Turner 1972). Certain distinguishable features of the structuring of different activities may constitute markers of those activities. Take, for example, different kinds of openings:

Let us begin.

Hello.

ringg

The meeting is called to order.

Well, we're all here now.

Benedictus benedicat.

Each of these initiating sequences is a marker of a different activity type.

In addition, the structure of the turn-taking system (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) is a marker of the kind of activity: local organization of turns, interruptions and finishing others' sentences characterize conversation, while monologue (one turn only, no interruptions) characterizes lectures and public speeches. There are also items within discourse which mark a change in activity type or goals – markers of asides (Jefferson 1972), of abrupt shifts in topic, etc. Over and above such general phenomena of interaction regulation, there are particular markers of particular types of activity – for example, markers of casual chat include repetition, exaggerated emphasis, expressions like *you know*, *I mean* (Brown & Levinson 1978; Goldberg 1976), as well as other markers that apply in general to highly verbal styles (Fraser & Brown, n.d.). Similarly, there are doubtless specific markers of the activity of auctioneering, or of presenting the news on radio or TV, or of sports reporting (cf. Crystal & Davy 1969).

It is reasonable to assume that activity types available to members of a society are not simply random lists of all possibilities, but are organized into clusters or groups of activities that seem to be of the same order. So we might suggest that public speaking activities, such as university lecturing, political speeches, barristers' arguments in court, are related activity types in members' conceptualizations, as opposed to business transactions, like auctioneering, buying and selling, negotiating a pay rise, and as opposed to casual chat, whether of dentist to patient, two pensioners on a park bench, or neighbours over the fence. Whether or not such plausible clusters of activity types would reveal similar clusters of markers in the speech they engender is a fascinating question for research.

Subject matter. But activity type alone does not give an adequate account of the purpose in a situation. An activity type specifies the range of possible purposes that participants will orient toward in the activity, but not which specific one will be involved. People do not set out to buy, or negotiate, or play; they intend to buy clothes or food, to negotiate a wage increase or a loan from a friend, to play football or golf. The notion of purpose requires the specification of content at a more detailed level than that of activity type. This we shall call 'subject matter', and we shall assume isomorphy between subject matter of the activity and topic of the speech, ignoring for the present situations where, for example, participants might be repairing a car while chatting about films.

A taxonomy of activity types would help to organize variations in associated linguistic markers. This is even more true of subject matter, whose range is enormous. One first thought, however, is that the type of linguistic variation associated with subject matter may be very limited, as well as obvious. Subject matter will, in large part, determine the lexical items encountered. We use different words to talk about different things, and it would require some unimaginable overextensions of metaphor if we were to be unable to distinguish a conversation about wine from one about rugby, or talk about politics from talk about child-care.

Giles & Powesland (1975) make some suggestions for the beginning of a taxonomy of topic by identifying a number of general dimensions of subject matter, such as salience, emotionality and technicality.⁵ Thereby they are able to suggest, from a review of previous work, a limited number of markers other than lexical choice. The salience or importance of the subject matter is associated with increased productivity on the part of speakers. Anxiety-arousing subjects increase the rate of speech disfluencies, and Labov's work (1972a) fits with several other studies in demonstrating that emotionally arousing subjects lead to changes in stylistic level, moving toward the vernacular end of the stylistic continuum.

But perhaps the clearest demonstrations that subject matter has markers other than lexical choice come from the work of Linde and others (Linde, in press; Linde & Goguen, in press; Linde & Labov 1975). She shows that different activity types – describing, narrating, planning – have quite different discourse structures, with associated syntactic markers. From her work, it appears that such differences can also emerge in response to subject matter differences, when the activity type is constant. Thus the discourse structure and syntax of telling stories are quite different from those of telling jokes. From Linde's work on describing apartments, in which the overwhelming majority of respondents organized their descriptions as 'tours' of the apartment, it seems quite likely that changing the subject matter to larger houses rather than apartments would produce more map-like descriptions, with appropriately different syntactic organization.

An analysis of purpose in terms of activity type and subject matter seems central to an understanding of situation, but the identification and interpretation of markers of purpose has hardly begun.

⁵ Unfortunately, they confound participants' knowledge of and attitude to a topic with the content of the topic itself. It is important to distinguish the two different things involved: knowledge and attitudes are attributes of participants, while topic content (our 'subject matter') is an attribute of purpose.

2.2. Setting

The physical setting in which interaction takes place generally has little determining power over linguistic characteristics of the speech used in that setting; it appears to be rare that speech choice is actually determined by the setting *per se*. But settings imbued with cultural import (what Hymes (1972), but not we, calls 'scenes') are associated with the activities which customarily take place in them: sermons in church, football on the playing field, buying and selling in the market place. The fact that such activities are not determined absolutely by the setting can be seen in the alternative activities which may occur in the same settings: builders repairing the sound system in the church, Sunday picnicking on the playing field, public protests in the market place. So we find it useful to distinguish between markers of setting *per se*, and markers of settings-associated-with-purpose, i.e. scenes.

Taking first the physical setting, we may note the hushed tone of voice that tends to be used for conversing in church as a marker of 'church (or sacred) setting'. Taboos on uttering certain words, or on using certain kinds of language, are often setting-specific; for example, the taboo on mentioning a king's name or anything that sounds like his name within his kingdom, reported for some Polynesian societies by Corbett (1976), would mean that the avoidance of his name and the presence of circumlocutions would be markers of the kingdom as a setting.

Another feature of physical setting for which there are markers in speech is the physical orientation of participants *vis-à-vis* each other. This is to some extent determined by the activity in which they are engaged; thus, in a lecture the speaker stands at a distance from and facing the addressees, whereas in a cocktail party participants are scattered in small, close face-to-face clusters, and at a dinner they may well be seated side by side. The effects of differing physical orientations have been studied experimentally by Moscovici & Plon (1966), who found linguistic correlates of face-to-face as opposed to side-by-side and back-to-back orientation, the latter two being more nominal. In addition, Fielding & Coope (1976) found that speech over an intercom was more nominal than speech in face-to-face communication. And, clearly, there are linguistic correlates of physical distance between speaker and addressee: whispering, talking to someone across the room and calling across distances are phonologically distinguishable in a number of ways.

Temporal setting is marked by variations in greeting and farewell formulae depending on the time of day (Good morning/day/afternoon/

evening/night) in many different languages, and in English it is also a marker of the temporal unfolding of an event. Differences in lexicon depending on temporal setting may go beyond such ritual formulae, however; Ferguson (reported in Fillmore 1975) claims that there are two different words in Moroccan Arabic for 'needle', one of which is used only in the morning, the other during the rest of the day. And in general, deictic forms in language (*here, there, this, that, now, then, today, tomorrow*) all mark aspects of the physical and temporal grounding of the speech, centred around the participants.

A third aspect of setting, the presence or absence of other persons in the environment who are not taking part in the interaction, may be marked in speech in various ways. A classic example is reported by Dixon (1970) for Dyirbal, an Australian aboriginal language, where there is a distinctive code which is used when a speaker is in the presence of his 'mother-in-law' or other taboo relatives, even if he is not speaking to them; the use then of this 'mother-in-law' language is an unambiguous categorical marker of the presence of a tabooed relative in the interactional setting. Such cases of 'bystander honorifics' (Comrie 1976) are one type of setting markers; another example, where not honour but secrecy is the motivation, is seen in the familiar phenomenon of adults spelling out parts of their message to one another when in the presence of children, as in *Let's get some C-A-K-E for tea but don't let you-know-who know*.

2.3. Scene and formality

When we consider setting and purpose together, as 'scene', we note a striking fact. In most, perhaps all, cultures, scenes may be arranged along dimensions of public-private, sacred-secular, serious-trivial, impersonal-personal, polite-casual, high culture-low culture, open network-closed network and many other value-scales. In large part, these diverse scales seem to be subsumed – for participants as well as analysts – under one bipolar dimension of formal vs. informal.⁶ The kind of lan-

⁶ Of course, to say that they are all subsumed under the single dimension of formality is an oversimplification, for it is clearly possible for some purposes to distinguish certain of these value-scales from the (culturally defined) scale of formality. Thus polite (as opposed to casual) scenes (such as tea parties, as opposed to picnics) are associated with the formal end of the scale, but there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between polite behaviour and tea parties; it is possible to be formally rude or casually polite. The evidence for the cross-cultural generality of the formality dimension comes from work in the ethnography of speaking and in the anthropology of interaction, but questions concerning the precise nature of the distinction and why it should be so pervasive in societies remain unanswered (but see Irvine (1978) for an important discussion).

guage appropriate to scenes on the formal or 'high' end of the scale is then differentiated from that appropriate to those on the informal or 'low' end. From acquaintance with a number of very different languages, we can speculate that such differentiation follows universal principles, so that 'high' forms of language share certain properties, such as elaboration of syntax and lexicon, phonological precision and rhythmicity, whereas 'low' forms share other properties, including ellipsis, repetition, speed and slurring (see Levinson 1978a). If this is so, then we may expect such features to be markers of the scene, or at least of its position on the formal-informal scale, in all languages. Much research in sociolinguistics involves isolating features of language varieties aligned on this kind of formal-informal dimension. Here we shall briefly review work on diglossic codes, bilingual code-switching and stylistic variation.

The types of language appropriate to formal as opposed to informal scenes vary in the degree to which they are separate 'codes', separately identifiable, with cooccurrence restrictions constraining mixture of the two. Perhaps the most clear-cut case of scene-conditioned use of different codes can be found in certain diglossic communities (Ferguson 1959), where one form of the language ('High') is used in public, official, written, or formal contexts, and another form ('Low') in ordinary interaction. South Indian Tamil is a case in point (Herman 1976; Levinson, pers. comm.); literary (High) Tamil is used in writing (except for a few recent novels that have appeared in colloquial Tamil, and for conversations in some novels), on the radio (except for radio plays), by actors in certain roles (e.g. astrologists), for political speeches, lectures and any other formal public speaking from a rostrum (although off the rostrum, after the speech, the speaker may revert to colloquial Tamil). Some Tamil speakers also have another language, English, as a resource for particular scenes; the language of law courts, and most university lectures, is English. In this respect the Tamil situation appears to parallel another, reported by Trudgill (1974b): in Luxembourg, speakers use a Luxembourg dialect of German for ordinary conversation, Standard German for books, newspapers and letters, and another language altogether, French, as the language of parliament and of higher education. In both of these cases there is a specialization of function for the High and Low varieties, with well-defined situations of appropriateness. In speech communities of this sort there is a highly predictable one-to-one relationship between language usage and social context, and the choice of code – High vs. Low – is a straightforward marker of the formality or informality of the scene.

In other diglossic communities the basis for alternation between the

two codes is more complex, with other aspects of the situation besides scene conditioning the use of High and Low forms. In Arabic-speaking countries, for example, where the dialect situation is complex, use of the High variety may be conditioned simply by speaker and addressee not understanding each other's colloquial dialect (Holes, pers. comm.), in which case the choice of the High variety would be a marker not only of scene, but of characteristics of the participants as well.

Diglossic switching is a particularly tidy case of a much more general phenomenon, code-switching, where members of multilingual or multi-dialectal communities switch between languages or dialects depending on various aspects of the communication situation, including the role relationship of participants as well as features of the scene (cf. Brown & Levinson, this volume: ch. 8, 2). This phenomenon has been reported in a variety of speech communities: Paraguay (Rubin 1962); New Guinea (Sankoff 1972); Mexican American communities (Fishman 1974; Gumperz 1970, 1975); North India (Gumperz 1975); Austria (Gumperz 1975); Norway (Blom & Gumperz 1972).

Code-switching, however, raises some difficulties for an overly simple notion of code choice as a marker of situation. For code-switching in some communities may be used metaphorically (Blom & Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1975). That is, in such communities code-switching is a much more fluid phenomenon, occurring *within* a given situation and even within a single speech act. Speakers make use of their own and the audience's abstract understanding of situational norms to communicate metaphoric information about how they intend their words to be understood (cf. Blom & Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1970; Gumperz 1975). Gumperz (1975) gives examples for three sets of languages, Hindi-English, Slovenian-German and Spanish-English, to illustrate how in each case the ethnically specific, minority language is regarded as a 'we'-code, associated with in-group and informal activities, while the majority language serves as the 'they'-code, and is associated with more formal, stiffer and less personal out-group relations (cf. Giles, this volume: ch. 7, 1.2; Brown & Levinson: ch. 8, 2.2). This is a symbolic association; it does not directly predict actual usage, but by switching between the we- and they-code, speakers can use the metaphorical associations of we-ness and they-ness to present nuances of attitude and belief towards what is being said. Metaphorical switches thus can call upon the normal associations between code and scene actually to change the definition of the current situation – for example to change from official to personal roles (Blom & Gumperz 1972). The fact that two codes, one associated

with formal scenes and one with informal scenes, can be extracted from their appropriate scenes (externally defined) to change the definition of a scene for the moment, means that the codes are not simply passively marking but are in large part creating the situation.

If in bilingual communities choice of *code* marks formality, in monolingual, monodialectal speech communities the same kinds of information about formality of scene are conveyed by switching between levels of *style*. Here the switch is not between discrete, independently isolable codes, but between varieties of a single language; a great proportion of the codes overlap and the different styles may be signalled by a relatively few items which are loaded with social significance as markers of that particular style, as well as by discourse cues such as speed, rate of breathing, etc. In English, stylistic differences in speech, as opposed to writing, are only beginning to be systematically studied as a whole. But isolated chunks of styles – features on one linguistic level rather than clusters of cooccurring features – have been studied in some detail.

Perhaps most attention has been paid to a particular set of highly socially salient stylistic variables, forms of address and reference for persons. While much of this research deals with address forms as markers of characteristics of the participants and of their relationship (e.g. Brown & Gilman 1960; Brown & Levinson 1978; Ervin-Tripp 1972), we may observe here that address forms are sensitive to scene-based definitions of formality as well. So, in a meeting a speaker may well address or refer to someone as Dr Smith, even though the speaker is on first-name terms with Dr Smith and face-to-face in an informal context would always call him Joe. Ervin-Tripp (1972), in her formalization of the Russian T/V pronoun system reported by Friedrich, cites special status-marked settings as among the social factors conditioning the use of a T or a V pronoun. Similarly, Duranti (pers. comm.) claims that Italians choose pronouns of address in relation to setting; *egli* 'he' (literary or formal) rather than *lui* 'he' (informal) would be used in an examination setting, for example (cf. Brown & Levinson, this volume: ch. 8, 2).

Address forms are a subcase of a more general type of stylistic variation, lexical choice. And such variation in general may be conditioned by the formality of the scene. The choice of lexical items between alternates of pairs such as *dine/eat*, *reside/live*, *volume/book*, can be a marker of the formality of the occasion in English (Brown & Levinson 1978). An extreme case of such sets of lexical alternates is found in Javanese 'speech levels' (Geertz 1960), where whole sets of vocabulary with strict cooccurrence constraints covary with situational determinants such as activity type and

setting (wedding vs. street), topic (religious vs. commercial), and presence vs. absence of bystanders, as well as with participant characteristics.

Phonological variation in style has been studied by Fischer (1958), and more extensively by Labov and others (Labov 1966, 1972a; Shuy, Wolfram & Riley 1967; Trudgill 1974a, b). Using 'style' in a particularly restricted sense to mean 'attention to speech', Labov and his associates have correlated the occurrence of particular phonological variables with aspects of the activity type – within an interview situation vs. outside, or as an aside vs. as part of an interview. Percentages of the crucial variables are correlated ambiguously with social class of speaker and with style.

We have already mentioned a third set of work on stylistic variation, which has directed attention to variations between nominal and verbal styles (Fielding & Fraser 1978; and our own ongoing work). Briefly, relationships between 'formal' style and extensive use of nominal constructions, nouns, adjectives and prepositions, vs. 'informal' style and elaboration of verbs, pronouns and adverbs have been found in data from a variety of sources – from both experimentally created and naturally occurring conversations, as well as transactions in public places of business and academic discussions in seminar or lecture settings. As mentioned above, the nouny material is associated with setting and activity type; academic lectures and seminars are considerably nounier than shopping transactions and casual conversation. Thus proliferation of nouns might be considered a marker of formal setting, and preponderance of verbs a marker of informal setting, although the emic status of such surface structure categories remains to be demonstrated. A further dimension of scene is also distinguished by the nominal/verbal difference: medium of communication (in this case whether written or spoken) proved to be significantly correlated with the nouniness of linguistic material. Academic journal articles were nounier than the spoken academic discourse, business letters nounier than spoken business interactions, and personal letters somewhat nounier than natural conversation.

A related line of research is being developed by E. O. Keenan (1978) in her investigation of differences between planned and unplanned discourse. The planned/unplanned dimension appears to us to be a major psychological correlate of the formal/informal dimension of a situational analysis. Keenan has suggested that a number of syntactic and discourse structure differences appear in samples of unplanned discourse (that which lacks forethought and organizational preparation) as opposed to planned discourse (that which has been thought out and organized prior

to its expression). Among the differences she notes are that unplanned discourse more than planned relies on the immediate context, rather than on syntax, to express propositions; hence there is referent deletion and especially the deletion of pronouns, left dislocation, and avoidance of syntactic subordinators, e.g. *if*, *because*. She also finds greater reliance on deictic modifiers, avoidance of relative clauses, avoidance of the passive voice, reliance on the present tense, and repetition, both lexical and phonological. Keenan relates these differences to cognitive demands on participants which constrain discourse planning, but we would also note other demands. Formal scenes often demand planned discourse, and conversely, planned discourse may have some of the metaphorical connotations of formal scenes and may be used, in ways paralleling code-switching phenomena, to convey a shift to distancing or formality.

2.4 Participants

Speech varies with participants in numerous ways, as was indicated in figure 1. First, we can distinguish between speech as a marker of various characteristics of the individual speakers and speech as a marker of relationships between participants. Characteristics of individuals may be divided into those which appear to characterize the individual as an individual, and those which categorize the individual as a member of a significant social grouping. The individualistic characteristics, in turn, may be subdivided into relatively stable aspects of personal identity, as opposed to temporary states and attitudes.

These temporary features are not a primary focus for any of the chapters in this volume, but ways in which they can manifest themselves linguistically have been documented and discussed in some detail by Wiener & Mehrabian (1968) in their analyses of immediacy. Laver & Hutcheson (1972), Robinson (1972) and Scherer (1979) review paralinguistic markers of emotions and attitudes. Relatively stable markers of personal and of social identity appear to be the core of the other chapters in this volume. So let us turn our attention to social relationships.

Like characteristics of participants, social relationship can also be analysed at an individual (or interpersonal) level and at a social-institutional one. That is, social relationships may be described in terms of social or cultural roles or in terms of personally negotiated relations dependent on personal and interpersonal attitudes, or of course in terms of a mixture of the two. As Fielding & Fraser (1978) have pointed out, the work of Brown and his colleagues (Brown & Gilman 1960; Brown 1965) on address forms

nically illustrates the operation of both role and interpersonal relations. Thus a mutual Title + Last Name might mark the relationship between occupants of different and nonsolidary roles, and an asymmetrical pattern of address may mark, say, an employer–employee role relation of unequal power and status. But changes in forms of address probably reflect changes in personal relations. When the doorman becomes ‘Jim’ rather than ‘Smith’ this is because the manager feels he knows the doorman better, not because the role relation of employer–employee has changed. Fielding & Fraser’s (1978) paper is a survey of markers of interpersonal relations in speech. Thus we may turn our attention to the one remaining gap regarding markers of participants – the marking of social roles.

The taking on of roles and role relations is commonly confounded with settings and purposes. When Dr Smith talks like a doctor, and not like a father or golfer, it is likely to be when he is in a surgery or hospital and is inquiring about the health of a patient or discussing new drugs with a colleague. Such confounding may well be more true of occupational roles, such as doctor or lawyer, than of kinship roles or nonoccupational roles such as stranger or friend. It is, however, about occupational roles that we have most information concerning registers, and indeed some writers (e.g. Trudgill 1974b) confine the term register to occupational registers.

There is at least suggestive evidence that distinguishable speech registers are part of the role performance of doctors (Candlin, Leather & Burton 1974), school-teachers (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975), university lecturers (Fraser & Brown, n.d.), radio commentators (Crystal & Davy 1969), stockbrokers (Turner 1973), professional gamblers (Maurer 1950), pickpockets (Maurer 1955), smugglers (Braddy 1956), drug addicts (Agar 1973) and other members of the underworld (Halliday 1976). And one imagines that the lawyer, the advertiser, the clergyman, various kinds of scientists and many other occupational roles have their associated registers. Another role-related register which has been described in some detail is ‘motherese’, i.e. the speech of mothers, and perhaps all adults and older children, when talking to young children (Fraser & Roberts 1975; Snow & Ferguson 1977).

What is most distinctive, and best described, about many of these registers is the nature of the lexicon. While performing their respective roles, doctors, stockbrokers and gamblers use different words. Since the topics of their talk are quite different this is hardly surprising, and if all that was being claimed was that different activities require different

vocabularies, the term register might not be merited at all. But, of course, even as far as vocabulary is concerned there is more to it than that. For the professional groups are likely to be using technical terms for activities which would be discussed in different terms by the layman, and the underworld groups will use argots which the layman, and people in roles complementary to their own, are not expected to know at all.

Furthermore, registers are by no means confined to questions of individual word selection. They may involve complex, unusual semantic relations amongst perfectly commonplace words. As Turner (1973) notes, for the stockbroker animateness can appear where normally it would be least expected: tin can suffer, while oil soars but lead merely moves up hopefully. Also syntax may be distinctive. The speech of the university lecturer or seminar-giver is strikingly nominal for speech, though considerably less so than if the lecture is prepared for publication. In contrast, motherese involves the frequent use of short utterances with relatively simple syntax. Registers can also contain phonological markers. The radio commentator, for example, makes use of extra stress for loudness contrasts, and uses intonation both to connect segments into lengthy, apparently coherent sequences, and also to give clear indications of finality. And as Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) demonstrate with teacher talk, some of the most striking markers of a register may be revealed only by an analysis of chunks of discourse, such as question-answer sequences, particularly when it emerges that the questioner always knows the answers in advance.

It is conceivable that different registers are most obviously marked at different levels of linguistic analysis, but to some extent such impressions have probably been unduly strengthened by the linguistically selective nature of many of the studies. Thus, although we ourselves have done no phonological analyses of academic speech, it is most probable that the syntactic features of a nominal style are accompanied by the phonological markers that Labov attributed to high levels of 'attention to speech'. When investigators like Crystal & Davy (1969) have looked for markers at a variety of linguistic levels, they appear to have found them. The speech of the radio commentator, for example, is marked by the paralinguistic feature of absence of voiced hesitation, and phonologically by distinctive uses of stress and intonation. Given the repetitive nature of the events being described in, say, sports commentary, a certain amount of repetition of syntactic and semantic structures is likely, yet various devices are used to ensure that repetition is considerably less than might be the case. These include variations in tone unit length and variations in sentence

types, including the use of elliptical utterances. Despite content variations from one type of event to another, a basic vocabulary appears to be used, with few scholarly words and with nouns signifying objects and verbs signifying actions. Otherwise highly fluent and coherent units of discourse have brief asides inserted into them.

It is not hard to see how such linguistic features achieve desired effects by creating for listeners impressions of fluency, variety and interest, spontaneity, specificity and detail. Most of the claims made by Crystal & Davy about effects and attributions are very plausible, but like the other studies of role registers, there is no independent evidence about the social significance of the different linguistic varieties. We assume that, as a minimum, the different roles could be readily identified from tape-recordings alone (except that argot speakers might hope the precise role could not be too closely identified by outsiders), in which case many questions of stereotyping, attribution-making and expectations for interaction could be posed. But, to the best of our knowledge, even our minimal assumption remains to be demonstrated.

3. Concluding remarks

3.1. Relations between scene and participants

We do not wish to deny the importance of participant differences in producing sociolinguistic variations. But we trust that our reviews of the fragmented research efforts into markers of purpose, setting and scene reveal some of the dangers of ignoring the wider situation.⁷ Let us spell these out more clearly.

One problem is that certain features which are generally attributed to participants, such as social distance and social status or power, are in fact not always stable attributes of individuals, or of relationships between individuals, but are context-dependent assessments which may be shifted depending on the setting and activity type (Brown & Levinson 1978). Two American strangers meeting on the streets of New York City would consider each other to be socially distant; the same two if they were to meet in a hotel in Singapore would be likely to consider one another socially close, as compared with the even stranger strangers around them. Hierarchical social status is also contextually relative in certain respects, or at least the domains in which status expression are relevant

⁷ The ramifications of situation have, of course, been elaborated over the last two decades by Goffman (1964, 1974) and Hymes (1972, 1974, 1975).

vary contextually, so that a doctor consulting a lawyer on a legal question might well express deference in formulating his query, whereas the lawyer when consulting the doctor about his heart condition would be the one to express deference. Even where the nature of the participants is crucial, as in the determination of address form usage, other situational factors can shift the assessment of participant characteristics toward greater or lesser social distance, status, etc. So an understanding of the nature of the scene, as viewed by participants, is essential in order to detect and interpret many of the markers that appear in their speech.

A second difficulty for analysts wishing to focus on markers of participants is the ambiguity of many social markers. As we noted above, address forms and Labovian phonological variables like the New York /r/ are ambiguous between marking class or socioeconomic status and marking formality of scene. Which marker one has in a given instance of usage must be determined by an examination of situational features. Examples of unambiguous markers are not always participant-related, as we have seen. And, anyway, unambiguous markers appear to be few and far between. A particular marker is more likely to be ambiguous than unambiguous, and if ambiguous, the chances are that it will be ambiguous between marking a feature of participants vs. a feature of scene. Thus tone of voice may mark mood or setting; the level of formality (a linguistically cross-cutting set of markers) may mark social class or activity type, and so on. Why there should be this fundamental ambiguity between participant-based and setting- or purpose-based markers is an important question. It may simply be that, given a set of markers, we may as well make them do as much work as possible. It is more likely, however, that there are good reasons for the particular ambiguities which appear, that they serve participants' purposes in specific ways. We might speculate that the New York /r/ is ambiguous because New Yorkers want to increase their social status, and address forms are ambiguous because interactors want to be able to keep their relationship obscured in front of bystanders; or more generally, interactants may not want to be held accountable regarding a particular attribute of their identity, rather they want to avoid being immediately and unambiguously classifiable on the various social dimensions which may be relevant.

A final, related reason for analysts to attend to scene is that there are relationships among the various components of situation which are likely to be sources of confusion if not carefully analysed. Some are necessary relationships; thus activity types and social roles are inextricably linked: one cannot imagine an activity type without imagining an associated set

of roles to be activated. Others are contingent relationships; for example, it is empirically observable that activity types are correlated with social categories such as class, sex and age. So, the activity of playing darts is associated with the working class in England; register features of this activity will be more common among the working class. Similarly, the activities of mending cars, or of conducting executive business meetings, are associated (empirically, to date) with men; those of mothering, or of nursing, are associated with women. It may well be that certain features of 'women's speech' considered to be markers of sex are in fact markers of these sex-role-stereotyped activities, and the occasional male involved in a female-typed activity would probably show features of such 'women's speech' (cf. Smith, this volume: ch. 4, 2.3). This may be a reason for the cultural stereotype whereby male hairdressers in women's hair salons are assumed to be homosexual. In fact, we suspect that activity types (and even some superordinate purposes such as travelling in a foreign country, or trying to get a job) take priority over the stable features of participants in determining the linguistic characteristics of behaviour, so that a participant engaged in an activity not normally associated with the type of person he is would produce (or try to produce) linguistic behaviour associated with the activity type. Some support for this hypothesis comes not only from male hairdressers but also from other work on traditional male and female occupations that are practised by role-discrepant people (Aboud, Clément & Taylor 1974). If this is generally so, registers are inextricably linked with activity types, and the latter are contingently linked with stable personal characteristics such as age, sex and class.⁸

3.2. The situation, the individual and society

We might postulate, then, a model in which purposes are the crucial determiners of linguistic behaviour, a model in which we imagine settings as being associated with particular types of activity likely to occur in them, and activity types as determining the goals which actors will pursue in that setting and the roles actors will activate *vis-à-vis* one another. These in turn determine the mini-goals which participants try to

⁸ This provides an alternative basis for explaining the phenomenon observed by Bernstein (1971), the relationship between class membership and what we would describe as nominal style (what he labels 'elaborated code'). Rather than imagining that this relationship is based in different cognitive capacities of the working and middle classes, a more plausible explanation is that working-class people do not as a rule take part in the activity types which call for nominal style, e.g. lecturing, conducting business meetings, writing scholarly articles. Hence they do not have as much need to use the features of a nominal style.

achieve, including tasks (such as coming to an agreement, or sharing information, or reinforcing a friendship) and topics (politics, the history of the chain, the weather). Such a model would contrast with the one which appears to be more current among social psychologists, where the cross-links between the situational factors (as charted in our figure 1) are seen as determined by participants' characteristics, so that a person's social identity determines the kinds of social roles he will take up, the kinds of activities he will indulge in and the kinds of settings he will frequent. But wherever one chooses to enter the causal chain, it is clear that situational factors, both participant and nonparticipant ones, are interlinked in highly complex ways: class is related to power and status at an interpersonal as well as institutional level, and mood, personality, social relationship, purpose and setting are all related, so that if a speaker uses a formal address term, for example, we do not know *a priori* whether it is because he is in a bad mood, has a standoffish personality, stands in a distant relationship with his addressee, is engaged in an activity with a serious purpose, or is in a formal setting. Granted that in a given instance a number of the possibilities may well be ruled out, still in many cases the potential ambiguity as to what is being marked remains to challenge the analyst.

For many social psychologists, the next step would be clear: ambiguities should be resolved by experimental manipulation. If formality of scene is naturally confounded with a nonsolidary relationship between participants, let us create experimental situations where the two can be separated and observe the outcomes. But as convinced 'situationists' we are sceptical. The detailed dynamics of different situations are still poorly understood. As a result, for the naturalistic situation, the implications of findings from a stripped-down experiment are likely to remain problematic, particularly since an experiment is usually a distinctive type of situation in itself. (Something of its distinctive nature can be seen if the reader cares to apply the notions of setting, purpose and participants to a typical social psychological experiment.) If we study speech markers experimentally, we are as likely to learn about markers of experiments as about anything else. As social scientists studying language we should not devote all our energies to studying the register of one specific methodology.

Our preferred strategy for clarifying the operation of variables confounded within naturally occurring situations is the more ambitious one of expanding the scope of inquiry in two directions. On the one hand, we would do well to pursue lines of research that could get at the actor's-

eye-view of the situation. What cues does an actor use to interpret markers in speech and to disambiguate the possible interpretations in a given instance? A speaker-based analysis of this sort is illustrated in the Geoghegan-style decision models for specifying the situational factors which enter into a speaker's choice of address form (Geoghegan 1971; Ervin-Tripp 1972; Levinson 1977). Such factors and their weighting in relation to each other are culturally, indeed subculturally, variable but can be specified (by means of elicitation and observation) for any individual and can presumably be expanded from address forms to other social markers in speech. One particular point of interest is that Geoghegan's distinction between marked and unmarked usages (Geoghegan 1973) suggests a promising way of distinguishing between stable bases for choice of an address form and shifts in temporary states such as mood or attitude to the addressee. Such speaker-based production models, however, are not necessarily applicable to how addressees actually interpret the production of a particular form, and for decoder-based models we must look elsewhere.

The work of Gumperz and others on conversational inference provides one framework for tackling such questions (Gumperz 1976, 1977, 1978). Work in this paradigm takes a passage of tape-recorded conversation and asks what inferences – for participants – are generated by the passage and what linguistic and extralinguistic cues provide the bases for these inferences. From this perspective it is possible to establish, for example, that members of different subcultures have different interpretive rules for formulating inferences from particular features of English. Thus Indian English and London English differ in intonation patterns, and inferences (or attributions) about speaker's intent, including inferences about intended meaning, speaker's attitude toward addressee, speaker's attitude toward the setting and activity, will differ systematically and predictably for speakers of the two dialects of English (Gumperz 1978; Gumperz, Agrawal & Aulakh, n.d.). Such work suggests that pragmatic principles can be described for attributing a reading to a given instance of a social marker, principles which are stable enough to be valid over time for speakers of a particular dialect.

These models provide ways into an individual participant's view of a particular situation; they thereby constrain some of the messiness or ambiguity of the elements which theoretically can enter into a situation. Any element which does not appear in a member's decision- or attribution-processes can be ignored. A second frame of reference for constraining the flux of theoretically possible elements in a situation, and

ambiguities between elements, is one which takes a society-eye-view of the proceedings. Thus, for any society we are studying, we need an understanding of the kinds of social-structural considerations which help determine the features of a situation. It is simply not the case that all possible combinations of participants, roles, settings, activity types, topics and tasks do in fact occur, and if we understood why certain combinations do not occur, whereas others are unlikely or unusual, while yet others are common and expected, then we would have made a good start on eliminating some of the theoretically possible ambiguities in interpreting social markers in speech. If we start with the usual sociological categories – economic, political, legal, religious, military and educational institutions, as well as kinship, friendship, class and role networks – we may ask in what ways each of these institutions and networks constrains the types of situations which can occur and the definitions that members have of situations. As yet, no comprehensive taxonomy of situations has been constructed for any society, although ethnographers of speaking often have a partial stab at providing one for small-scale societies. Such a taxonomy would seem to be a necessary step in coming to grips with the social-structural constraints on situations. But, with regard to problems posed by multiple determinants and ambiguities in speech markers, some of the ways in which a social-structural perspective helps to resolve them are spelled out by Brown & Levinson (this volume: ch. 8).

In conclusion, two points emerge concerning the central position of situation in an analysis of speech markers. First, even if one's primary interest is in participant-linked markers, many of those are either linked in turn to situation, or, on closer examination, prove to be markers not of participant *per se* but of participant in a particular situation. Second, a situational analysis is particularly valuable strategically because, Janus-like, it encourages the social scientist to look both at the individuals who interact in the situation and at the structure of the society which encloses the interaction.

References

- About, F. E., Clément, R. & Taylor, D. M. 1974. Evaluational reactions to discrepancies between social class and language. *Sociometry*, 37, 239–50.
- Abrahams, R. D. 1975. Black talking on the streets. In R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (eds.) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge.
- Agar, M. 1973. *Ripping and Running: a formal ethnography of urban heroin addicts*. New York.

- Bernstein, B. 1971. *Class, Codes and Control*, vol. 1, London.
- Blom, J.-P. & Gumperz, J. J. 1972. Social meaning in linguistic structures: code-switching in Norway. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*. New York.
- Bolinger, D. 1975. *Aspects of Language*. 2nd ed. New York.
- Braddy, H. 1956. Smugglers' argot in the southwest. *American Speech*, 31, 96-101.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. 1978. Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena. In E. Goody (ed.) *Questions and Politeness: strategies in social interaction*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, 8. Cambridge.
- Brown, R. 1965. *Social Psychology*. Glencoe, Ill.
- Brown, R. & Gilman, A. 1960. The pronouns of power and solidarity. In T. Sebeok (ed.) *Style in Language*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Candlin, C. N., Leather, J. H. & Burton, C. J. 1974. *English Language Skills for Overseas Doctors and Medical Staff*. Progress Reports 1, 2, 3 and 4, Department of English, University of Lancaster.
- Chafe, W. L. 1972. Discourse structure and human knowledge. In R. O. Freedle & J. B. Carroll (eds.) *Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge*, Washington, DC.
- Comrie, B. 1975. Polite plurals and predicate agreement. *Language*, 51, 406-18.
1976. Linguistic politeness axes: speaker-addressee, speaker-referent, speaker-bystander. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 1.7, A3-B1. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Corbett, G. 1976. Syntactic destructors (problems with address, especially in Russian). *Pragmatics Microfiche* 2.3, A3. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Crystal, D. & Davy, D. 1969. *Investigating English Style*. London.
- Dixon, R. M. W. 1970. *The Dyirbal language of North Queensland*. Cambridge.
- Ervin-Tripp, S. 1972. On sociolinguistic rules: alternation and co-occurrence. In J. J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*. New York.
- Ferguson, C. A. 1959. Diglossia. *Word*, 15, 325-40.
1976. The structure and use of politeness formulas. *Language in Society*, 5, 137-51.
- Fielding, G. & Coope, E. 1976. Medium of communication, orientation to interaction, and conversational style. Paper presented at the Social Psychology Section Conference of British Psychological Society.
- Fielding, G. & Fraser, C. 1978. Language and interpersonal relations. In I. Markova (ed.) *Language and Social Context*. London.
- Fillmore, C. J. 1975. Santa Cruz Lectures on deixis. *Indiana Linguistics Club Papers*, Bloomington, Ind.
- Fischer, J. L. 1958. Social influences in the choice of a linguistic variant. *Word*, 14, 47-56.
- Fishman, J. A. 1972. The sociology of language. In P. P. Giglioli (ed.) *Language and Social Context*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
1974. The sociology of language: an interdisciplinary social science approach to language in society. In T. Sebeok (ed.) *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. xii. The Hague.
- Fraser, C. 1978. Communication in interaction. In H. Tajfel and C. Fraser (eds.) *Introducing Social Psychology*. Harmondsworth, Middx.

- Fraser, C. & Brown, P. n.d. Nominal and verbal language styles. MS, Social and Political Sciences Committee, University of Cambridge.
- Fraser, C. & Roberts, N. 1975. Mothers' speech to children of four different ages. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 4, 9-16.
- Geertz, C. 1960. *The religion of Java*. New York.
- Geoghegan, W. 1971. Information processing systems in culture. In P. Kay (ed.) *Explorations in Mathematical Anthropology*. Cambridge, Mass.
1973. A theory of marking rules. In K. Wexler & A. K. Romney (eds.) *Cognitive Organization and Psychological Processes*. Washington, DC.
- Giles, H. & Powesland, P. 1975. *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*. London.
- Goffman, E. 1964. The neglected situation. *American Anthropologist*, 66, no. 6, 133-6.
1974. *Frame Analysis*. New York.
- Goldberg, J. 1976. The syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics of some conventionalised parenthetical clauses in English: *you know* and *I mean*. Diploma dissertation, Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Gumperz, J. J. 1970. Verbal strategies in multilingual communication. In *Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics*, 21st Annual Round Table, no. 23. Georgetown University, Washington, DC.
1975. Code-switching in conversation. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 1.4, A2. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
1976. Language, communication and public negotiation. In P. R. Sanday (ed.) *Anthropology and the Public Interest: fieldwork and theory*. New York.
1977. Sociocultural knowledge in conversational inference. In *Georgetown University 28th Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*. Washington, DC.
1978. The conversational analysis of interethnic communication. In E. L. Ross (ed.) *Interethnic Communication*. Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society. Atlanta, Georgia.
- Gumperz, J. J., Agrawal, A. & Aulakh, G. n.d. Prosody, paralinguistics, and contextualization in Indian English. MS (1977), Language Behavior Research Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley.
- Haas, M. R. 1964. Men's and women's speech in Koasati. In D. Hymes (ed.) *Language in Culture and Society*. New York.
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1976. Anti-languages. *American Anthropologist*, 78, 570-84.
- Halliday, M. A. K., McIntosh, A. & Stevens, P. 1964. *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. London.
- Hasan, R. 1973. Code register, and social dialect. In B. Bernstein (ed.) *Class, Codes and Control*, vol. II. London.
- Herman, V. 1976. Code switching in Tamil. Diploma dissertation, Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Hymes, D. 1972. Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*. New York.
1974. *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*. Philadelphia.
1975. Ways of speaking. In R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (eds.) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge.
- Irvine, J. 1978. Formality and informality in speech events. Texas Working Papers in Sociolinguistics, 52. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas.

- Jefferson, G. 1972. Side sequences. In D. Sudnow (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York.
- Keenan, E. O. 1978. Unplanned and planned discourse. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 3.1, A3-D2. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Keenan, E. O. & Schieffelin, B. B. 1976. Topic as a discourse notion: a study of topic in the conversations of children and adults. In C. Li (ed.) *Subject and Topic*. New York.
- Kochman, T. 1972. *Rappin' and Stylin' Out: communication in Black urban America*. Urbana, Ill.
- Labov, W. 1966. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC.
- 1972a. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia.
- 1972b. Contraction, deletion, and inherent variability of the English copula. In *Language in the Inner City: studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia.
- 1972c. Rules for ritual insults. In D. Sudnow (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York.
- Lambert, W. E. et al. 1960. Evaluation reactions to spoken languages. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 60, 44-51.
- Laver, J. & Hutchesson, S. (eds.) 1972. *Communication in Face-to-Face Interaction*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
- Levinson, S. C. 1972. The organisation of conversation: talk-exchange as a species of transaction. Field statement MS, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.
1977. Social deixis in a Tamil village. PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- 1978a. Universals in sociolinguistics. Working Papers in Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- 1978b. Activity types and language. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 3.3, D1. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Linde, C. In press. The organisation of discourse. In T. Shopen, A. Zwicky & P. Griffin (eds.) *The English Language: English in its social and historical context*.
- Linde, C. & Goguen, J. A. In press. Structure of planning discourse. *Journal of Social and Biological Structures*.
- Linde, C. & Labov, W. 1975. Spatial networks as a site for the study of language and thought. *Language*, 51, 924-39.
- Maurer, D. W. 1950. The argot of the dice gambler. *Annals of the American Dialect Society*, 269.
1955. Whiz mob: a correlation of the technical argot of pickpockets with their behaviour patterns. *Publications of the American Dialect Society*, 24.
- Miller, G. A., Galanter, E. A. & Pribram, K. H. 1960. *Plans and the Structure of Behaviour*. New York.
- Mitchell, T. F. 1957. The language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica: a situational statement. *Hesperis*, 26, 31-71.
- Mitchell-Kernan, C. 1971. *Language Behaviour in a Black Urban Community*. Monographs of the Language Behavior Research Laboratory, Berkeley, California.
- Moscovici, S. 1967. Communication processes and the properties of language. In L. Berkowitz (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. III. New York.

- Moscovici, S. & Plon, M. 1966. Les situations colloques: observations théoriques et expérimentales. *Bulletin de psychologie*, 19, 702-22.
- Pike, K. L. 1964. Towards a theory of the structure of human behavior. In D. Hymes (ed.) *Language in Culture and Society*. New York.
- Robinson, W. P. 1972. *Language and Social Behaviour*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
- Rubin, J. 1962. Bilingualism in Paraguay. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 4, no. 1, 52-8.
- Sacks, H. 1967. Lecture notes. Dittoed MSS, University of California, Irvine.
1973. Lecture notes. Summer Institute of Linguistics, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. & Jefferson, G. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking in conversation. *Language*, 50, 696-735.
- Sankoff, G. 1972. Language use in multilingual societies: some alternative approaches. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (eds.) *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
- Schegloff, E. 1972. Sequencing in conversational openings. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*. New York.
1976. On some questions and ambiguities in conversation. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 1.9. Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge.
- Schegloff, E. & Sacks, H. 1973. Opening up closings. *Semiotica*, 8, 289-327.
- Scherer, K. R. 1979. Non-linguistic vocal indicators of emotion and psychopathology. In C. E. Izard (ed.) *Emotions in Personality and Psychopathology*. New York.
- Sinclair, J. M. & Coulthard, R. M. 1975. *Towards an Analysis of Discourse*. London.
- Shuy, R., Wolfram, W. & Riley, W. K. 1967. *A Study of Social Dialects in Detroit*. Final Report, Project 6-1347. Washington, DC.
- Snow, C. E. and Ferguson, C. A. (eds.) 1977. *Talking to Children: language input and acquisition*. Cambridge.
- Trudgill, P. 1974a. *The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich*. Cambridge.
- 1974b. *Sociolinguistics: an introduction*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
- Turner, G. W. 1973. *Stylistics*. Harmondsworth, Middx.
- Turner, R. 1972. Some formal properties of therapy talk. In D. Sudnow (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York.
- Wiener, M. & Mehrabian, A. 1968. *Language within Language: immediacy, a channel in verbal communication*. New York.