# *GRAMMAR , LEXIS AND CONTEXT*

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## ABSTRACT : GRAMMAR , LEXIS AND CONTEXT

Language teaching has been strongly influenced over recent years by talk of notions and functions , most notably through Wilkins' (1976) work on Notional Syllabuses . Yet the notional/functional syllabus has been criticized for failing to capture anything more than a superficial correspondence between form and meaning .

In this thesis I argue for a framework in which a deeper congruence between form and meaning is developed . I identify regularities in the lexico-syntactic structure of English which express recognizable notional relationships , which in turn reflect deeper conceptualizations of relations between events and participants . These conceptualizations are represented on a semantic continuum of 'contextual distance' . By reference to this continuum , I argue that we can identify a clear congruence between increasing conceptual complexity and increasing lexico-syntactic complexity . This account gives considerable prominence to the role of lexis , and to the interdependence between grammar , lexis and context in the signalling of meaning , something which has not always been adequately considered within linguistics or within applied linguistics .

I then consider a possible application of these ideas to pedagogy . In many 'product' approaches to syllabus design and methodology , learners work with language forms whose meanings are to an extent already fixed , with grammar subsuming lexis and with cotext and context already clearly related by the materials designer . In such approaches the interdependence between grammar , lexis and context is sometimes lost sight of , and I argue for a revised approach in which this interdependence is made central . Thus learners are encouraged to fashion their own meanings by working with lexical items , and by learning to grammaticize these lexical items by reference to context . By separating out grammar and lexis in this way , learners are given direct access to the deeper congruence between form and meaning - between grammar , lexis and context .

The format of the thesis is as follows . I begin with a selective review of work in linguistics (chapter one) and applied linguistics (chapter two) , arguing that the importance of the grammar/lexis relationship has not (by and large) been much investigated . In chapter three I introduce the continuum of contextual distance , outlining a general hypothesis in which relationships between grammar , lexis and context are linked to a deeper understanding of the congruence between form and meaning . I go on to develop the detail of this hypothesis , looking both at ideational meanings (chapter four) and interpersonal meanings (chapter five) . Stepping back from these detailed arguments , I conclude by presenting an approach to classroom methodology (chapter six) and to syllabus design (chapter seven) based on the concept of learner grammaticization .

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# - CHAPTER ONE -

## *GRAMMAR AND LEXIS IN LINGUISTICS*

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to look at a variety of approaches taken to the description of language, with the aim of establishing to what extent certain linguists have considered relationships between lexis and grammar.
It will be suggested that grammar and lexis have generally been regarded as quite distinct entities, and that consequently certain important generalizations about the 'meaning potential' of lexis with regard to grammar, and of grammar with regard to lexis , have not been fully appreciated.

### 1. CHOMSKY : TG & THE ROLE OF THE LEXICON

#### 1.1 THE STANDARD THEORY

In Chomsky's original conception of transformational grammar ( 1957) the relationship between grammar, lexis and meaning is expressed through his term 'linguistic competence'. This in itself consists of a number of separate competences - grammatical, phonological and semantic . Chomsky kept these competences separate because well-formedness within one kind of competence does not of itself entail well-formedness in another . So , for example , a sentence may be grammatically well formed , but semantically deviant , as with the sentence *my wife is unmarried* . As Chomsky put it:

> Grammar is best formulated as a self-contained study independent of semantics. In particular, the notion of grammaticalness cannot be identified with meaningfulness...
>
> ( 1957:106)

However , while he kept his grammatical , semantic and phonological categories distinct from each other , lexis was not considered by Chomsky to constitute a separate competence . Rather , his 'lexicon' was made available to the grammatical, phonological and semantic components in order, as it were, to give them final expression, so that words become marked as to their grammatical, phonological and semantic properties . The syntactic component, for example, generates a set of rules which define well-formed sentence structure, and these

then have access to the lexicon so that words can be fitted into grammatical patterns . It is important to note the directionality of Chomsky's model: although each component of linguistic competence has access to the lexicon, the lexicon does not have access to the grammar. In other words, underlying Chomsky's classification is the belief that lexis is subsidiary to grammar. It does not in itself define or significantly contribute to any kind of competence. On the contrary it is, in effect, merely a means of illustrating syntactic structure.

According to the Standard Theory, structures generated from the syntactic component are sent to the semantic component for a semantic representation, and to the morphophonemic component for a phonological representation. Thus the syntactic component comprises the core of the system . The lexicon is not involved at all in these transformations, because in itself it consists of nothing more than a list of separate and unconnected lexical items. With such little importance attached to the lexicon, it is not surprising that with the Standard Theory (1957) , a great deal of work was left to be done by the syntactic component through transformations : language forms were generated entirely from the syntactic component , while the purpose of the lexicon was essentially to give substance to the final structure for purposes of exemplification .

The primacy given to grammar meant that other components were interpretative of structures formulated entirely by the syntactic component. Chomsky was aware that this sharp delimitation of competences might create difficulties:

> The syntactic and semantic structure of natural languages evidently offers many mysteries, both of fact and of principle, and any attempt to delimit the boundaries of these domains must certainly be quite tentative. (1965:163)

However, such caution was not clearly represented in the framework of the standard theory, although it has been argued (eg.Brown 1982:150) that if equal attention were given over to the semantic component and to the lexicon, it would quickly have become apparent that many descriptive tasks could have been handled

by any of the three, or have been divided up between them. Realizations such as this soon led to the modification of the Standard Theory during the 1960's. As well as giving increasing prominence to the semantic component, these years also witnessed a growing interest in the role of the lexicon, thereby raising fundamental questions concerning the relationship between grammar and lexis.

## 1.2 THE REVISED THEORY

### 1.2.1 Enriching the lexicon: derivational and inflectional morphology

With the development of the revised theory (1965) the lexicon was gradually accorded greater prominence , both with respect to derivational morphology and with respect to inflectional morphology .

Firstly , **derivational morphology** , previously considered a matter for the syntactic component , was handed over to the lexicon , so that existing word stock , together with rules for the analysis of existing words and the formation of new words , were located in the same place . This shift , from the syntactic component to the lexicon , took place in order to account for two distinct processes. The first of these was conversion, which involved the simple transfer of an item from one lexical class to another, such as the conversion from 'they manned the ship' to 'they shipped the man'. The second process was compounding, where two potentially free lexical forms may be juxtaposed to form a derived compound form - 'wind' and 'mill' to form 'windmill', 'back' and 'chat' to form 'backchat', and so on.

It is important to underline the reason why this transfer took place . In short , it became increasingly apparent that the applicability of derivation is not systematically accessible to the same kind of principled rule-making as syntax was held to be . So the lexicon became associated with procedures for conversion and compounding whose relevance was restricted to particular lexical items , leaving the syntactic component free to deal with general 'rules' which could form the basis for the systematic generation of transformations , unhindered by lexical irregularities . Thus the lexicon became , in part , a list

of lexical items marked for their particular patterns of derivation , each pattern applying only to a certain group of words. The derivation 'rule', for example, through which the noun 'length' can be derived from the adjective 'long' applies to 'long' but not to other adjectives . A thoroughgoing derivational approach referring indiscriminately to all lexical items of a particular class would, ofcourse, have led to a situation where marked forms would be generated on a large scale . This realisation led to the acceptance of a 'mixed lexicon', with many items entered as single, unique units.

Although in one sense a solution , this process created a new set of problems, because derivational morphology is not the only area with 'rules' of limited applicability . If the lexicon was to concern itself with derivational irregularities , what of **inflectional morphology ?** This is concerned in part with aspects of word structure variations which have a direct bearing on grammatical categories such as **number** and **gender** : inflectional morphology, that is, accounts for the internal structure of words, and as such it makes no categorical distinction between aspects of grammar and considerations of lexis. How, then, should TG incorporate features of inflectional morphology ? - what should be the responsibility of the syntactic component, and where should the line be drawn between this and the lexicon ? .

Number had previously been seen as a grammatical category , while gender was lexical (because gender is invariant - an arbitrary feature of individual lexical items) . Number and gender, though, function in a similar way. Adjectives derive their gender from the noun they modify, just as determiners must agree with the noun with which they associate in number. Similarly, just as with gender , some nouns are inherently plural (people, cattle) while others are inherently singular/'mass' (wine/water). The only way to account for these relatively arbitrary elements was to specify number as well as gender in the lexicon, using a '+/- count' notation. In this way, number also entered the lexicon.
I have already noted that derivational morphology entered the lexicon on account of its immunity to rule-making, and number was placed in the lexicon for very

similar reasons: there is no systematic basis for the distinction between nouns which are inherently plural and nouns which take the -s suffix. The -s suffix - previously considered to be a matter for the grammar as part of the syntactic component - now entered the lexicon , thereby maintaining the principle that **grammar is systematizable while lexis is not** ; grammar exemplifies rules, lexis is characterized by a web of restrictions . In this respect lexis got defined more and more in terms of how it differed from grammar , even though this involved 'glossing over' the fact that semantic notions such as number in fact made reference both to lexical and grammatical elements. However , not all modifications to TG involved this kind of grammar/lexis polarization . In the period following the development of the Standard Theory (Chomsky:1965) , the lexicon also took on a more influential role in direct relation to the syntactic and the semantic component , through the application of case grammar .

### 1.2.2 **Enriching the lexicon : case grammar**

The development of case grammar (cf. Fillmore 1968) was an early attempt to accommodate additional dimensions of meaning within TG , by seeking to explain deep structure through reference to the underlying similarity between such syntactically contrasting sentences as 'John killed Bill' and 'Bill was killed by John'. Using case grammar terminology, John is said to be the agent or direct initiator of the action in both cases, and Bill the patient. This gave rise to the notion that all the main verbs in a language can be defined semantically in terms of 'frame features' or 'case frames'. The verb 'open', for example, can occur in a variety of case frames:

1. The door opened (_____ objective)
2. John opened the door (_____ object + agent)
3. The wind opened the door (_____ object + instrument)
4. John opened the door with a chisel (_____ object + instrument + agent)

All this can be expressed more economically by using bracketing to specify the optional elements, so that 'open' can be specified as:

Open [- O (I) (A) ] (Fillmore 1968:27)

In this way it proved possible to construct a common logical representation which

explicitly demonstrates how two structures (such as active/passive) are semantically related one to the other . This had substantial repercussions for TG, allowing for previously convoluted transformations to be simplified on the basis of a lexical entry supplemented by syntactic specification through case frames.

In the standard theory , the burden of accounting for systematic relationships between sentences had fallen largely on the transformational component . The verb GIVE , for example , was said to occur in two environments :

NP1 (GIVE) NP2 to NP3 eg. *Bill gave the glass to Jane*

NP1 (GIVE) NP3 NP2 eg. *Bill gave Mary the book*

The second structure here would be derived from the first through a transformation called 'dative movement' , involving preposition deletion and the reordering of the verb arguments . The difficulty was that this kind of rule was not universally applicable : it applies to verbs such as GIVE , OFFER and SEND , but not to BROADCAST or to TRANSMIT , neither of which takes the dative movement. The standard theory solution was to state the transformation in general terms in the syntactic component , and to mark exceptions to the rule in the lexicon . In this way verbs like TRANSMIT would be entered lexically together with the feature [-dative] . Rather as with number and gender , then , the lexicon was used as the depository of exceptions to 'grammatical rule' .

But syntactic transformations of this kind are not the only way of treating relationships of this kind , and in wake of Fillmore's work the lexicon assumed much greater responsibility . The various possible environments for each verb were now listed in the lexicon , so that the entry for GIVE would be as follows :

GIVE V , ---- NP pp (to NP)

NP1 (AGENT) ---- NP2 (PATIENT) to NP3 (GOAL)
NP1 (AGENT) ---- NP3 (GOAL) NP2 (PATIENT)

This kind of entry shows both the relevant structures , together with a

functional specification for each , allowing the formulation of a basic logical representation which clearly shows how the two structures paraphrase each other.

The important point here is that the semantic and syntactic relations which were handled previously through the syntactic component were now allocated quite satisfactorily to the lexicon , including all those operations which involve the rearrangement of the arguments of a lexical item within basic structures . So , whereas the earliest transformational models (cf.Chomsky 1957) involved a syntactic component which far outweighed the lexicon in terms of importance , later models have involved a substantial re-allocation of responsibilities (cf. Cook 1972;Brown 1986) .

Implicit within this shift in the 'balance of power' between the syntactic component and the lexicon was a formalized recognition of the interdependence between grammar and lexis . Certain lexical items (and particularly verbs) are themselves marked for the various possible arguments with which they can co-occur in syntactic structure , and the acceptability or otherwise of specific grammatical operations (such as dative movement , discussed above) is clearly constrained at the lexical level .

### 1.2.3 Case Grammar : some further implications and applications

The adoption of case grammar , then , led to the specification within the lexicon of individual verbs in direct relation to the types of grammatical modification and transformation which they would allow . But this did not mean that the lexical realization of each related argument was similarly specified . For example , the verb GIVE is specified in the lexicon together with its permissible arguments (AGENT , PATIENT , GOAL) , but there are some lexical items which cannot (in the vast majority of cases) occur as AGENT or as PATIENT . We can say that 'cat', 'dog', 'man' and 'bone' all belong to the same nominal category, so that the grammar does not in itself differentiate between them . Clearly , though , mutual substitution between these lexical items is not always possible without leading to cases of semantic incongruity - 5. is fine, but 6. is dubious:

5. The man gave the dog a bone
6. The bone gave the dog a man

So only certain nouns can occur, depending on the verb selected. There is clearly a need to establish sub-categories of nouns and verbs , but to avoid the extreme of listing all possible subjects for 'give', it was decided to say simply that 'give' is a verb which requires a noun phrase subject, but to leave the selection of the actual noun to be sorted out through the semantic component (Brown 1986:103-5) .

Given that it was one of the purposes of TG models to account for such matters as derivation and transformation systematically and economically , this kind of 'delegation' to the semantic component made a lot of sense . Nevertheless , the issue of the acceptability or unacceptability of specific combinations of lexical items is a crucial one , for it raises further questions concerning the relationship between grammar and lexis . For example , case grammar tells us that with a lexical item such as OPEN , we have the option of selecting from agent and instrument, and we must have an objective. Given the lexical items 'John','open' and 'door', for example , it is clear that they are very likely to associate in the following way :

7. John - open - door
(Agent) - (Process) -(Objective)

With these particular lexical items, then, we do not really need grammar to tell us which word plays what semantic role , so that in this example, the relationship between lexical item and semantic role can be inferred largely with reference to lexis . If the lexical choice had been different - if , for example, we had chosen the lexical association in 8 , then we would have to call on grammar to sort out the role distribution for us , through word order :

8. John - strike - Bill

The connection between case grammar and the grammar/lexis relationship is something which I will refer to in later sections of this chapter , and again in chapters six and seven . For this reason it is worth clarifying at this point how

this connection works out . According to Widdowson (1990) , the lexical association in 8 serves to identify those component parts of context - a process and two related participants - whose precise relationship one to another is ambiguous : is John acting as agent , or as patient ? We need to call on grammatical devices such as word order to clarify the distribution of role relationships . In effect , what Widdowson is suggesting is that the balance of power between grammar and lexis as represented in TG can be reversed : first we lay down the bare lexical items in ungrammaticized association , and then we supplement them by the addition of grammatical elements which give the word a more precise conceptual orientation . Grammatical inflection , for example , enables us to give semantic focus to bare lexical associations through giving them a location in time through tense and aspect :

9. farmer - kill - duckling

10. farmer **is** kill**ing** duckling

Markings for tense and aspect , says Widdowson , are "communicative devices for getting features of context into focus" and hence :

> The greater the contribution of context in the sense of shared knowledge and experience , the less need there is for grammar to augment the association of words . The less effective the words are in identifying relevant features of context in that sense , the more dependent they become on grammatical modification of one sort or another .
>
> (1990:86)

Widdowson thus sketches a basic relationship between grammar and lexis whereby :

> it is the function of grammar to reduce the range of meaning signalled by words so as to make them more effective in the identification of features of context ...
>
> (1990:92)

In the application and development of case grammar to transformational grammars , this kind of perspective was not entirely absent . While the question of specific lexical associations in relation to each verb was left to the semantic component, case grammar directly addressed the notion that individual verbs themselves carry contextual information (information about agents , patients and other features of ideational context) , and that these arguments may be arranged in a variety of ways in relation to basic structure .

## 2. J.R.FIRTH

### 2.1 Interrelations and the context of situation

Firth's thinking is radically different from that of Chomsky. Wheras Chomsky's competence model consisted of discrete components, Firth emphasized the importance of establishing and investigating the relationships between them. For Firth, the central concept of semantics is what he termed the **context of situation**, made up of complex interactions between lexis, grammar and phonology. As Firth put it:

> Even when the phonetician, grammarian and lexicographer have finished, there remains the bigger integration, making use of all their work in semantic study, and it is for this situational and experiential study that I would reserve the term 'semantics'. (1951:193)

These various components, then, should be regarded as having **interrelations**, as well as **interior relations** - the latter being Firth's term for relationships contracted between terms within a single category . But we cannot properly talk of meaning, according to Firth , without taking into account both interior relations and interrelations. When we talk of meaning, then, we use:

> ...the whole complex of functions which a linguistic form may have. The principal components of this whole meaning are phonetic function,.....lexical, morphological and syntactical (to be the province of a reformed system of grammar), and the function of a complete locution in the context of situation, or typical context of situation. (1968:174)

In other words, meaning consists of a complex of relations between language and context, and each component of the language needs to be related to all other components .

### 2.2 Firth's categorization : a brief overview

It needs to be pointed out at the outset that Firth's categories are not easy to come to terms with, and it is sometimes difficult to see precisely how one is distinguished from another. For example, Firth refers to **structure** as a syntagmatic relationship between elements which can be either phonological or

grammatical. Structure, he says ,is " an interrelationship of elements within the text or part of the text" (1968:103). On other occasions Firth refers to such syntactic interrelations as **colligation.** When he does imply a distinction between structure and colligation, it seems to be that structure can be broken down into smaller, composite grammatical elements:

> The terms structure and elements of structure are not used to refer to a whole language or even to what may be called portions of a language, but exclusively to categories abstracted from common word or textual form. (1968:186)

Colligation, on the other hand, is concerned with categories of structure which have a 'mutually expectant order', so that colligation is used exclusively to deal with relations contracted, syntagmatically, between elements of the grammar in text, or in portions of a text . Although sometimes used in a way very similar to this, it is only 'structure' which is used to refer to grammatical elements abstracted from their place within text.

Then there is a further distinction, one which is thankfully rather more transparent, between structure and **system.** System is strictly a paradigmatic concept:

> A system such as a system of vowels or a system of grammatical forms is in the nature of a paradigm. (1968:103)

Thus the paradigm of the verbal inflections - ing/ed - would in isolation fall within the scope of system.

It is not entirely clear whether Firth had a paradigmatic lexical category. Perhaps the closest he came to this was in his use of the term **exponent,** which directs us to the phonological and orthographic 'shape' of a word or part of a word (1968:183).

An example might serve to make these distinctions clearer . Underlying Firth's categories is a sense in which they feed into each other, as we move from language in isolation towards language in syntagmatic chains of mutual

expectancy. We could start with the exponent 'keep', which can be used to demonstrate the tabulated verbal paradigm 'keep-keeps-keeping-kept'. Here, perhaps, we have - at an abstracted level - an association between exponent/lexis (keep) and system/grammar (the paradigm of inflection which can be applied to it). But Firth considered such a level of analysis to be of little value : what matters is how these grammatical and lexical isolates function at the syntagmatic level, beginning with clause or sentence level, for "the verbal characteristics of the sentence are rarely in parallel with what you find in tabulated conjugations in the grammar books" (1968:103) . Firth then gives us the following example (ibid.) :

11. He kept popping in and out of my office all the afternoon

At the level of structure, we could abstract 'popping' in relation to the auxiliary of aspect 'kept': the relationship between the two, focussed on in isolation from the rest of the sentence, is a matter of structure . Then there is another verbal characteristic of the sentence which is of interest, associated with the adverbial phrase 'all the afternoon':

> One could not very well say' he kept popping in and out of my office at ten o'clock' or' at once'(1968:103)

To the extent that such adverbial restrictions need to be read in conjunction both with 'kept' and with 'popping', we begin to see how the complexities of this sentence are a product of interrelations between grammatical elements, between elements of structure. However, as we focus more and more on the sentence as a unit, and on the way in which 'mutual expectancies' are set up between its component parts, we begin to see how the construction as a whole operates as a colligation . As Firth put it , 11 "is grammatically close-knit as a verbal piece . The elements of structure are ... interdependent" (1968:103/4) .

So far I have dealt principally with Firth's grammatical categories. For lexis, Firth used the term **collocation** with particular regularity . This, a syntagmatic

category, refers us to the habitual company that words keep, one to another, within text. There is a clear parallel here between collocation (lexical/syntagmatic) and colligation (grammatical/syntagmatic), and it is one which allows us to key in to Firth's treatment of grammar and lexis. In the above sentence, for example , could we not also make a collocational analysis, focussing on the relationship between 'keep' and 'pop' and 'all the afternoon'? Whatever the answer to this query, it begs the question of the precise relationship between colligation and collocation, and this requires that we first establish more clearly precisely how Firth defined each of these categories . Since he attached so much importance to interrelations between categories, we would expect Firth to have something to say about the grammar/lexis relationship in terms of a relationship between collocation and colligation.

2.3 **Collocation and colligation : a relationship between grammar & lexis?**

Firth's concept of collocation , then , is concerned with habitual lexical associations :

> (Collocation) is the study of key-words, pivotal words, leading words, by presenting them in the company they usually keep -that is to say, an element of their meaning is indicated when their habitual word accompaniments are shown.(1968:106/7)

Thus the distribution in collocation of a word such as 'get' can be analysed once an exhaustive collection of collocations has been made, to indicate that 'get' assumes different meanings in different collocational environments - 'this music just gets me/get me one too/ that won't get you anywhere' (1968:20/21).

It might have been possible to extend this notion of collocation to include more varied examples, to cover more extensively what is now referred to as formulaic language (cf. , for example , Bolinger 1976/Pawley and Syder 1983) , and this could have drawn on the relationship between certain frequently collocated lexical items and the kind of contexts of situation in which they occur . At one point Firth gives a detailed list of the different meanings of 'get' with

different collocations to illustrate each one, saying that each constitutes a "descriptive indication of the relationship of the collocations to generalized contexts of situation" (1968:20) . Thus some of his examples are highly suggestive of interpersonal contexts ('that won't get you anywhere') while others - the majority - are not ('silly ass/British Way of Life') . Firth did not, however, pursue the question of how different collocations may refer more or less clearly to particular contexts of situation, for his interest was primarily in the principles of collocation per se.

If Firth was not entirely clear about the relationship between collocations and contexts, he was less clear on the relationship between words in collocation and grammar in colligation . Colligation deals with the mutual expectancy between elements of structure in syntagmatic association, within text or within sentences. I have already mentioned one quite complex example (9) , but colligation does not always presuppose such close-knit complexities. On a much simpler level, the 3rd person singular masculine pronoun 'he' may be in colligation with a singular 3rd person verb such as 'smokes', as in 'he-smokes'.Colligation, however, makes no reference to words as lexical items but only as representations of grammatical classes. So, for example, 'I watched him' may be a collocation in so far as the 'key' word, watch , habitually associates with an agent and patient, but as a colligation it simply relates pronouns to a past tense verb form . As Firth put it:

> The statement of meaning at the grammatical level is in terms of word and sentence classes ... and of the interrelation of those categories in *colligations* . Grammatical relations should not be regarded as relations between words as such - between *watched* and *him* in 'I watched him' - but between a personal pronoun , the past tense of a transitive verb ....

In order to establish a relationship between grammar and lexis, then, Firth would have needed to formulate a relationship between collocation and colligation . In principle, ofcourse, he clearly implies that such a relationship exists, and that it should be properly accounted for . In reality, though, there is very little in

Firth's writing to support this notion in any detail. What, for example, should we make of collocations which involve grammatical elements, elements of structure, whose word order and inflection is completely fixed ? . If we take an expression such as 'how are you?', it is clear that along with the mutual dependency of the constituent lexical items comes a drainage of clear referential meaning. 'How are you?', in other words, operates as a single unit in its own right : its meaning can only be established through reference to the expression as a whole. It thus serves very well as an example of the Firthian notion that word meaning is dependent on word company . However , there are difficulties which Firth's categorisation does not help to solve. Firstly, where is the key word here? Given that the expression is in effect a single meaning unit, it is questionable whether the idea of a key word -one word which we can single out as in a sense dominant or 'determining' - is at all applicable. Secondly , this expression is grammatically unique : 'How are you?' completely loses its illocutionary force as a greeting as soon as the verb is inflected in any way (*How were you?). This crucial distinction is lost when the expression is presented as a colligation, where the change in structure gives us no clue as to the radical shift in meaning. Firth, as we have said, talks of colligations as 'mutually expectant orders' (1968:186). Clearly this expression does indeed illustrate a mutually expectant order, but in lexical rather than in grammatical terms . It is difficult, then, to maintain that it is the grammar which generates this lexical sequence. We cannot capture the formulaic nature of expressions such as this by reference to colligation or to structure - it is clearly a form of collocation but it cannot , in Firth's terms, be usefully analysed as a colligation .

Firth , I have said , emphasized the need to recognize that each of his categories - including colligation and collocation - bear interrelations one to another . To establish a relationship between grammar and lexis , it would be necessary to establish a relationship between colligation and collocation . I

have suggested above that some formulaic expressions are mutually expectant not between abstracted grammatical classes but between specific lexical items , so that they are collocations but not (in any useful sense of the term) colligations .

But there are other cases where both colligation and collocation are simultaneously in evidence :

12. Fred kicked the bucket

In 12 there is a clear element of collocation . Although there is - as with 'how are you?' - no obviously self-selecting 'key word' , the collocation of 'kick' with 'bucket' is exceptional in that it gives a quite different meaning from , say , the collocation of 'kick' with almost every other inanimate noun . Thus the idiomatic reading of 'kick the bucket' (meaning 'die') is a product of the tight lexical interdependency between these particular lexical items . But at the same time 12 is extremely tight knit as a colligation : its word order , for example , is fixed so that we cannot say 'the bucket was kicked by Fred' and retain the idiomatic meaning . Unlike 'how are you?' , 12 cannot be regarded exclusively in collocational terms because , like regular colligations of the SVO pattern , it can be inflected : *Fred has kicked/is kicking/kicks the bucket* . In short , 12 has features both of collocation and colligation .

But although Firth allows for interrelations between the grammatical and lexical components of his framework , he has little to say by way of specific illustration. Yet his general approach clearly invites further investigation . In chapters 3-5 , I will look further into the question of the co-occurrence of inflectional restrictions with restrictions on lexical content exemplified by example 12 .

# 3. HALLIDAY

## 3.1 Grammar & lexis in the Hallidayan framework : overview

Halliday follows, at least superficially, in the tradition of Firth, adapting some of Firth's categories and developing them into an overall framework (1964) . Grammar and lexis are seen by Halliday, as by Firth, as falling into separate categories. The first of these refers to paradigmatic relations , for which Halliday used the term **choice** relationships . Broadly speaking there are two types of choice category . One is grammatical, and is known as **system.** Grammatical systems are **closed,** because they involve choices between a small and finite number of possibilities, such as the choice between singular and plural, or between 'this' and 'that'. Whenever we a have a choice between grammatical elements which are commutable -grammar words, verbal inflections and so on - then these are elements of system . The other chain category is set . This too is paradigmatic, and it concerns lexical items abstracted from their context in text. In contrast to system, set is an **open** choice, because it deals with choices from a wide, and sometimes almost unlimited grouping of individual lexical items.

Halliday's second main category concerns syntagmatic relations, which he calls **chain** relationships . Again there is a subdivision between grammatical and lexical components . The grammatical component is **structure**, which is roughly akin to Firth's colligation. The lexical component is collocation, concerned with the syntagmatic association between lexical item but, as we shall see, rather different from Firth's category of the same name.

The distinction between grammar and lexis, says Halliday, is not always as stark as this categorisation may make it seem. Frequently , for example, we are not clearly dealing with system or with set - rather we are somewhere on a cline between the two, and "languages all have choices in the middle of this cline" (1964:22).

In the Hallidayan approach, grammar is much more powerful than lexis. Grammar, for example, deals both with choices between individual items (eg. this/that, I/you) and between categories (eg singular/plural or past/future) while lexis deals only with open set choices between discrete lexical items. Thus we can make many more generalizations about grammar than we can about lexis, and "any statement made in grammar can account for a larger number of events than a statement made in lexis" (1964:23). He then goes on to argue that:

> Since the purpose of the theory is to account for the largest number of events as simply as possible, this means that the theory of grammar is more powerful than the theory of lexis. So in making a description of language we try to bring in as much as we can within the framework of the grammar.(Ibid.)

Halliday's overall framework can be summarized thus:

**CHOICE:** **SYSTEM** (paradigmatic/grammar) **SET** (paradigmatic/lexis)

**CHAIN** : **STRUCTURE** (syntagmatic/grammar) **COLLOCATION** (syntagmatic/lexis)

Fig. 1

For the purposes of this enquiry, it is the horizontal links in figure two which are the most important. What precisely is the relationship between system and set, and between structure and collocation, and what are the implications of the framework as a whole for the relationship between grammar and lexis?

It will be argued that there is a tendency within Halliday's approach to define chain and choice categories so as to undermine Firth's insistence on the importance of interrelations between component categories.

### 3.2 **System and Set: grammar and lexis**

Halliday's distinction between grammatical systems and lexical sets reflects, quite clearly, a distinction between grammar and lexis . System involves choices between grammar words (this/that, I/you) or between grammatical categories

(singular/plural , past/present); set involves choices between content lexical items. Halliday gives little explicit consideration to the relationship between the two, but his overall framework, and particularly his distinction between chain and choice , make such a consideration essential.

How might this be? Halliday's framework can be regarded from two contrasting perspectives . Firstly, as a model with four fundamental components - set, structure, system and collocation - which interrelate primarily through grammar. Thus, lexical items within set are chosen on the basis of and with reference to structure and to system, which in some way have already been formulated . The actual selection of lexical items occurs on a 'slot and filler' basis, as is made clear by Halliday's example:

he was sitting there on the _____ (1964:21)

Here we have an illustration of how elements of system (the grammar words 'he , was , on , the' together with the progressive inflection) are already 'in place' before a final content lexical item, such as 'bench', is chosen from set . So the choice of 'bench' to round off the sentence has the form of an independent 'slot filler'. "In lexis" says Halliday,"we make one choice at a time" (1964:34). But if the point about lexical choices is that they are made separately, one at a time , is there no sense in which a sequence of choices might be made? In the case of the above example , it is clear that some choices, quite a few infact, have already been made. 'Sit' has been chosen (also from set) and all the grammar words are in place . Have these already been selected from system, which therefore has some kind of priority, associated syntagmatically through structure? If system choices take precedence over set choices, there remains the further question of how choices are sequenced from within set. Does Halliday's example imply that 'sit' precedes the word final slot ? Perhaps I am making rather too much of what , after all , is only a single example , designed simply to illustrate the notion of open choices. This may be

so , but there remains the larger issue , namely that the very concepts of chain and choice must , by definition , presuppose some notion of sequence -you cannot have a choice in a void.

Let me reformulate this problem from a rather different perspective . It seems difficult to see how we could have a choice between items of system -between, say , 'the' and 'a' or between 'on' and 'under', without having already in mind some kind of tangible referent in the ideational context which is being referred to . The choice, from system , of 'on' in the above example is likely to refer to an object, such as a chair or a fence, which would form part of Halliday's ideational context. Surely, though, there must be cases where the kind of object referred to can influence our choice of grammar word in other ways. Thus 'he was sitting there on the fence/chair/bench' but:

13. ? he was sitting there on the grey sky
14. he was sitting there under/below the grey sky

With 13 and 14, we have a very clear example of how a choice from set influences and takes priority over prepositional choices from system. In this case, atleast, set is prior to system.

In principle Halliday does not rule out such interrelationships, because he accepts that grammar and lexis are not always clearly distinct:

> It is not the case...that all choices in language are clearly of one type or the other, closed or open. What we find is really a gradient or 'cline' : that it, there is a continuous gradation in the patterns of formal choice in language. At one end we have a large number of systems...with a small number of fixed possibilities in each: here we are clearly in grammar. At the other end we have open sets...whose limits are hard to define: here we are equally clearly in lexis. But every language has choices which are round about the middle of this cline...and the interaction of one choice with others is still fairly complex. (1964:22)

The problem is that - rather as with Firth - there is a tension which is not always satisfactorily resolved between general statements such as the above and

Halliday's more specific categorizations and illustrations. It is not always very easy to visualize this cline in operation given the very broad distinction made between system and set, and between structure and collocation.

### 3.3 **Structure and the relegation of lexis**

Once we begin to look at Halliday's framework in terms of dynamic interrelations between components, we cannot restrict ourselves to a consideration of system and set. I have already suggested that case grammar (and particularly Widdowson's implicit application of it) shows how the selection of particular verbs creates expectations in terms of associated lexical items and their semantic roles. Referring back once again to Halliday's example, the choice of 'sit' itself implies both an agent and an optional locative in syntagmatic relation to it. This raises the more general question of the relationship between choice and chain, because the choice of 'sit' need not be seen purely as a paradigmatic matter . 'Sit', in other words, itself implies an unfocussed relationship between agent, process and locative (eg. he-sit-chair). Consequently syntagmatic relations such as [agent-process-patient] need not be formulated exclusively at the (grammatical) level of structure: we could strongly argue that certain lexical items can also be seen to play a sizeable role here . Thus the syntagmatic implications of certain choices from set have a direct bearing on the relationship between set and structure.

Halliday refers to grammar as a 'natural system': both general kinds of grammatical patterning and specific manifestations of each bear a natural relation to the meanings they have evolved to express. When a child says 'man clean car'

> the fact that this is separated into three segments reflects the interpretation of composite experiences into their component parts: the different grammatical functions assigned to 'man' , 'clean' and 'car' express the different roles of these parts with respect to the whole ; the distinction into word classes of verb and noun reflects the analysis of experiences into goings-on (expressed as verbs) and participants in the goings-on, expressed as nouns, and so on.(1983:XIV)

But it is not necessary to view the man-clean-car association purely in terms of 'grammatical functions' . The very fact that we can so easily make sense of such an utterance is helped by the conceptual nature of these particular lexical items in association. Had the child said 'man car clean' we would still be able to make sense of it, partly because we recognize the noun/verb distinctions, but primarily because we know, from our knowledge of the world, that 'man' - being animate - must be the 'doer' of the action, the agent . We could argue , then , that the final 'grammaticized' sentence, eg. 'the man is cleaning the car', is conceptualized as much by lexis (set) as by syntagmatic grammar (structure) , with the latter very often refining and focussing the former (cf. Widdowson 1990) . So the agent/process/patient roles can be inferred from lexical items taken from set, which are then given further focus by the grammar of structure, as 'the man is cleaning the car' is a further focussing of 'man clean car'. Here we have the loose beginnings of a relationship between grammar/structure and lexis/set. Halliday, however, does not allow for any such integration, because for him set is strictly paradigmatic.

By way of summary, it is clear that 'the man is cleaning the car' could evolve from interrelations between set, system and structure. Ofcourse the syntagmatic framework of the sentence could, quite uncontroversially , be formulated in structure in terms of mutually expectant elements placed in order by the grammar , with a subsequent 'filling in' of the slots from set. This seems to be more or less Halliday's perspective, and can be represented as follows:

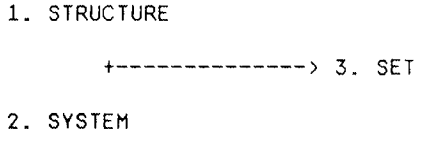


fig. 2

If, on the other hand, we allow that set has a wider role than this, implying relationships between case roles in the way that has been outlined , then set

could be seen to inform lexical content both paradigmatically and syntagmatically , in close association with structure. The choice of grammar words and of inflections -the man, the car, clean ing, could then be made from system. This reformulation , although highly generalized, might be represented thus:

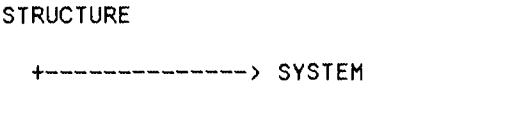


fig. 3

Clearly this is much too crude and superficial to constitute a principled reorientation of the Hallidayan framework, but it may atleast serve to demonstrate how the set/system/structure distinctions beg a number of questions about the relationship between grammar and lexis , a relationship which must take into account the dynamic, sequential implications of chain and choice.

### 3.4 **Collocation and the limitation of lexis**

For Halliday collocation is the basic formal pattern into which lexical items enter:

> A lexical set is simply a grouping of items which have a similar range of collocation . 'Chair', 'seat' and 'settee' belong to the same lexical set because they have a number of highly probable collocations in common: they collocate readily, for example , with 'comfortable' and 'sit' .
>
> (1964:33)

So collocation is serviced from set , in terms of 'probable' associations. Furthermore, such probabilities are a matter of degree:

> Wheras in grammar we can say : 'at this place in structure, these terms are possible , and all others are impossible', in lexis we can never say : 'only these items are possible'. Lexical sets in act are bounded only by probabilities. Given the item 'chair' we are more likely to find in the same utterance the items 'sit' or 'comfortable' or 'high' than , say , 'haddock' or 'reap'...
>
> (ibid.)

So Halliday defines collocation with reference to set, just as he defines set

with reference to structure (because set is the 'filler' while structure provides the 'slot'). He seems to be saying : 'just as we cannot make lexical choices from set without a priori structure, so we cannot construct collocations without reference to set'. The relationship would seem to be something like:

Fig. 4 STRUCTURE ----------->SET--------->COLLOCATION
allows us to choose from to form a

This is a rather restrictive definition of collocation, because of its dependence on grammar (structure). It is not clear, for example, how such a framework would deal with relatively fixed expressions, where the grammar is marked (so that few, if any inflections are possible), and where the collocation is more or less invariable, as in 15 and 16 below:

15. a stitch in time saves nine (*saved)
16. sooner you than me! (*you are sooner than me)

The idea, which I have already suggested, that expressions can make more or less clear reference to structure, and can be more or less the outcome of a free lexical choice, involves us in accepting that grammar and lexis have a complementary but varying relationship . Halliday says that with lexis we can never say 'only these items are possible' (ibid.). Surely, though, this is exactly what we can say, atleast with regard to 15 above . Lexical fixity of this kind and restrictions on the grammar may go hand in hand - as I argued earlier with reference to the idiom in 12 . Halliday's collocation , though , cannot free itself from the grammar, and being based on grammar, it does not help to account for formulaic expressions with a unique lexical content .

## 4. SPEECH ACT THEORY

### 4.1 Grammar, lexis and context : Introduction

It has long been recognized that speech acts give the linguist particular problems in identifying and accounting for the variable meanings of language forms and their contexts of use. It is rare to find examples of a one-to-one relationship between language and illocutionary meaning. Rather, such meanings are invariably the product of relationships between language and context . But how far has this relationship been investigated in terms of the roles played by grammar and by lexis ?

### 4.2 Lexical signalling : performative verbs

There is a class of speech act which draws its illocutionary force largely from features of its lexical realisation; where, in effect, the verb signals the illocutionary force of the proposition. J.L.Austin, who identified these **performatives** or **performative verbs**, pointed out that in certain cases, "the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of the action" (1962:5). He gave the following examples:

17. I **name** this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*
18. I **bet** you sixpence he'll win
19. I **warn** you not to spread gossip against him (Ibid.)

In each of these examples the performative verb - name, bet, warn - signals the act (of naming, betting, warning) which is performed by virtue of the utterance. At first sight, it would seem that Austin is arguing for a relatively fixed, context-independent relationship between performative verbs and the acts they serve to express, and he is criticized for holding precisely this view (eg. Crombie 1985b:8). However, Austin was well aware of the ways in which linguistic configurations and contextual constraints can effect meaning, even with performative verbs. Dealing first with context, he pointed out that "the circumstances, including other actions, must be appropriate" (1962:9) . Thus, for example, in uttering the performative 'I do' in the marriage ceremony , it is essential that the speaker -atleast within a christian culture - should not

already be married.

Austin went on to talk about grammar as a means by which lexically signalled performatives might be made invalid, or 'unhappy' as he put it . He said that while 'I bet' may be a performative," 'I betted' and 'he bets' are clearly not performatives, but describe actions on my and his part respectively" (1962:63). Thus, for the illocutionary act of 'betting' to be valid, particular grammatical as well as lexical configurations are required .

Austin then takes his argument a stage further. It is doubtful, he says, whether there is a precise 'grammatical' criterion whereby we can unambiguously identify a performative/non performative distinction. Even the first form (I bet) :

> .... may be used to describe how I habitually behave: 'I bet him (every morning) sixpence that it will rain' or 'I promise only when I intend to keep my word'. (1962:64)

Austin's argument does not stand still; he is constantly challenging his own assertions and thereby developing new lines of enquiry . However, the general point is clear enough . Lexis does not independently signal a performative illocutionary act. 'Bet' can be modified by grammar, by associated lexical items and by context, so that it is performative in some circumstances, but not in others. Furthermore, there is no independent, exact role which we can assign either to lexis or to grammar in this process, because grammar, lexis and context are closely inter-dependent.

More generally, the shortcomings of taking lexical signalling as a basis for the classification of illocutionary acts are clear. Some speech act verbs are in themselves ambiguous, so that when we speak about 'agreeing', we may be agreeing that something is true, or we may be agreeing to do something. Furthermore, there are a number of verbs which can express the same speech act - verbs such as 'beg, entreat, implore , beseech' (Mitchell 1981:105). More generally still, ofcourse, there are a great many speech act realizations which simply do not have any clear performative signposting, such as 'It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to ...'.

Consequently, although lexis can play a crucial signalling role in speech act exponents, we can only go so far in talking of lexis in isolation from other linguistic and contextual factors.

### 4.3 Grammar , lexis and context : Searle and the *Literal Force Hypothesis*

Searle (1969/79) is associated with what has become known as the Literal Force Hypothesis , namely the view that illocutionary force can , atleast with certain expressions , be built into sentence form . According to Searle certain **syntactic** forms -most notably some of the modal auxiliaries - are conventionally associated with certain speech acts, as is illustrated in the following examples:

20. **Could** you dust the room ?
21. **would** you like to dust the room ?
22. You really **ought to** dust the room
23. You **should** dust the room

Searle, like Austin a speech act theorist with a background in philosophy, looked at examples such as these and commented on the relationship between their syntactic regularity and their frequent use as suasive speech acts. Speech act theory, says Searle, provides us with a framework whereby , under certain conditions, 20 would be understood as a request, rather than simply as a hypothetical question about a past ability, as in 'were you able to dust the room?'. He goes on to argue that:

> ... within this framework certain forms will tend to become conventionally established as the standard idiomatic forms for indirect speech acts...I am suggesting that "can you", "could you", "I want you to", and numerous other forms are conventional ways of making requests.
>
> (1979:49)

Searle developed a series of conditions designed to identify the criteria which must be validated if an utterance is to count as a particular illocutionary act. He gives four such conditions, as follows:

| **Condition** | **Definition** (for requests) |
|---|---|
| Propositional Content | Future act A of the hearer |
| Preparatory | 1. The hearer is able to do the action A, and speaker believes this.<br>2. It is not obvious to hearer and speaker that the hearer will perform the action in the normal course of events, and of his/her own accord. |
| Sincerity | The speaker wants the hearer to do the action |
| Essential | Counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do the action in question. |

(Adapted from Searle 1969:66)

Searle examines each of these conditions in detail, building them into his overall theory designed to address the relationship between 'expression' and 'meaning'. Exactly how do these 'conventionalized' forms for indirect requests draw on these general conditions? To answer this question, Searle listed four 'generalizations':

> **Generalisation 1** : S (speaker) can make an indirect request ...by either asking whether or stating that a preparatory condition concerning H's (hearer's) ability to do A (the action) obtains
>
> **Generalisation 2** : S can make an indirect directive by either asking whether or stating that the propositional content condition obtains.
>
> **Generalisation 3** : S can make an indirect directive by stating that the sincerity condition obtains ....
>
> **Generalisation 4** : S can make an indirect directive by either stating that or asking whether there are good or overriding reasons for doing A.... (1979:45)

Searle listed example expressions which, at a 'pretheoretical level', illustrate these generalizations and the basis speech act conditions on which they are based:

> 24. **Can you** reach the salt ?
> 25. **Can you** pass the salt ?
> 26. **Could you** be a little more quiet ?
> 27. **You could** be a little more quiet (1979:36)

These examples relate to generalisation 1, because they ask whether (24-26) or state that (27) H is able to do the act - in other words, the preparatory condition. Similarly, generalisation 4, concerning the speakers belief that there

are good reasons for doing the act, is implied when we use the modal auxiliaries 'should/ought'. Searle gives the following examples:

28. **You ought** to be more polite to your mother
29. **You should** leave immediately
30. **Ought you** to eat quite so much spaghetti ?
31. **Should you** be wearing John's tie ? (1979:37/38)

Clearly , though , there are self evident difficulties with this view when taken to extremes . For example, the preparatory condition, which involves reference to the hearer's ability to perform the action, can be made more explicit by using the conventionalized form 'if you can' , as with:

32. Would you pass me the salt, if you can ?

However, this form is syntactically 'stigmatized', ie. its distribution is marked so that it cannot occur with direct or with indirect requests for information:

*33. I want to know if you've got the spanner, if you can

So, because there are distributional restrictions which seriously delimit the systematicity of LFH, it has come in for considerable criticism (eg. Levinson 1983:266).

Searle's examples of conventionalized syntactic forms ( 24 to 31 above) are all structured around lexical items which clearly illustrate his hypothesis. However, it is possible to think of the same syntactic forms occurring with lexical items which do not meet Searle's conditions for a valid request:

34. Could you help him ?
35. Could you hear him ?

While both 34 and 35 refer to the ability of the hearer , only 34 clearly operates in addition , as a directive . Clearly , too , this has something to do with the difference between 'help' and 'hear'. We could argue that *hearing* is not something which the hearer could put into operation intentionally , as a matter of volition - either we happen to hear something , or we don't . Consequently , it is rather

difficult to regard 35 as a request for action , largely on account of the lexis .

So in 35 the directive force of the syntactic form is to some extent countered by the use of a **stative** verb in the predicate . Indeed , it is because many statives express 'actions' which are innate rather than consciously brought about that these expressions are so difficult to interpret as directives -*understand* , *see* , *hear* , *resemble* , *recognize* etc. Logically , it is not possible to request or to advise someone to do something which they cannot do deliberately . So , **while the syntax of these forms (34/5) does not in itself discriminate between directive and non directive meanings , the lexis quite clearly does** . However , Searle's hypothesis does not distinguish in any clear way between grammar and lexis in its' statements about the relationship between 'form' and illocutionary force .

Thus a change of lexical item can create ambiguity between a directive force and what Searle calls the 'literal' force . This relates to Searle's propositional content condition for requests , which he says concerns the speaker referring to a 'future act' of the hearer . In essence , whether or not 'could you *hear me* ?' denotes a request depend on whether 'hear me' can in certain circumstances be seen to refer to a future act , or only to a past ability (the literal force) .

There are other ways in which grammar and lexis can play distinct but mutually dependent roles in signalling particular illocutions . A change of performative verb , for example , can mark a shift from one kind of directive meaning to another :

36. I **warn** you not to spread gossip against him
37. I **order** you not to spread gossip against him

Here there is a quite unambiguous change to Searle's preparatory condition , from a situation in which speaker implies that a warning can be backed up with punitive action in the event of non compliance (36) , to a situation where the question of punitive action is simply not relevant (37) .

Another way in which the preparatory condition can be affected by a change of

lexical item is in the distinction between warnings and promises :

38. If you do that again , I'll give you a punch on the nose
39. If you do that again , I'll give you an apple pie

Only in the case of promises does the speaker presuppose that the action is in the hearer's interests (cf. Searle's preparatory condition for promises , 1969:58/9). Consequently , the change from *punch on the nose* to *apple pie* marks a shift from 'against hearer's interests' (warning) to 'in hearer's interests' (promise) . It should be emphasized , however , that particular contexts of situation could always invalidate this distinction : 39 , for example , could be a threat if speaker knows that hearer hates apple pies .

These and other examples will be looked at in detail in chapter 5 . For the present , they are worth mentioning in order to highlight the general point , that many speech act expressions involve an interdependence both between language and context , and between grammar and lexis .

I have talked about lexical changes of illocutionary force , but what of grammatical changes , and (of particular concern here) changes to grammatical inflections ? That grammatical changes of this kind can substantially alter the illocutionary force of an utterance is virtually self evident . I have already mentioned how this can happen in connection with performative verbs : *I bet you* may (given a supporting context) function as a performative , but *I betted you* cannot do so .

The same principle can be seen to be at work with less direct expressions :

40. Could you help me ? (valid as request form)
41. Could you have helped me ? (invalid)

42. You ought to leave immediately ! (valid)
43. You ought to have left immediately (invalid)

44. Would you like to see *Ghandi* ? (valid)
45. Would you have liked to have seen *Ghandi* ? (invalid)

So , just as lexical change within the same syntactic form can have repercussions for illocutionary force , so inflectional change can mark a difference in illocutionary force within the same lexical/collocational environment . Again , this point will be further investigated in chapter 5 .

### 4.4 SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In this section I have suggested that the illocutionary force of speech act expressions is a product of interaction between grammar , lexis and context . Some speech act theorists (notably Austin) have focused on the lexis , arguing that the lexical signalling of performative verbs in itself marks the speaker's illocutionary intent , unless this is cancelled by particular cotextual and contextual factors . Others , such as Searle , have given less attention to grammar and/or lexis *per se* , arguing instead for a generalized correspondence between conventionalized expression and directive illocutionary forces . What is missing is any clear conception of the variable roles of grammar and lexis within these expressions .

As with the other sections in this chapter , I have not attempted to provide a rigorous , all embracing survey . But it is worth noting , in passing , that the Literal Force Hypothesis is not the only approach to the study of speech acts which takes little account of grammar and lexis . Sadock (1974) and Green (1975) , for example , have proposed an **idiom theory** . According to Sadock and Green , request forms like 'would/could you' are all idioms for, and semantically equivalent to 'I hereby request you to...', just as 'kick the bucket' is an idiom for 'die'. Idiom Theory ties in closely with a view of language acquisition in reference to formulaic language: some forms, including those which are idiomatic, are simply not analysed, but are recorded whole in the lexicon (cf. Peters 1983 and section 5/this chapter) . The problem with Idiom Theory is that it disregards both cotextual and contextual variables which distinguish between an expression operating

idiomatically (as a speech act) and an expression which is not idiomatic. Given that forms such as 'could you' have both a literal (ability) and an idiomatic (request) meaning, how can the hearer tell, purely on the basis of the language , which meaning is intended ?

The undeniable role of context in disambiguating led others (eg. Gordon and Lakoff 1975) to suggest that there should be an **Inference Theory** , whereby 'can you climb that tree ?' has an indirect request force (and not merely the literal force of a question about the hearer's ability) whenever the literal force is blocked by context. This is irrefutable, but it does not in itself take us very far in identifying what it is about language which allows us to recognize illocutionary forces in some circumstances, but not in others.

I have suggested , however , that by making a broad distinction between grammar and lexis , it is possible to observe how both grammatical and lexical changes may lead to changes of illocutionary force in ways which are broadly predictable . In chapter five I will go into this in some detail .

## 5. FORMULAIC LANGUAGE

### 5.1 Introduction

The concept of formulaic language is based on the notion that the units of language acquisition may be stored mentally not (or not exclusively) in terms of their analysed grammatical form , but as expressions which are memorized as unanalysed 'chunks'. For example , the sentence *it's good to see you* can be regarded , broadly speaking, from one of these two contrasting perspectives . From the analytic point of view , it constitutes a syntactic structure which consists of variable lexical items embedded within a syntagmatic grammatical chain . It could also , though , be seen as a formulaic utterance , familiar as an 'expression' and restricted in its' capacity for grammatical or lexical variation : we would be most unlikely to hear someone say 'it's staggering to see you' or 'it's good to view you' .

Studies of formulaic language derive in part from analyses of language acquisition, and in part from study of adult , native speaker language production . I shall look at each , briefly , in turn .

### 5.2 The units of language acquisition

Many writers have pointed to the growing evidence that first and second language learners demonstrate a capacity to store and reproduce from memory very large numbers of 'phrases' (eg. Bolinger 1976 ; Vihman 1982 ; Gleason 1982) . Anne Peters has outlined a number of criteria for what may constitute a unit of language acquired and subsequently used in this way :

a) Is the utterance used repeatedly and in exactly the same form ?

b) Is the construction of the utterance to any productive pattern in the child's current speech ?

c) Is the utterance inappropriate in some contexts in which it is used ?

d) Does the utterance cohere phonologically ?

e) Is the usage of the expression situationally dependent ?

f) Is it a community-wide formula ?

(1983:7-11)

It has been suggested (eg Slobin 1975) that units of language acquired on the basis of criteria such as the above may be stored , at least initially , in a kind of 'mental lexicon' , so that the learner effectively memorizes whole lists of self-contained language expressions , prior to analyzing and breaking them down according to their particular linguistic properties . Slobin's reference to a mental **lexicon** is significant . His point is that irrespective of syntactic distinctions , all kinds of linguistic expressions , if they can be perceived by learners as being familiar form/meaning pairings , are effectively treated as if they were extended lexical items . In other words , both whole expressions and individual lexical items may be perceived as being in some sense 'self contained' , without reference to their internal structure .

### 5.3 **The units of adult language production**

Studies of adult speech suggest that our capacity for storing 'chunks' of language in the mental lexicon does not necessarily diminish substantially as we move out of the early stages of language acquisition . How is it , for example , that native speakers are able to produce such long , fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse with such apparent ease ? According to Pawley and Syder :

> .... there is a puzzle here in that human capacities for encoding novel speech in advance or while speaking appear to be severely limited . Yet speakers commonly produce fluent multi - clause utterances which exceed these limits .
>
> (1983:191)

In order to help solve this puzzle , Pawley and Syder have developed the notion of **lexicalized sentence stems** . These , say Pawley and Syder , are linguistic units of at least clause length whose grammatical form and lexical content is to a greater or lesser degree fixed , and which serve to express a culturally recognized concept . They are not true idioms , but regular form/meaning pairings .
The hypothesis outlined by Pawley and Syder runs counter to the traditional compartmentalization of language form into **syntax** (rules used for production) and the **dictionary** (fixed , arbitrary usages) . Many regular morpheme sequences , they say , are known both holistically (as lexicalized units) and analytically (as the

products of syntactic rules) . They go on to talk of the extent to which expressions may be judged to be **nativelike** . Illustrating this concept , Pawley and Syder point to how many expressions sound 'odd' if their lexical or grammatical constituents are altered . Thus 56 would generally be judged to be nativelike , while 57 would not :

> 56. I'm so glad you could bring Harry
> 57. That you could bring Harry gladdens me so
>
> (1983:195)

Clearly , reference to syntactic distinctions alone does not help to explain this distinction , since both 56 and 57 are perfectly acceptable in grammatical terms .

Pawley and Syder refer to a 'cline' or 'novelty scale' with entirely novel expressions at one end , and familiar , culturally recognized expressions at the other . In between are partly new collocations of lexical items , partly structural material . We can judge the extent to which an expression is lexicalized , say Pawley and Syder , by reference to the following criteria :

a) Its' meaning is not totally predictable from its form

b) It behaves as a minimal unit for certain syntactic purposes

c) It is a social institution (ie. a culturally standardized term)

These criteria are not so different from those proposed by Peters with reference to language acquisition .

### 5.4 **Grammar and lexis in formulaic language**

How is the work on formulaic language relevant to discussion of the relationship between grammar and lexis ? There are , perhaps , two areas of interest here . Firstly , the notion that formulaic units can be perceived , both by learners and by adult users , as being akin to lexical items . This in itself is a strong argument against the notion that grammar is by definition dominant , and that lexis is , as it were , essentially a sub-category whose primary function is to exemplify the 'inherent' meaning of grammatical forms .

Pawley and Syder argue strongly that the degree to which expressions behave as minimal units , akin to individual lexical items , is a matter of degree . This is what they call the process of lexicalization , and they suggest a system of notation whereby a recurrent collocation can be described so as to highlight its lexical and grammatical restrictions . For example , the expression *I'm sorry to keep you waiting* can be represented as :

```
I'm          sorry to keep       you waiting
NP be-TENSE  sorry to keep-TENSE you waiting
```

(1983:210)

In this sentence stem , the obligatory lexical elements are spelled out - 'sorry to keep'/'you waiting'. Permissible inflections are indicated by 'TENSE' , so that we could say 'I was sorry ...' , or 'to have kept you ...' . Each sentence stem , Pawley and Syder argue , has "a more or less unique grammar" (1983:215) , and each is subject to a different range of phrase structure and transformational restrictions .

What is significant about this view of formulaic language is its' explicit recognition of the fact that many expressions cannot be usefully appraised solely in grammatical terms . Instead , much of formulaic language is seen as a product of both grammatical and lexical configurations , with the two being so highly inter-dependent that a linguistic description which ignored either component would be seriously deficient . As Pawley and Syder put it :

> any strict compartmentalization [between productive grammatical rules and unitary lexical items] would not truly reflect the native speaker's grammatical knowledge if the facts are ... that lexicalization and productivity are each matters of degree .
>
> (1983:220)

This recognition of the interdependency between grammar and lexis has been largely absent from most other approaches to linguistic description which I have touched on in this chapter . In section 6 , then , I will review the work I have outlined in terms of the degree to which grammar and lexis have been seen as interdependent .

## 6. GRAMMAR AND LEXIS IN DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS : SYNTHESIS

The work reviewed in this chapter can be broadly divided between three categories, according to whether grammar , lexis or a dependent interrelation of the two has been accorded priority . In figure five , then , I present a diagrammatic summary of these various orientations ; the figure is to some extent simplified (and so idealized) , in order to provide a clear though highly generalized picture :

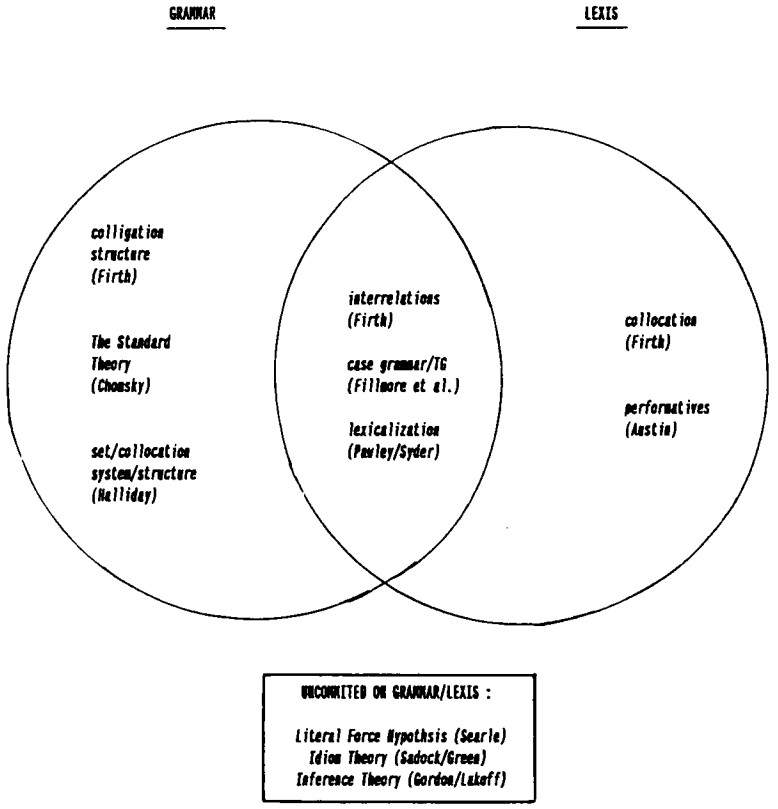


Fig. 5 : *Degrees of emphasis on grammar/lexis in linguistic description*

The area denoted 'grammar' refers to those areas of linguistic description which are largely or entirely based on grammatical classification , but which does not also accommodate any clear interrelation with lexis . Thus in **Chomsky's** standard theory , the syntactic component comprised the generative core of the system , while the lexicon was largely concerned with exceptions to grammatical 'rule' ; but with the incorporation and elaboration of **case grammar** within TG came a recognition

that the power of the syntactic component needed to be constrained through lexical entries which categorized their syntactic co-occurrence potential . In this way the development of TG saw a gradual recognition of the interdependence of grammar and lexis .

In principle **Halliday** both accommodated a lexical level of linguistic description through his categories of **set** and **collocation** , and allowed for interaction between these and his grammatical categories of **structure** and **system** (figure 2) . But the kind of relationship between these components which Halliday formulated meant that lexical categories were entirely dependent on grammatical categories , so that lexis has no independent existence . In this sense there is a striking parallel between Chomsky's syntactic component (1956) and Halliday's structure/system network (1964/66) : in both cases lexis is effectively dependent on grammar .

**Firth** , in contrast , proposed that **interrelations** between grammatical and lexical components should be deliberately sought after , and thus I put interrelations in the area of common ground between grammar and lexis (figure 5) . But I have suggested that there is little specific indication of how Firth's grammatical categories (of **structure** and **colligation**) interrelate with **collocation** in specific instances of analysis . Thus while relatively 'lexicalized' expressions - including idioms , proverbs and much of formulaic language - are clearly related to collocation , it is difficult to measure the extent to which both lexis (collocation) and grammar (colligation) may interact to varying degrees across a broader spectrum of linguistic expression . In short , colligation is defined so as to exclude lexis , and collocation is defined so as to exclude grammar . Halliday's concept of collocation , ofcourse , differs substantially from Firth's . For Halliday , collocation is explicitly serviced from set , and set is implicitly derived from structure , so that Halliday's collocation has a grammatical foundation which excludes analysis of language which is highly lexicalized .

**Pawley and Syder's** concept of **lexicalized sentence stems** explicitly takes on board the notion of a variable 'balance of power' between grammar and lexis : as they put

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it , "lexicalization and productivity are each matters of degree" (1983:220) . I have very briefly suggested that this sort of perspective may also be worth pursuing with regard to many **speech act expressions** , including **Searle's conventionalized indirect forms** . Yet with the exception of **Austin's** study of performative verbs (which looks at speech act expression from the lexical perspective) , I have placed speech act analysis outside the domain of grammar/lexis interaction in figure 5 ; by and large , the internal workings of grammar and lexis are not specifically addressed by the Literal Force Hypothesis , nor by Idiom Theory or Inference Theory .

In chapters three to five , I will pick up again some of the issues raised in this chapter , arguing that grammar and lexis interrelate in predictable ways in the expression of specific meanings in relation to context . But first , we need to examine the extent to which interrelations between grammar and lexis have been taken on board by applied linguists in the field of language teaching and language syllabus design , and this is the subject of chapter two .

# -CHAPTER TWO-

## *GRAMMAR AND LEXIS IN PEDAGOGY*

### INTRODUCTION

I have suggested that linguists have generally paid rather less attention to lexis than to grammar and , in particular , that they have not fully addressed relationships between lexis and grammar . We now need to see to what extent the same is true of pedagogy , and to asses the degree to which linguists and speech act analysts have influenced the thinking of applied linguists in this regard . It is by no means unusual , after all , for teachers and syllabus designers to turn to linguist's descriptions of language as one source of guidance . To what extent has this been done , particularly with reference to the way language is conceptualized in course design ? Alternatively , have applied linguists been more aware of the relationships which hold between lexis and grammar ?

It will be suggested that grammar has been given a great deal more attention than lexis in language pedagogy , sometimes to the extent that grammar has been assumed virtually to subsume lexis . This , however , has not always been the case . In the 1930's the focus of interest was very much on words , and there is now once again a revival of interest in vocabulary teaching , and in the design and implementation of 'lexical syllabuses' . Indeed , ever since the 1930's lexis has been the mainstay of a wide range of learner dictionaries , running from Hornby (1948/74) through to the plethora of more recent works (eg. Longman 1983/87) .

With these trends in mind , it is worth enquiring why this early interest in words did not continue to be widespread after the 1930's/40's . We also need to ask whether this shift , together with the more recent return of interest in words , has taken place against a clear appreciation of how grammar and lexis might relate one to the other .

## 1. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WORD BASED PARADIGM : *BASIC ENGLISH*

### 1.1 Outline

The 1930's witnessed a movement intended to establish the word as the basic unit for pedagogic description , and one of the first and most significant moves in this direction was the proposal for Basic English . Initiated by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards (Ogden 1930/1968) , Basic English aimed to establish a core minimum vocabulary for the learning of English of 850 words . Claiming that this could be used to express quite complex ideas through paraphrase , only 18 main verbs were included , together with the three basic verbal inflections -er/-ing/-ed . The absence of such verbs as *ask* or *want* could , said Ogden and Richards , be overcome by paraphrasing , so that 'ask' could be circumlocuted by 'put a question' , and 'want' by 'have a desire for' .

However , the project to establish Basic English suffered from a number of major drawbacks . Firstly , Basic English is a restricted , simplified language , and as such it is questionable whether it could help learners understand language which is not similarly simplified . More generally , Basic English may not prepare learners for further learning beyond the completion of formal programmes of study , because it is a **closed system** , constituting an accumulative code for language use rather than a generative framework for ongoing investment in novel , unfamiliar forms .

Secondly , the word list included many lexical and grammatical words which , quite clearly , can have more than one meaning . Indeed , it has been estimated that these 850 words probably represent more than 12,000 meanings (Nation 1983:11) . Thirdly , the list was represented in a highly intuitive and introspective manner . Little indication was given to the potential frequency or subject range of any of these words in a given corpus . Furthermore , notions of how particular words , and especially grammar words , might or might not key in to certain structural patterns were not considered . In other words , criteria such as structural value and capacity for word building were not taken on board . Underlying this criticism lies what was perhaps the major fault of Basic English , namely that the word was

considered as a unit in isolation , with self contained meaning . Aside from the question of paraphrase , there was no serious consideration of the way in which words and grammar may relate to each other in the expression of meaning . Indeed , it is hardly surprising to be told that Basic English represents in the area of 12,000 separate senses , given that words were referred to meaning only in the crudest and most unconnected of ways . The list was divided up between 100 'operators' , 600 words representing 'things' , and 150 words representing 'qualities' (Richards:1943) . There is no principled way in which operators , things and qualities can be related to each other , or to grammar .

### 1.2 **Grammar and lexis in Basic English**

Thus , because Ogden and Richards provided no principled means whereby the words in their list might link up to form syntactic structures and lexical associations , there was no clear way forward in developing a coherent teaching programme . It is difficult to see how grading and sequencing could be undertaken , given that no specific syntactic patterns emerge , and that no specific word meanings are preferred , there being no cotextual or contextual clues which would help to narrow them down .

What is striking about the Basic English word list is the way in which grammatical and lexical elements remain quite distinct . While content lexical items are to be found in the 'things' and 'qualities' categories , grammar words (Richards' 'operators') and grammatical inflections are listed separately . However , the content words do not exist as completely abstract entities , because , crude as it is , the 'things/qualities/operators' distinction could form the beginnings of a notional categorisation of words . The question then is *how do these grammatical and lexical groupings link up together ?* Although Ogden and Richards do not answer this question , the very fact that it is the lexical rather than grammatical elements which are given semantic labels seems to leave the way open for a lexical approach to establishing some kind of grammar/lexis relationship . Had Ogden and Richards been able to categorize their words in a less generalized fashion - for

example , by reference to their semantic roles as processes , agents , patients , goals etc. - then potential relationships between their grammatical and lexical components could have been formulated .

The advantage of this alternative approach , as has already been suggested in chapter one , is that lexical items can be semantically marked in terms both of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships which hold between them . For example , the syntagmatic pattern [agent - process - patient] , where certain verbs can/cannot fill the process slot , in itself suggests both associations between lexical items and possible links to grammatical features , such as word order or verbal inflection . This point has already been outlined and illustrated in discussion of Chomsky and Halliday . The important point is that Ogden and Richards were not so very far away from an approach such as this .

## 2. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WORD BASED PARADIGM : MICHAEL WEST

### 2.1 **Outline**

Michael West is particularly noted for his General Service List (1953) . This list was the culmination of a number of studies made in the 1930's concerned with vocabulary selection for teaching purposes , and with which Harold Palmer was also closely associated . These studies helped create the report made to the Carnegie Conference of 1935 , and to the publication of the first General Service List of 1936 .

In some ways the list seemed to be an advance on Basic English , because it stressed the importance of taking into account such selectional criteria as word frequency , universality , structural value , subject range, word building and definition value . Bringing in subjective considerations of the potential value of words , both semantically (via universality , subject range and definition value) and syntactically (via structural value and word building) seemed to be a process with inherent advantages . Semantically , it was now possible to itemize words with reference to their potential range of meanings in linguistic contexts . Syntactically , grammatical criteria were introduced which seemed to invite the marking of particular words for their potential relationships through syntactic

structure . It was precisely on account of the absence of these considerations that Basic English has come in for so much criticism . In short , West's semantic and syntactic criteria seemed to acknowledge that a semantically coherent basis to course design required reference not only to words , but to the way they can associate with each other in meaningful lexico-syntactic patterns .

However , while the Carnegie Conference report improved on Basic English by giving more focussed attention to meaning and to grammar , it failed to provide an approach which would sustain lexis as a viable 'level' of linguistic description separate from , though interrelated with grammar .

### 2.2 Grammar and lexis in West's framework

The problem with West's approach was that it led to a situation where words could no longer be seen as in any way distinguishable from grammar . We can begin by looking in greater detail at West's criteria for the selection of words . This involved two quite distinct kinds of 'processing' . The first of these involved distinguishing between the objective selection of words (via analysis of their frequency and subject range) , and the subjective 'streamlining' of these words according to their universality and definition value . So , for example , a frequent word - such as 'bench' - might be disregarded and replaced by another whose range of meaning was wider , such as 'seat'. Thus West's subjective criteria acted as a kind of filter , whereby some words were rejected , and others retained. The process looked something like this :

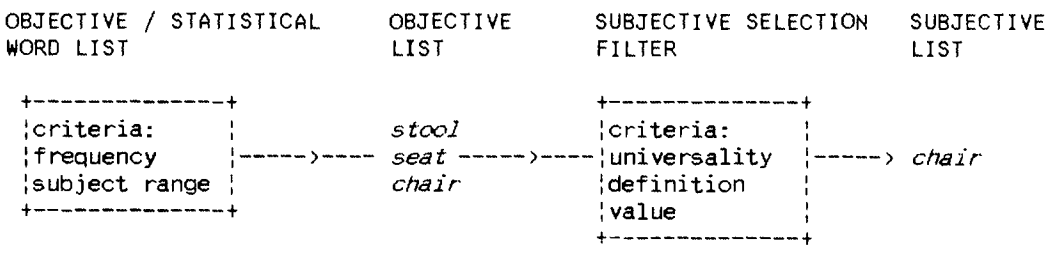



Fig. 1

Perhaps the most important point to note here is that all of West's criteria for the selection of words were essentially paradigmatic . Classifications made in

terms of universality or of subject range concerned individual lexical items . Thus one could easily enough be substituted for another , and it was precisely on this basis that West could introduce what we have referred to here as his subjective 'filter' .

The dangers of regarding lexis as no more than a compilation of individual items were then compounded with the further filtering of words through West's syntactic criteria . This operated in the following way :

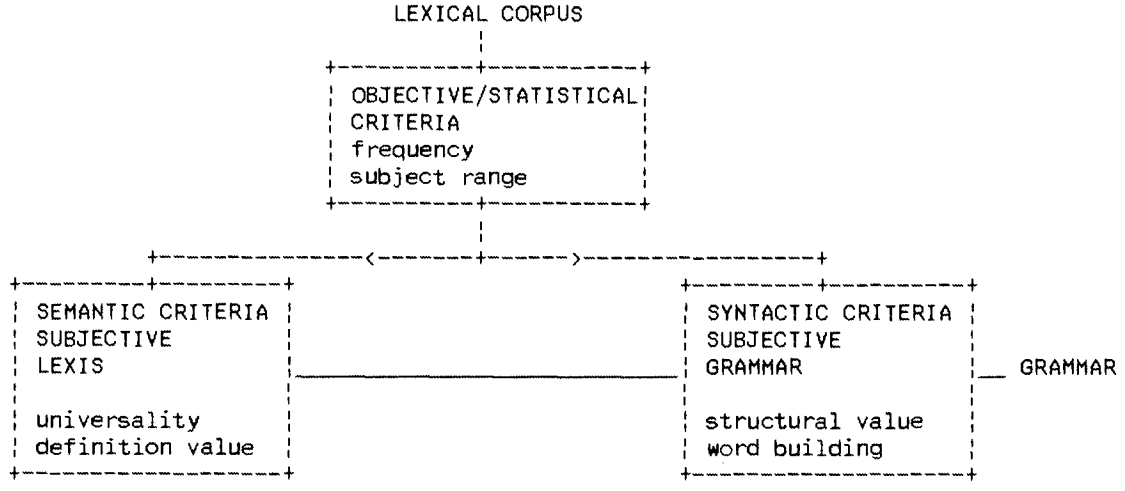



Fig. 2

While West's lexical criteria were paradigmatic , his syntactic criteria were all syntagmatic . So , although each separate stage of the framework could perfectly well be justified on its own terms , the syntactic criteria were , when placed alongside the semantic criteria , by far the most powerful and embracing . That is to say , whatever words were finally selected through the 'semantic filter' , the only way to relate them , the only way to describe the emergence of actual , syntagmatic forms , was through and in terms of the syntactic criteria . This was a direct and inevitable consequence of the way in which the terms of each component grouping had been set up . In short , lexis is paradigmatic , and words are commutable . Grammar is syntagmatic , and thus only and exclusively through grammar can we talk of actual sentences , clauses , expressions .

This distinction between semantic and syntactic criteria , then , represented a

distinction between words and grammar , together with a clear prioritizing in favour of the latter . West kept the semantic and syntactic components quite separate , allowing no balanced way in which they could be related to each other . There was thus no way of appraising , yet alone exploiting , the notion that particular structures might be developed by learners on the basis of starting out with a selected and associated vocabulary .

### 2.3 West in the wider context

In effect , West ended up by treating lexis very much in 'slot and filler' terms , in a way which is not entirely unrelated to the way Chomsky , and even Halliday , have accounted for lexis in relation to grammar . Lexis , that is , is seen largely as a means of breathing substance into grammatical structures . With this in mind, it is quite in order to suggest that West's work led quite naturally to the onset of the structural approach . As Widdowson has put it , West's framework :

> .... represented no extension of the traditional basis of limitation as far as grammar is concerned : the whole system of the language emerges as the material to be taught . (1964:127) .

Ultimately , West allowed no means of linking words together other than by reference to grammar , and so it is not at all surprising that word counts gradually became less popular , as the focus of attention shifted to structure .

It is interesting to compare West's work with that of Ogden and Richards . West defined words , in effect , as independent , individual units requiring reference to grammar to be made sense of . Ogden and Richards , in contrast , saw grammar in terms of distinct operations (inflections) and operators (grammar words) which , in effect , could only be associated into meaningful patterns by reference to lexis . Ogden and Richards kept their lexical and grammatical categories distinct , while allowing for them to be cross-referred . West started out the same way , by working separately with lexical ('semantic') and grammatical (syntactic) components . Unlike Ogden and Richards , though , West's definitions did not allow for the two to be kept separate , and thus the syntactic criteria virtually subsumed the lexical criteria .

## 3. FRIES AND THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH

### 3.1 Outline

There is thus a clear sense in which work on vocabulary selection led to the transfer of attention to structure , and to the relegation of lexis to a position of secondary importance . With the impetus coming chiefly from the United States , this new balance held sway in many quarters for some 30 years , from the 1940's through to the end of the 1960's . Fries , in his *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945) , was well aware of the concern amongst many language learners with the development of vocabulary . His somewhat dismissive explanation for this was to attribute it to their naive memories of their first language learning experience . The fact is , said Fries , that in L1 acquisition , the learning of grammar is so basic and fundamental that adults have forgotten the experience . The problem of learning a new language , Fries maintained , is not learning its vocabulary ; rather , it has to do with mastering its sound system and its grammatical structure . All the learner needs at first is enough basic vocabulary to practise the basic structures . In language , he said , there are four different kinds of words : function words , substitute words , words of negative/affirmative distribution , and content words . The first three of these need to be thoroughly mastered in the initial stages of language learning , with only a small number of content words required (1945:39) . Only on completion of this crucial first phase of structural learning can the learner move on to a greater development of vocabulary . Fries , then , made a stark distinction between vocabulary (which he equated with content words) and structure .

It was Fries' assumption that through structure we can express an adequate variety of meanings with only a minimal use of content words . The function of these content words was chiefly to 'flesh out' structural patterns for the purposes of necessary pedagogic exemplification . Consequently no serious attempt was made to treat vocabulary as anything more than an appendage to grammar .

### 3.2 Lexis , grammar and context : a pedagogic mismatch

The notion that words , and particularly content words , have a role to play in

identifying features of the environment is one which I have already mentioned in the previous chapter . I have talked , with reference to Widdowson (1990) about how lexical items can be used to refer to participants (in the roles of actor/agent/patient etc.) , to related processes , and so on . It is interesting to note , then , that Fries himself indicated an awareness of precisely this function of vocabulary . The small content vocabulary which he recommended for the early stages of language learning should , he said , be easily conceptualized , and should thus be drawn from the immediate classroom environment (1945: 39/40) . Similarly , the later stages should culminate in the learning of vocabulary for special areas of experience . Fries thus implied that familiarity with vocabulary was a prerequisite for making sense of the world about us , and - by extension - for relating the form of the language to the contexts to which it refers . The structuralists , however , did not pursue this line of enquiry . Instead , they maintained that the essence of language learning consists of learning structure . In this context , the structural approach was a move backwards .

At the beginning of this chapter , mention was made of Richards' notion that words can in some sense be marked for a generalized meaning which is related to but separate from grammar . Such a notion was firmly rejected by the structuralists . One of the chief drawbacks to the structural approach was its promulgation of a static conception of language , one which took little account of words or of contexts . There is an inevitable tension between the selection and description of structures without reference to words , and the need to present these structures meaningfully in the context of the classroom . Fries recognized that a small but appropriate vocabulary would be required for this . What he did not do was fully take on board the implications of such a belief . If an appropriate vocabulary is required to account for the constraints of the classroom context , then it surely follows that an appropriate selection of grammatical forms is needed too . Furthermore , there must be limits to the extent that we can carefully account for the one without at the same time bearing in mind the other . During the stages of language selection for a structural syllabus , the criteria available to the course designer largely concerned structure framed in isolation from lexis . This led to

pedagogic mismatches between language and the classroom context in which it was to be presented . As Widdowson has commented :

> The fact that a given word or structural item presents no difficulty for the learner and has a high coverage value must be disregarded if the classroom circumstances make it impossible to present the item meaningfully . (1964:137)

So , the idea of selecting and grading target language with a view to its' meaningful contextualisation in the classroom was not given a high priority by the structuralists . Items of vocabulary were selected in terms of their abstracted potential value , but without reference to any particular association with other words , or with context . Considerations of the relationship between grammar , lexis and context were not developed : contextualisation was considered to be a methodological matter . Hence the mismatch .

Thus the structuralist's relegation of context to the presentation stage went , quite logically , hand in hand with their lack of interest in relationships between grammar , lexis and context . However , this relegation is perfectly explicable if we bear in mind that the structural approach was a logical conclusion to West's categorizations . West , I have said , defined criteria for lexical and grammatical selection so that the latter subsumed the former . relations between grammar and lexis , or between lexis and context were left , in effect , undiscovered . Fries' starting point - that words are subsidiary to grammar - thus neatly took up from where West had left off . West began with the word yet finished with the entire structural system of the language . Fries started with the primacy of grammar , and kept vocabulary as subsidiary from the very outset .

Halliday , though beginning with categorizations which seem to account for a lexical 'level' of language , quite clearly de-emphasized lexis in favour of grammar in the way he defines his categories and relates one to the other . There is some similarity between this and the work of Michael West , 35 years earlier . More generally , both Chomsky and Halliday take a slot-and-filler approach to the grammar/lexis relationship , and there is , again , more that a slight resemblance to the principles which guided the work of the structuralists .

## 4. WILKINS AND THE NOTIONAL/FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUS

### 4.1 Introduction

In what ways did the notional/functional syllabus consider relationships between grammar and lexis ? In 1972 , four years prior to the publication of *Notional Syllabuses* , Wilkins criticizes what he saw as the downgrading of lexis throughout the structuralist years . Such a view , he said , might be acceptable in the absence of any obvious need to learn a language quickly . However , while learning mostly vocabulary and very little grammar would be of precious little value to the learner , learning all structure and next to no vocabulary would be a great deal worse :

> .... without grammar very little can be conveyed , without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed .
>
> (1972:111)

Nevertheless , Wilkins decided to play safe , concluding that the delaying of vocabulary expansion in courses with long term aims could do no harm . In the majority of situations , the standard pattern of emphasis on grammar prior to development of vocabulary is the wisest approach (1972:133) . This is a striking statement . It recalls that made by Fries 27 years earlier , that grammar should be the central point of concern in the early stages of language teaching .

### 4.2 Grammar and lexis : the semantico-grammatical category

In discussing the notional component of his system (the semantico-grammatical category) , Wilkins is ultimately uncommitted on the precise role and importance of lexis . He begins by talking about the semantico-grammatical category , as the name implies , in terms of a relatively close relationship between meaning and grammar . At this point , he makes no reference to lexis whatsoever :

> It is because of the close relationship between semantics and grammar that it is feasible to approach decisions about grammatical forms to be taught through semantics .
>
> (1976:22)

So , what matters in terms of semantics is the grammar of the language : no mention of lexis here . However , when he comes to discuss the various sub-components of the semantico-grammatical component , we find Wilkins making frequent reference to the semantic significance of lexis . In his discussion of time , for example , he talks about the crucial signalling value of deictic lexis - words which mark the days of the week , words like 'now' and 'then' , and grammar words which link up clauses such as 'while' , and 'when' . He goes on to make the point that the logical organisation of time "is rarely directly reflected in the grammatical organisation of time" (1976:29) . Wilkins' point is clear enough : time is signalled in language through a whole variety of devices , some grammatical , some lexical - tense (grammar) and deixis (lexis) , for example , interact and regularly cross-refer in the expression of temporal relationships .

Similarly in his discussion of frequency and sequencing , Wilkins makes as much play of the significance of lexical markers (then , next , during etc.) as he does of grammatical devices such as the 'present habitual' . He points out , indeed , that language frequently does not mark such notions as repetition or frequency in the verb , "but through some specific lexical marker" (1976:30) .

Wilkins then goes on to look at 'relational meanings' . Here he acknowledges the work of Fillmore on case relations , to which I have already made reference in chapter one . In relationships between parts of a sentence , says Wilkins , roles such as agent , initiator , beneficiary and instrument are represented linguistically as relations between nouns , nouns and verbs etc. The importance of such role relations is not lost on Wilkins . He comments :

> Without an awareness of the similarity in the underlying semantic functions that different forms of the sentence may contain , there is no way of controlling them and relating them to one another.
>
> (1976:36)

Wilkins' position on case roles clearly implies that lexical choices have

predictable semantic consequences . He gives , for example , the following illustration of the operation of case :

John boiled the milk (1976:36)

Here , says Wilkins , John plays the role of initiator of the action , but he is not directly the agent . Clearly , though , this is not simply on account of the noun-verb-noun structure , but has to do with the choice of the lexical item 'boiled' as opposed , say , to 'poured' or 'diluted' . If we were to say 'John poured the milk' , then John becomes direct agent . This distinction is essentially a lexical one , but it is one which Wilkins does not make explicit . For Wilkins , it is 'different forms' of the sentence which contain different semantic functions (1976:36) and it is the correspondence between form and meaning (rather than between lexis , grammar and meaning) which he seeks to emphasize . Given that Wilkins had already discussed how lexical items and grammatical forms interact in the creation of meanings (with reference to time , frequency) , he could perhaps have set his discussion of case roles more clearly in this context .

So , in his discussion of the various sub-categories of semantico-grammatical meaning , Wilkins talks both of grammar and lexis . He seems , though , unwilling to formally acknowledge this relationship when he comes to make more general statements about the meanings of notional categories . These categories , after all , are termed 'semantico-*grammatical*' , rather than '*lexico*-grammatical' . When it comes to defining , then , Wilkins leaves us with the impression that grammar can , in general terms , be seen to subsume lexis .

### 4.3 **Communicative Function and Modal Meaning**

Both grammar and lexis have a role to play , says Wilkins , in the expression of communicative function . Nevertheless , the two can be and should be treated separately . What , first , of the grammar ? At which stage in the design of a notional-functional syllabus should the grammar of functions be accounted for ? Wilkins is ambivalent about this . There are , it seems , two contradictory forces

at work . On the one hand , there is quite obviously no one-to-one relationship between language form and functional meaning . On the other , we should look for a recurrent association between a given function and certain linguistic features" (1976:56) . Although functions may be regarded from any number of perspectives :

> ... there are conventional interpretations that would be put upon sentences in the absence of contextual information that would contradict them .
>
> (1976:57)

For example , he says , the grammatical label 'interogative' and the functional label 'question' can , at a level of contextual abstraction , be used interchangeably . The notional/functional syllabus exploits 'conventions of use' . The problem is that Wilkins is not prepared to commit himself to asserting , except in the most general terms , how far along this line of form/function similarities a syllabus designer might be able to go . His point about the interogative/question correlation is self-evident and extremely generalized . Surely it ought to be possible to make rather more specific statements than this .

I have already argued, in discussion of speech acts , that given certain assumptions about context , we can make quite detailed statement about the relationships holding between grammar, lexis and context (cf. section 4.3) . In making these points , ofcourse , it was necessary to draw links between grammar , lexis and context . Just as Searle talks of the way in which certain forms "tend to become conventionally established as the standard idiomatic forms for indirect speech acts" (1969:49) , so Wilkins talks of the "conventional interpretations ... put upon sentences" (1976:57) . Both Searle and Wilkins appeal to conventionalized form/meaning correspondences without referring to the underlying grammar/lexis/context network in search of deeper accounts of the relationship between meaning and expression . It seems quite clear , then , that Wilkins was influenced by speech act theorists in this regard . Yet at the same time , Wilkins seems to be suggesting that the N/F syllabus sets out to exploit such 'conventions of use' .

Wilkins , however , is cagey about going as far as this . In the final analysis , he says , the choice of grammatical exponents for functions will , to a substantial extent , be determined by "the exact sociolinguistic conditions under which communication takes place" (1976:57) . This , ofcourse , is true enough , but it is a point which applies virtually to all statements about meaning in context . To an extent , the syllabus designer is in the business of making generalizations about meanings in context , while showing an awareness of the influence of 'exact sociolinguistic conditions' in his/her choice of language , and in the extent to which variations and flexibility are allowed for at the level of classroom implementation .

Wilkins talks of 'grammatical exponents' of communicative function , but what of lexis ? He is more hesitant here . Categories of communicative function "do not so much demand a specific lexical content as operate on a lexicon determined by other factors" - such as situation , accounted for by a prior needs analysis . Needs analysis "goes part of the way towards defining the lexical content of learning" (ibid.) . Thus Wilkins sketches a broad distinction between grammar and lexis . The former can be accounted for partly by exploiting 'conventional interpretations' , though only to a very limited degree . Lexis is much more dependent on the choice of particular contexts .

So saying , Wilkins effectively sees no need to make any kind of clear comment about the relationship between grammar and lexis . Ofcourse functional exponents must make reference to both , but this is essentially down to the constraints of particular contexts of situation , about which Wilkins has little to say : wait for the needs analysis .

**4.4 SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS**

A difficulty with Wilkins' approach is the way in which grammar and lexis , and his three main categories (of notions , functions and modal meaning) , remain essentially distinct and unrelated . He talks quite separately of the grammatical

and lexical components of communicative function . How , though , can we say both that 'there are conventional interpretations put upon sentences' , and that 'categories of communicative function draw their lexical content from the particular context in which they are put to use' ? What role does lexis play in situations where these conventional interpretations are considered feasible ?

Had Wilkins allowed for some 'cross-fertilization' between his three categories , he might have been able to say more about how grammar , lexis and context can inform each other . What is the role of propositions (semantico-grammatical) in indirect , modal constructions (modal meaning) which can signal directive illocutions (communicative function) ? In chapter one , the suggestion was made that these categories can indeed be seen to relate one to the other . Indeed , it could be argued that consideration of a grammar/lexis relationship virtually compels us to deal with interrelations of this kind .

Within Wilkins' approach there is a tendency to regard lexis more in terms of a compilation of individual items , whose value and function is unpredictable , than as a level of language which might be comparable to , and which might interact with grammar . The hypothesis suggested by Wilkins has a strong appeal , partly on account of its ultimate simplicity . By representing language as broadly semantico-grammatical , Wilkins suggests that at the level of syllabus design , grammar has a kind of self contained meaning .

## 5. THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF *COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUS DESIGN*

### 5.1 Introduction

With the exploitation , within applied linguistics , of Hymes' concept of communicative competence (1966) , syllabus designers found it necessary to deal with a number of syllabus components simultaneously . It was no longer a matter of working primarily with grammar . With functions and notions as well as structures to cope with , the question arose of how to provide an adequate organisational framework . How could this enriched and much more complex menu of syllabus components best be handled ? The job of the syllabus designer was no longer chiefly one simply of selecting and sequencing . There was now the additional difficulty of integrating diverse components into a coherent teaching programme . To what degree have designers of content syllabuses coped effectively with these demands , and what have the implications been for the relationships between grammar , lexis and context ?

### 5.2 THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE AND ITS PROBLEMS

The organising principle involves taking a single component of the syllabus , and using it as the pivotal or key component . All other components are sequenced in terms of the organising principle . All other components are integrated in terms of it . If , as is most commonly the case , grammar is taken as the organising component , then the syllabus will be based around a grammatical sequence . Functional exponents would then be placed alongside structures to which they could be seen to make reference . The sequence , though , would be framed essentially in grammatical terms . There would , ofcourse , be a functional sequence of sorts , but it would be determined by the grammar . So we often find coursebooks which place request exponents together in a unit , because they all share certain modal (ie. 'structural') forms . In a situation such as this , then , the functional component would be organized in line with structural grading .

This situation can very easily give rise to a rather haphazard functional development (Johnson:1982/67) . For example , what do we do about functional exponents which do not , or do not with any regularity involve similar structural

elements ? The organising principle provides no clear guidelines for coping with such a difficulty . Strictly speaking , non structural items (such as functional or rhetorical forms) can only be systematically introduced where they happen to conform to structural regularities . Consequently , the kind of lexical and grammatical variety which is invariably needed for a coherent functional development is simply not available .

This view is contentious . It could be argued that it does not allow for sufficient flexibility or negotiation between syllabus and methodology . Clearly the syllabus need not , and arguably should not prescribe the absolute limits on what constitutes target language . A syllabus must to some extent be an idealized construct : a guide to teachers and learners , but not a straightjacket . It must allow for adjustment , alteration and addition , in accordance with the actual circumstances of teaching .

It was , perhaps , with this in mind that Brumfit proposed his 'spiral syllabus' (1980:121) . His argument is that since functional items cannot be systematically integrated with structural items , only the latter should be sequenced by the syllabus designer . This would be the core grammatical sequence (or 'ladder' as Brumfit put it) . Brumfit suggests that functional and rhetorical forms should remain as checklist specifications , to be integrated into the grammatical core by the teacher , during the course of the actual teaching programme . Thus the syllabus designer provides the core grammatical sequence , allowing the teacher to integrate functional items on an ad hoc basis . Brumfit referred to this as a 'cross-fertilization' between a grammatical 'ladder' and a functional-notional 'spiral' embellished around it . The difficulty with this is that it does nothing in principle to solve the problem of how structures and functions can be mutually accommodated . It merely shifts the responsibility away from the syllabus designer , towards the teacher .

We are still left , then , with the problem of a grammatical organising principle which seeks to impose a framework of integration between language components which

is highly restrictive in linguistic terms . The more rigid the organising principle , the more it becomes necessary to rely on a highly flexible approach in methodology to make up for the constraints imposed by the syllabus organisation . In many ways the organising principle looks like a hangover from the structural syllabus . It is difficult to see how such an approach can cope adequately with the competing demands for sequencing and integrating diverse components . Indeed , the organising principle has little to say , directly , about integration per se . The point seems to be that if we start out with , say , a core grammatical sequence , then this in itself will largely determine the question of integration . Functional items are 'integrated' with a prior structural sequence , so that sequencing effectively determines integrating . Why should this be so ? The answer , perhaps , is that the organising principle works most comfortably with a **single** component . If we make structure the core component , then functional 'organisation' will be established in terms of the structural core . The two cannot very easily be given equal weight , so that integrating follows on from and is subservient to sequencing .

### 5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE FOR GRAMMAR AND LEXIS

I have suggested that grammar-based courses often invest grammar with a kind of self contained meaning : lexical items are assumed to naturally 'fit' into the independent meaning of the grammar . I have talked , too , of how with a structural organising principle , grammatical items are assumed to 'fit' into units which are grammatically labelled and grammatically organized . There is a striking similarity here between the organisation of syllabuses , and the way in which their linguistic components are conceptualized . Both pressupose that components of language can be quite rigidly prioritized , both de-emphasize the importance of integration , on an equal footing , between one component and another . In other words , there is a correspondence between the approach taken to linguistic description and its application within syllabus design : grammar is very often taken to be dominant over , and largely independent of lexis .

What is lacking , in both cases , is adequate flexibility . How , for example ,

would an organising principle approach deal with the following exponents :

1. If you do that again , I'll give you **a punch on the nose** ! (?warning)
2. If you do that again , I'll give you **a box of chocolates** ! (?promise)
3. You really must **buy** some cake ! (?order)
4. You really must **have** some cake ! (?insistent offer)

With a grammatical organising principle , 1 and 2 might be dealt with under the structural heading of 'conditionals' . 3 and 4 might come in a unit on modality . Clearly , though , these examples show a mutual modification between grammar and lexis , which is not at all evident from the grammatical labelling . What we have here , quite clearly , is not just grammar , but different combinations of grammar and lexis which give rise to different kinds of meaning .

We could , alternatively , imagine a functional organising principle . Here , 1 and 2 might be located separately , one in a unit on promises , the other on warnings . Similarly 3 and 4 might be divided between offers and orders . But would this be a more satisfactory solution ? As the simple lexical distinctions make clear , the difference between a warning and a promise may be marked lexically but not grammatically , so that it would be useful to highlight , by putting the two together , how one can easily 'become' the other . With a strictly functional organisation , as with a grammatical one , it would not be easy to highlight this kind of interdependency .

Ideally , what would be worth investigating is the possibility of separate grammatical and lexical components , without one effectively subsuming the other . Thus we would not simply have a unit on modal verbs . Rather , there might be a series of units on modal verbs in association with different lexical items . Different combinations , together with different contexts , yielding different meanings . Ofcourse , many coursebooks include units of this kind , and have been doing so over a number of years . However , a syllabus which spelled out , in principle , that there are both grammatical and lexical aspects to 'meaning potential' , should make it easier for learners to learn to exploit such a system .

*Notional Syllabuses* contains no clear guidelines on language should be organized for a teaching programme . Wilkins saw no intrinsic way of ordering categories , or of linking one unit up to the next . He said merely that the situational or stylistic appropriacy of grammar can be taken as the main criterion for selection (1976:65) . Such a formulation disregards the situational and stylistic appropriacy of lexis .

Wilkins , ofcourse , was writing in the context of a wider project undertaken by the Council of Europe . Another product of this project was Van Ek 's *Threshold Level* (1975) . Van Ek provided no discussion whatsoever on the rationale for including the words listed in his lexical checklist . It is debatable , infact , whether Threshold can be regarded as anything more than a proto syllabus . Its' linguistic content is specified only in the form of separate and unrelated checklists . Matters of sequencing and integrating are left out of account .

With the majority of coursebooks it is grammar which is taken as the main component , with lexis relegated to a position of subsidiary importance . The relationship between grammar and lexis for which Widdowson (1990) argues (cf. chapter one : section 1) - that grammar acts on lexical associations to fix them more precisely in relation to context - is not , and arguably could not be accommodated . The adoption of a single organizing principle does not , ofcourse , necessitate a grammatical organization ; course programmes of varying orientation - shifting , for example , from a grammatical to a functional basis - are perfectly feasible (cf. Johnson 1982 ; Allen 1980) . But this kind of variation does not allow for greater flexibility in terms of sequencing or integrating at any one point in the syllabus , so that lexis is likely to remain subsumed by grammar .

I have suggested that an alternative approach could involve the separating out of lexis from grammar so that - congruent with Widdowson's (1990) approach - grammar is applied to lexis , rather than the other way around . In chapter 7 I will look into this alternative approach in some detail , while in chapter 6 I consider the kind of methodology which would be facilitated by such a syllabus design .

## 6. THE RELATIONAL SYLLABUS

### 6.1 **Outline : Informing the syllabus**

The Relational Syllabus (Crombie 1985b) is based on different kinds of relationship which exist between propositions , or arguments , or conversational moves . Crombie identifies 2 basic kinds of binary relations , which she refers to as 'binary values' .

The first of these is concerned with **interactive semantic relations** , such as elicitation/response . The second is concerned with **general semantic relations** , such as contrast or cause/effect . Dealing first with the general semantic relations , Crombie provides a detailed taxonomy , which includes the following categories (my examples) :

| | |
|---|---|
| **Temporal Relations** | a) Chronological sequence |
| | b) Temporal overlap (simultaneity) |
| **Matching Relations** | a) re. differences (contrast) |
| | b) re. similarities (comparison) |
| **Cause/Effect** | a) Reason/Result (Bill left because he was hungry) |
| | b) Grounds/Conclusion (he left , so he missed the party) |
| | c) Means/Result (Bill escaped by getting a taxi) |
| | d) Means/Purpose (Bill got a taxi so as to escape) |
| | e) Condition/Consequence (Had Bill got a taxi ....) |

**Interactive semantic relations** often occur in conversational discourse in alliance with **general semantic relations** . For example :

| **Utterance** | **Interactive Relationship** | **General Semantic Relationship** |
|---|---|---|
| a. Why did he get here so late ? | Elicitation | Result |
| b. He missed the bus | Replying Informative | Reason |

(adapted from Crombie 1985b:50)

A 'why' question , says Crombie , frequently signals a result or a conclusion of

some kind , while asking for the reason/result pairing to be completed through supplying a reason/justification . The above example illustrates how general semantic relations (such as reason/result) can span moves in a conversational exchange , emphasizing the point that the discourse values which they represent are not confined to the intra-sentential level .

Much of Crombie's work is concerned with developing and analysing interpropositional relationships of this kind . She argues strongly that binary values are basic to our understanding of how language is structured , both at the level of the sentence and at the level of connected discourse . They thus constitute a strong basis for the construction of a relational syllabus . Binary relations , says Crombie , are fundamental categories of meaning . Unlike Wilkins' notions and functions (1976) , they are not isolated units of linguistic description ; rather , they are discourse values . So a syllabus based on binary relationships will encourage "the development of language courses where there is a concentration on the creation and interpretation of coherent discourse" (1985b:2) . Crombie argues that since the total number of such binary relations is limited and analytically manageable , so that the syllabus designer is not faced with the difficulty of making an arbitrary selection . Furthermore , the validity of basing a syllabus on binary relationships is further enhanced given the fact that they have "a high degree of comparability across languages" (1985b:3) .

### 6.2 OUTLINE : THE SYLLABUS FRAMEWORK

Crombie suggests two possible approaches to the development of relational syllabus inventories . The first she calls **homogenous** . Here the syllabus would be composed entirely of relational frames (like reason/result or elicitation/response) , together with 'relational cues' (linguistic signalling of relational frames) .

The second she calls the **cooperative** inventory . This is composed in part of labelled items ie. learning units subdivided according to aspects of form and meaning . These divide into three :

1. **Structurally labelled learning units**
2. **Semantically labelled learning units** - emphasizing the association between grammatical forms and conceptual categories : for example , 'because' clauses together with the reason/result relation .
3. **Relational learning units** - with the focus directly on binary values , Crombie's term for the functional patterns of interactional and general semantic relations , as they occur in the context of connected discourse .

Crombie's suggestion is that these three types of unit could be used to inform the sequencing of the syllabus :

> In such a three-tiered system , syntactically labelled learning units could feed into semantically labelled learning units and semantically labelled learning units could , in turn , feed into relational learning units . Thus , the implementation of semantically labelled learning units would involve the grammatical expertise acquired in structurally labelled learning units ; the implementation of relational units would involve the exploitation of the grammatical expertise ..... *and* the understanding acquired through the association of a grammatical form with a particular conceptual category .... which has been the focus of attention in semantically labelled learning units .
>
> (1985b:86)

Crombie's own preference is for the introduction of grammatical constructions in a systematic and discourse motivated way . She thus advocates considerable flexibility in the way one type of learning unit feeds into another . For this purpose she suggests the introduction of 'extension and integration' units , where newly introduced relational patterns are set against relational realizations which have already been introduced (1985b:87) . Thus the organisation of the syllabus would be cyclical .

## 6.3 ORGANISATION AND INTEGRATION IN THE RELATIONAL SYLLABUS

How does the relational syllabus compare to the other syllabus designs I have been looking at , and to what extent does Crombie's work on binary values deal more adequately than before with grammar/lexis relationships ? The organising principle approach has been criticized for leading to a 'distortion' of linguistic components

and for being a rather crude and insensitive tool for integrating components together . Crombie's conceptualisation of relational values would seem to go a very long way towards solving this problem . This is because her syllabus is based on relational values which do not themselves make cut-and-dried distinctions between general semantic relations (not so far removed from Wilkins' semantico-grammatical category) and interactive relations (bearing some similarities with Wilkins' communicative functions ) . Similarly there is no rigid distinction made between language at sentence level and language at the level of extended discourse . Crombie's categories neatly cut across such distinctions , emphasizing their fundamental similarities , rather (as was the case with Wilkins) their differences. Thus the very way in which language is conceptualized in the relational syllabus - its forms and its meanings - emphasizes the links between one 'level' of language and another .

Crombie's suggestions for the design of the syllabus further enhance this perspective . The learning units are designed so as to allow for a flexible development , from focus on form through to focus on meaning in discourse . What is most striking about Crombie's proposals for syllabus organisation is that her structural , semantic and relational units do not in any divisive way distinguish between interactional and general semantic relations . Thus her suggested development from less to more emphasis on connected discourse , her flexible approach to sequencing , is based on a fundamental integration between levels of language .

### 6.4 GRAMMAR AND LEXIS IN THE RELATIONAL SYLLABUS

Crombie makes frequent reference to 'lexico-grammar', and to the fact that binary values may be signalled not only through the grammar , but also through the lexis . this is justified in a variety of ways . She says , for example , that in discourse , patterns such as problem/solution are often explicitly signalled by lexical means , as are relational values : (grammar) words like *however* and *because*

play an explicit role in highlighting interpropositional relationships .

She makes a number of further statements which would seem to support precisely the kind of interdependence of grammar and lexis which is left unaccounted for in other content syllabus designs . Since these comments have a direct bearing on the subject of this chapter , it is worth quoting them in full :

> 1. Because lexical items of various types ..... all play an important role in relational value realisation and signalling , a concentration on relational values creates an environment in which all aspects of the linguistic system must be treated as being equally significant.
>
> (1985b:107)

> 2. A relational syllabus encourages an awareness of the stylistic and informational implications of grammatical and lexical choices . For example , in looking at various encodings of Reason-Result in English, we see that there are a number of different ways of emphasizing the reason member of the relation : it can , in complex sentences , be placed in initial position ; it can be embedded with anaphoric reference (....and because he did so...) ; it can be placed in a separate sentence or tone group ; it can receive contrastive or contradictory emphasis within a cleft sentence construction .
>
> (1985b:107)

The difficulties start when we move away from the general to the more specific statements . Despite the former , Crombie makes rather little use of lexis in her more detailed statements about types of binary value signalling . In the second of the two quotes above , her general statement about the implications of "grammatical and lexical choices" is followed by illustrations pertaining only to the grammar . Similarly , we have a 'structurally labelled' learning unit but not a 'lexico-grammatically' labelled unit . If grammar and lexis both play a part in signalling kinds of interpropositional meaning - and Crombie is very clear that they do - then what exactly are the implications for the relationship between the two ? . Under what circumstances and in what ways are meanings signalled by the grammar , and what is the role of lexis in these cases ? These and related questions provide the framework for the following three chapters . Here we can only look at a few examples , in order to make the general point a little clearer .

Crombie draws a stark distinction between two kinds of language . The first comprises lexico-syntactically signalled binary values which "can be identified even when their realizing linguistic units have been abstracted" . The second concerns unitary values (functions and functional exponents) which are "rarely identified linguistically" and which are generally tied to particular contexts of situation (1985b:5) . This is , perhaps , something of an over-generalization . I have already suggested (cf. chapter 1 : section 4) that some forms signal functional meanings rather more clearly than others , and that both grammar and lexis play crucial roles here . The point is that some forms , as Searle (1979) has pointed out , signal illocutionary meaning with considerable regularity (eg. indirect request forms) . That this is not the case with all functional exponents does not in itself argue against their value , *en bloc* .

With this point in mind , it is worth questioning whether interpropositional values are so very different that they can be considered , in effect , to regularly signal their meaning transparently . What , for example , should we make of the following examples ?

7. Jane bribed the guard , and so she **escaped** *(means/result)*
8. Jane bribed the guard , and so she **sinned** *(grounds/conclusion)*
9. Janet forced **the guests** to get out of the room *(?reason/result)*
10. Janet forced **the lock** to get out of the room *(means/purpose)*

With 7 we have a clear implication of a means/result relation - *Jane's intention was to escape , and she did so by bribing the guard* . In 8 , such a reading is not possible : in all likelihood , 8 signals a grounds/conclusion relation - *by virtue of bribing the guard , Jane committed a sin* . With 9 , we have what amounts to a general causative relation , with the stress on Jane's causative action . In contrast , 10 strongly suggests a means/purpose relation - *Jane forced the lock in order to get out of the room* .

Crombie's point , that functional exponents are highly context sensitive , and therefore are "rarely identified linguistically", is ofcourse a tenable one . She

points out how changes of lexical item can mark distinctions between threats and promises (1985b:5) . But it is not just functional exponents which are subject to this kind of modification , since many binary values are also semantically sensitive to lexical change . They are probably less sensitive in general terms than unitary values , but the difference is one of degree . Since binary values are sensitive to lexical change of this kind , there is a case for building this grammar/lexis interdependency rather more systematically into those relational learning units which focus on language form : **'structurally** labelled' could well be replaced by **'lexico-syntactically** signalled' .

What of cases where there is no signalling grammar word of any kind ? Here , lexis can play a still more explicit role :

11. **Seeing** the flames , Bill ran upstairs *(reason/result)*
12. **Fighting** the flames , Bill ran upstairs *(simultaneity)*
13. **Leaving** the flames , Bill ran upstairs *(?sequence)*

Crombie concentrates her attention on the explicit conjunctive/grammatical signalling of general semantic relations . But where such relations are not coded so explicitly (as with the adverbial clauses of 11-13) it is the lexis as much as the grammar which is used to code the interpropositional meaning .

What is important to note is that to say 'grammar and lexis each have a role to play in signalling meaning' does not in itself say anything about how this may happen , or about how such an insight might be built into a syllabus framework in an organized and principled way . To do this we would need to go further . We would need to establish a grammar/lexis relationship through which statements could be made about the 'meaning potential' of the one in relation to the other .

## 7. THE *LEXICAL SYLLABUS*

### 7.1 OUTLINE

Much of the work done on lexical syllabuses has evolved from recent studies of word combinations and word usages made on the basis of computer-held texts . In an article explaining the rationale for a lexical syllabus , Sinclair and Renouf (1988) begin by lamenting precisely the relegation of lexis with which this chapter has been concerned . There has not , they say , been a systematic approach to the exploitation of lexis in language teaching . Despite a recent interest taken in a lexical approach to language study (eg. McCarthy:1984) , the problem remains that vocabulary is , generally speaking , still regarded as the means by which other features of the language are exemplified .

In order to do something about this problem , Sinclair and Renouf propose that lexical criteria should inform decisions on the content and the organising framework of a syllabus . With this in mind , they suggest that the main focus of study should be on :

1. The commonest word forms in the language
2. Their central patterns of usage
3. The combinations which they typically form

(1988:148)

Firstly , how should we go about deciding what the commonest word forms are ? The best indication of this comes from computer-held banks of text , such as the Birmingham Collection of English Text . We should look at this data together with information about cotextual variations and patterns of usage . Sometimes , they say , word paradigms share a common body of meanings , so that *get* , *gets* , *getting* and *got* may share a common identity of form with systematic correlations in meaning . But this is not always the case . They give the example of the clearly related lexical pairing *certain* and *certainly* , which have quite different ranges of use . *Certain* functions most frequently as a determiner , as in *a certain number of students* . *Certainly* is invariably used as an adverb , as with *it will certainly be interesting* (1988:147/8) .

In a similar way , the same word may occur in different contexts of use . Take the verb *see* . Most people , say Sinclair and Renouf , would probably say that its most common meaning is in the sense of *seeing through one's eyes* . Yet data based studies indicate that it is most frequently used in interactive discourse - *I see* and *you see* .

So the same word can take on different meanings in different contexts . In many cases , this variability involves what Sinclair and Renouf call **delexicality** . This they define as :

> ... the tendency of certain commoner transitive verbs to carry particular nouns or adjectives ... (1988:153)

An example is the verb *have* . In most coursebooks , *have* is given a concrete meaning (have a bath/have a meal) , yet its commonest delexical occurrence is with various kinds of abstract noun - *have a look* , *have a strong feeling for* , *have minor doubts* etc. (ibid.)

Delexicality shows how patterns of usage and combinations of words are often indivisible . Some word combinations are highly lexicalized , such as *a happy marriage* . Others may involve grammatical idiosyncracies , so that 'Bill acceded to Jane's demands' is more common that 'Jane's demands were acceded to' . Common grammar words , too , have habitual patterns of collocation -*each hour* , *each day*, and so on .

In applying such ideas to syllabus design , Sinclair and Renouf make lexis and lexical combinations the primary consideration . Instead of leading to a piecemeal acquisition of a large vocabulary , the lexical syllabus :

> .... concentrates on making full use of the words that the learner already has , at any particular stage . It teaches that there is far more general utility in the recombination of known elements than in the addition of less easily usable items . (1988:155)

Thus , instead of building up phrases , "the learner will be gradually breaking them down , sensing the variability" (1988:156). By arranging language according to

common combinations of a core vocabulary , and by allowing the learner to rearrange these combinations , Sinclair and Renouf seem to be saying that a lexical organization will provide the learner with an appropriate type and range of input . This distinctive notion contrasts with other forms of content syllabus :

> In the construction of a balanced and comprehensive course , the designer will no doubt keep a tally of structures , notions and functions , as well as vocabulary . But in the presentation of materials based on a lexical syllabus , it is not strictly necessary to draw attention to these check lists . If the analysis of the words and phrases has been done correctly , then all the relevant grammar, etc. should appear in a proper proportion . Verb tenses , for example , which are often the main organising feature of a course , are combinations of some of the commonest words in the language . (1988:155)

## 7.2 GRAMMAR AND LEXIS IN THE LEXICAL SYLLABUS

Before evaluating these ideas , two cautionary points are worth making . Firstly , Sinclair and Renouf say very little about the design features of a lexical syllabus , so that some of the comments which follow are based on rather a sketchy notion of how these might be implemented . Secondly , although a series of coursebooks based to some degree on these ideas has been published (D. and J. Willis:1988) , there is at present a paucity of published material to explain in any detail the principles on which the course is based .

This said , the first point to be made is that Sinclair and Renouf do not make clear how an inventory of lexical items/collocations constitutes the basis for a pedagogical syllabus design . The prerequisites for this are , surely , clear criteria for sequencing and (possibly) for integrating . In the absence of any notion of what constitutes complexity , it is not atall easy to see how a sequence of target language , however loosely framed , could be properly formulated . If the criterion is simply 'start with the most frequent items , and proceed towards less frequent ones , then this raises a whole web of difficulties . Let us say , for example , that unit one is based around the 25 most frequent words . On the basis of the Birmingham corpus , these would be as follows :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. the | 10. was | 19. had |
| 2. of | 11. is | 20. but |
| 3. and | 12. he | 21. they |
| 4. to | 13. for | 22. at |
| 5. a | 14. you | 23. his |
| 6. in | 15. on | 24. have |
| 7. that | 16. with | 25. not |
| 8. I | 17. as | |
| 9. it | 18. be | |

Now clearly these grammar words cannot be made sense of without reference to their combination with other , content words . But here we get to tricky ground . If , for example , we choose to focus on *have* (no. 24 above) , should we start with some of its most frequent , abstract delexical uses , like *have an idea* ? This could prove difficult for two reasons . Firstly , although Sinclair and Renouf point out that textbooks over concentrate on the more concrete uses of *have* (like *have a bath)* , such uses have a strong pedagogic justification : they are relatively easy to conceptualize and to contextualize . An important point for elementary learners. Secondly , *have an idea* is difficult to introduce without some clarifying context : 'John had a bath' conveys a clearer , more independent kind of meaning than 'John had an idea' . To overcome this difficulty , we would have to draw in quite a large amount of other language . How , though , should this other language be chosen , and what sort of lexical combinations should it draw on ? I noted in section 3 that in the structural syllabus little account was taken of the context in which language is to be presented , and a similar point might be raised here . The point is that decisions about contextualisation and decisions about lexical selection must go hand in hand . The one inevitably influences the other .

This criticism might be taken to be rather excessive . However , the underlying point , that we need systematic reference to criteria other than lexis in order to select and sequence efficiently , is not given a great deal of attention by Sinclair and Renouf . The standard criterion for doing this is , ofcourse , grammar . We surely need to consider not only lexis in relation to contexts of use, but also grammar . But Sinclair and Renouf state categorically that a proper analysis of words and phrases will in some unexplained way **give** us the structures , the functions , and so on . This is an argument which it is difficult to come to

terms with . Surely , to have a "proper proportion" of structures , or notions , or functions , we need in addition to have some policy on sequencing and integrating . How else could we put together language expressions which share a common structure and which share a common area of meaning ? How else , within the framework of a content syllabus , can we encourage learners to perceive such quasi-systematic regularities ? It is difficult to see how such a framework could arise purely on the basis of a 'correct' analysis of words and phrases (1988:155) . A lexical data-base is not a syllabus , even if it is notated in terms of collocations and so forth : it is , at best , an informed checklist .

This brings me to a second point , concerning **integration** . Although Sinclair and Renouf talk at length about different kinds of lexical association , there is little mention of how such combinations may be regarded as being more or less 'lexicalized' . They do indeed mention that some expressions are syntactically stigmatized - we say 'Bill acceded to Jane's demands' more often that we say 'Jane's demands were acceded to' , though there might be some debate about the validity of presuming that one is a paraphrase of the other . The point , though , is that degrees of collocation/colligation - the idea that it may be more or less possible to make sense of an expression in terms of a grammatical analysis - is barely touched upon . We are left with the feeling that word combinations can be almost equally regarded as typical lexical collocations , across the whole continuum from basic colligations through to highly formulaic expressions . To take account of such a continuum , the syllabus designer is virtually compelled to consider how best to integrate grammar with lexis , structures with functions . The more we try to define structures with reference to lexis , and to organize a syllabus accordingly , the less easy it is to retain a sufficiently explicit structural component . It is thus all the more difficult for learners to invest in the generative capacity of grammar .

Sinclair and Renouf appear to be sidestepping the whole question of interrelations between grammar and lexis when they comment that "verb tenses ... are combinations

of some of the commonest words in the language" (1988:155) . This point is taken up by the Willises who , in a paper outlining the rationale for the *lexical syllabus* (1988b) comment :

> .... what , in the structural syllabus , constitutes a structure ? The answer , surely , is that structures are no more than common collocations. In listing the three conditionals one is doing no more than saying that the word IF collocates strongly with certain verb forms -WILL , WOULD , WOULD HAVE , HAD and so on . In the same way what pedagogic grammars tell us about the present perfect tense can be reduced to a series of statements to do with collocations .
>
> (1988b:3/4)

If by 'collocation' the Willises mean 'string of words' - and if we include grammar words in this category - then there is a self evident truth to their statement . But where does it get us in terms of advancing a new , lexical approach to language teaching ? At a very simple level , one of the great advantages to grammatical classification is that it allows learners both to perceive system at work in language form , and at the same time to massively economize on what would otherwise become an infinite list of possible word combinations .

What Sinclair/Renouf and the Willises are after is an approach to language teaching which focuses the learners attention on word meaning , encouraging them to "see sentences as combinations of meaningful units" (Willises 1988b:5) , rather than as mechanically manipulated structures . Such an objective has much to commend it , and it is not inconsistent with the approach adopted in chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis . What is lacking , though , is a framework accommodating both language description and language teaching , which allows a **synthesis** between grammar (as the most systematic and generalisable categorization of language form) and words (as the meaningful components of grammatical structure) . It seems that the proponents of the lexical syllabus are arguing for grammar to be radically de-emphasized in a way which is unecessary and uneconomical ; so much so that a principled and pedagogically viable relationship between grammar and lexis is not argued for .

When it comes to exploiting relationships between grammar and lexis , then , a

lexical syllabus where grammar is something of a disembodied checklist is unlikely to be any more effective than a grammatical syllabus with a lexical checklist .

There is a striking similarity between the ideas of Sinclair and Renouf , and the criticisms which were made earlier about Basic English . In both cases , there is insufficient focus on the interdependencies of lexis and grammar . Basic English failed partly because it concentrated too much on lexis , and because it kept grammar and lexis , in effect , as separate checklists . There was no clear way forward in terms of visualizing how the two could be integrated in an informed sequence . It could be argued that the proposals for the *lexical syllabus* suffer from similar drawbacks .

**8. SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS**

In these first two chapters , I have suggested that relationships between grammar and lexis have not been much considered , either in descriptive linguistics or in language pedagogy . By and large , grammar has been held to be the dominant and determining element , with lexis regarded as subordinate and dependent category . Although it is difficult to ascertain with any precision the extent to which developments in pedagogy have been directly influenced by linguists , it seems clear enough that the notional/functional syllabus - which has been by far the most influential approach to syllabus design over the past 15 years - was directly informed by work on speech acts (Searle 1969) and case grammar (cf. Fillmore 1968).

The most notable exceptions to this have been Wilkins and Crombie , both of whom have given more attention to the way in which grammar and lexis can each contribute to the expression of meaning . Both with Wilkins and Crombie , though , the perception that lexis as well as grammar has meaning potential has not been greatly exploited , and neither has provided a framework whereby the relationship between the two might be explicitly examined .

Work on speech acts and on formulaic language has clearly been influential , most notably with the notional/functional and with the lexical syllabus . Wilkins saw

the potential for making generalizations about speech act realizations , but he made no attempt to develop these , or to make similar generalizations about the role of lexis . Sinclair and Renouf have taken the opposite tack , dealing with language in general from a lexical point of view , with grammar pushed very forcefully out of the limelight . But whether with a grammatical emphasis (as with the structural syllabus) or with a lexical emphasis (as with Basic English and the *lexical syllabus*) , approaches to course design have for the most part emphasized either grammar or lexis , while having little to say about interrelations between the two . The following three chapters provide a linguistic analysis which investigates relationships between grammar , lexis and contexts in some detail . Drawing on this analysis I return in chapters six and seven to questions of pedagogic exploitation, in an attempt to resolve some of the problems I have outlined in this chapter .

# CHAPTER THREE

## *GRAMMAR , LEXIS AND CONTEXT : OVERVIEW OF A HYPOTHESIS*

### 1. BACKGROUND : GRAMMAR AND MEANING

The purpose of this section is to outline the work of various linguists which provides specific background to the theory presented subsequently in section 2 .

### 1.1 GRAMMATICIZATION : GRAMMAR AS PROCESS

#### 1.1.1 A continuum of grammaticization : over time

What is grammar ? I suggested in chapter one that it has often been regarded as a construct which is static , systematic , and all embracing . Thus Chomsky (1957/65) utilizes grammar as the central and determining component of his framework . Similarly , Halliday (1964/1966/1983) argues that it is through grammar and through grammar alone that we can account for "the largest number of events as simply as possible" (1964:23) . Yet many examples of language use demonstrate quite clearly that grammar is a device which we make more or less use of . For example , early child language is largely ungrammaticized , as is pidgin language . Where does grammar come into play here ?

According to Givon (1979a/1979b/1984) , both pidgin and child language provide illustration of grammar as a developmental process : crudely , from [-grammar] , as with pidgin languages , through to [+ grammar] , as with creoles . We start out with relatively unsystematic forms of communication , using all available resources ; gradually we develop grammar as a means of formally coding meanings which would otherwise remain open to ambiguity . Thus central to Givon's thinking is his conceptualization of the **diachronic process of grammaticization** . This process operates along a continuum :

*least grammaticized* — *most grammaticized*
PRAGMATIC MODE ---------- SYNTACTIC MODE

Ontogenetic : early pragmatic -> later syntactic
Pidgins/creoles : nongrammar -> grammar
Register level : unplanned/informal -> planned/formal

Fig. 1 (Givon 1979a:82)

So each of these 'separate' areas (ontogenetic etc.) makes common reference to the gradual development of grammar as a process of **diachronic development** .

### 1.1.2 A continuum of grammaticization : at any one point in time

But just as children learn gradually to grammaticize , to formally code certain meanings into recognized syntactic structures , so all languages are themselves involved in this process of diachronic change . It is not simply that pidgins develop into creoles ; rather , at any one point in time all languages show indications of diachronic development . Thus we are able to identify forms coexisting in the language of mature speakers which may be more or less grammaticized . As Givon puts it :

> A mature speaker has not lost his earlier mode but , rather , has slowly acquired progressively-more-syntacticized registers . (1979a:107)

Givon exemplifies the pragmatic and syntactic modes as follows :

| | PRAGMATIC MODE | SYNTACTIC MODE |
|---|---|---|
| a) | topic-comment structure | subject-predicate structure |
| b) | loose conjunction | tight subordination |
| c) | no use of grammatical morphology | elaborate use of grammatical morphology |
| d) | semantically simple verbs | semantically complex verbs |

*(adapted from Givon 1979a:98)*

## 1.2 GRAMMATICIZATION AND MEANING

### 1.2.1 Discourse and the origins of grammaticization

What motivates the rise of grammaticization ? According to Givon , grammar has its origins in discourse . As Givon puts it , " .... syntax *cannot* be explained or understood without reference to its use in communication" so that syntactic structure can be shown to "emanate from the properties of human discourse" (1979b:49) . Hatch (1978) makes similar points , specifically with reference to the early stages of language learning , although rather more cautiously :

> It is assumed that one first learns how to manipulate structures , that gradually builds up a repertoire of structures and then , somehow , learns how to put the structures to use in discourse . We would like to consider the possibility that just the reverse happens . One learns how to do conversation ... and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed . (1978:404)

But it is not only in language acquisition that grammaticization is said to grow out of discourse . According to Givon , this process is also found in the shift from pidgin to creole , and in the diachronic development of all languages :

> I would like to suggest that all [these developments] represent processes by which loose , paratactic , PRAGMATIC discourse structures develop - over time - into tight , GRAMMATICALIZED syntactic structures . (1979a:82/3)

### 1.2.2 Grammar and the coding of meaning

Central to Givon's framework is the **discourse motivated origin of grammaticization.** This concept has far reaching consequences . Grammar is said to develop out of the processes of communication , and communication - unequivocally -has to do with the expression and negotiation of meaning . Thus grammar and meaning are closely bound up with each other . Givon puts it this way :

> Rather than wind up with a formal and AUTONOMOUS level of structural organization in language , we do indeed find syntax to be a DEPENDENT , functionally motivated entity whose formal properties reflect - perhaps not completely but nearly so - the properties of the explanatory parameters that motivate its rise .
>
> (1979a:82)

In 1 and 2 below , for example , we have examples of pragmatic language which is ungrammaticized and clearly dependent on context for its interpretation : 4 is particularly context dependent (who is the agent ? Who the patient ?) :

1. farmer - kill - duckling
2. farmer - kill - lion

According to Widdowson (1990) , with 1 and 2 we have a kind of unfocussed proposition . In cases of ambiguity (2) , however , we need to call on grammatical devices such as word order to clarify what role relations are intended . Grammatical inflection (ie. grammaticizing 1 and 2) enables us to give such processes a location in time , through tense and aspect (farmer killed/is killing duckling etc) . Marking for tense and aspect , says Widdowson , are "communicative devices for getting features of context into focus" and hence :

> The less effective the words are in identifying relevant features of context ... , the more dependent they become on grammatical modification of one sort or another.
>
> (1990:86)

So grammar has a functional role in coding and clarifying meanings . This

functional perspective involves a rejection of the structuralist tradition in linguistics : the notion of function played no explicit role in structuralist descriptions of language structure (Bloomfield 1933/Chomsky 1957) . For Givon , central to any grammatical analysis is the synthesis between form and meaning , or between code and message :

> It is only because the coding relation between structure and function in syntax is *non-arbitrary* ..... that one could proceed to infer common function from common structure .
>
> (1984:33)

**1.3 GRAMMAR , MEANING AND NOTIONS**

It is possible , I think , to make a broad distinction between two levels of correspondence between form and meaning . The first I shall refer to it as **surface form/meaning correlations** , and the second as **deep form/meaning congruences** . Surface correlations have to do with more or less self evident links between basic grammatical forms (such as the system of tense) and general areas of meaning (such as temporal distinctions) . These links are relatively transparent , so that they sometimes find expression within the very metalanguage of grammatical description ; thus we talk about *the present tense* , *the past tense* and so on . If we are to confine ourselves to observing this kind of form/meaning correlation , then the kind of deep rooted functional basis to grammaticization which Givon argues for is likely to be overlooked . In stark contrast to Givon , then , we find linguists such as Palmer defining the scope of form/meaning study in the following way :

> What we need , and what all grammars have ever provided , is an analysis that is formal in the sense that it illustrates formal regularities and can be justified formally in that formal evidence is always available , but also semantic in the sense that it relies on obvious semantic clues for some of its categorization .... (1965:7)

It is quite clear , I think , that Palmer's approach falls squarely within the 'surface' camp . We should not , he seems to say , regard grammar as functional in the Givon sense . Rather , there is a level of 'formal regularity' which can be justified in its own terms . Some of these formal regularities may be categorized in semantic terms , but only where semantic clues are 'obvious'.

What , then , of the deeper congruence ? Deeper regularities involve correlations which are less self evident , and which tend to require more involved conceptualizations . Conceptualizations , for example , to do with how relationships between participants and processes get lexico-grammatically coded . As Yule (1976) points out , such accounts are not at all common even in the more recent descriptive grammars (eg. Quirk et al. 1972) . Yet the more transparent , surface form/meaning correlations , such as tense/time , are common parlance .

Ofcourse this surface/deep distinction is not an absolute . It is presumably less a matter of two diametrically opposed polarities , and rather more a case of two end points on what is effectively a continuum of meaning transparency . Nevertheless the distinction will serve atleast to provide an introductory framework for the following discussion .

### 1.3.1 Surface form/meaning correlations

In the search for predictable correlations between form and meaning , linguists have for some time tried to develop a finite list of semantic categories which serve to 'explain' particular formal regularities . These semantic categories are often referred to as **notions** ; that is , basic conceptual categories - such as time or cause/effect - which can be seen to bear some degree of correlation with the language forms which express them . Jespersen , usually acknowledged to be the source of modern notional accounts , introduces his concept of notional categories in the following way :

> .... beside , or above , or behind , the syntactic categories which depend on the structure of each language as it is actually found , there are some extralingual categories which are independent of the more or less accidental facts of existing languages .....
>
> (1924:55)

Implicit within Jespersen's statement is the belief that 'form' and 'notion' are essentially discrete entities . Thus notions are 'independent' of language forms as they are actually found , and the facts about language are 'more or less accidental' . While it would be beyond the scope of any theory so far devised to

suggest that all the facts of grammatical form can be explained in terms of underlying notional pressures , it is worth noting that Jesperson is rather more cautious than , say , Givon would be . For Givon the functional/communicative origins of grammar should incline us to minimize the 'accidental' wherever possible .

For example , Jesperson discusses the correlations between tense and temporal distinctions : there are many cases of surface realizations of time -the *-ed* suffix correlating with past time , and so on (1924:56) . But , says Jesperson , verbal inflections do not simply map on to temporal distinctions , because we find past tense forms which are used to express 'unreality in present time' - *if we knew* or *I wish I knew* (ibid.) . Jesperson concludes :

> Syntactic categories thus , Janus-like , face both ways , towards form , and towards notion . They stand midway and form the connecting link between the world of sounds and the world of ideas .
>
> (1924:56/7)

Jesperson seems to be saying two things here . Firstly , that because tense inflections do not merely express clear temporal distinctions -because in addition they signal , for example , unreality -we cannot make simple statements about tense having a single notional purport . This is uncontroversial enough . Secondly , though , he implies that this in itself limits the potency of notional accounts : but why should this be so ? The syntactic coding of unreality is simply another notional category which happens to have some syntactic features in common with temporal indicators . Jesperson might have pursued this distinction further . In the case of unreality , we often find 'past' forms which are used as markers of hypothetical meaning : *if* ***Bill had left*** *, he would have* ..... . In other words , there is another kind of congruence here , between hypothetical/unreal and 'past tense' forms . In section 5 I discuss this in some detail .

In short , while there is no evidence to support the belief that form and meaning - language and notion - invariably correspond in a systematic way , there are limitations imposed by some linguists which may not always be necessary or justified .

### 1.3.2 Form/meaning congruences : conceptual and linguistic independence

I suggested above that deep form/meaning congruences involve establishing a level of conceptual analysis which is absent from the 'surface' approach . What is usually involved is treating regularities in English structure as expressing recognizable notional relationships which , in turn , reflect deeper conceptualizations of the relationships between participants and processes . Such accounts have the potential to explain a great deal more about the function of grammar (and , indeed , of lexis) than is possible using only a surface analysis . Indeed , it is partly on account of the superficiality of the latter that so many 'notional' and 'functional' pedagogic materials have been criticized (Widdowson 1979/Brumfit 1981/Yule 1986) . Absent from the kind of notional account provided by Wilkins (1976) is the idea that a notional grammar may give us insights into what Lyons refers to as :

> ..... the congruence which holds , in varying degrees , between the grammatical and the semantic structure of language . (1968:167)

A clear example of this kind of congruence is the correspondence between what is termed **conceptual independence** and **linguistic independence** . The principle of conceptual and linguistic independence is defined by Haiman (1983) in the following way :

> The linguistic separateness of an expression corresponds to the conceptual independence of the object or event which it represents
>
> (1983:783)

How might such a broadly stated principle work out with actual language ? The notion of conceptual/linguistic independence ties in with work done by Givon (1980) . He suggests that within the class of complement taking verbs , we can establish a scale representing degrees of influence exerted by the agent of the main clause verb over the agent of the complement clause (1980:335) . The greater the influence of the former , the less the independence of the latter . Thus influence is greatest in 5 , weakest in 3 :

> 3. Jane **hoped** that Bill would leave / had left
> 4. Jane **ordered** Bill to leave
> 5. Jane **forced** Bill to leave (1980:369)

So Jane's influence over Bill is weakest in 3 , where Bill remains capable of independent action ; in 4 it is potentially increased and in 5 it is such that Bill is no longer an independent agent . Sentences 3-5 represent part of a scale of increasing influence , which Givon calls a *binding hierarchy* . Although Givon does not make this explicit , it is clear that Haiman's notion of conceptual independence is highly relevant here : the stronger the influence of the agent in the main clause , the less conceptually independent is agent of the complement clause . In notional terms , these are **degrees of influence between cause (Jane) and effect (Bill's leaving)** .

Now according to Haiman's principle of 'linguistic separateness' (ibid.) , this semantic concept should be reflected in the language : more conceptual independence , more linguistic separateness . And indeed this turns out to be the case . As Givon puts it :

> The higher a verb is on the binding scale [ie. the stronger the element of influence] , the less would its complement tend to be syntactically coded as an independent/main clause .
>
> (1980:337)

So in 3 , where influence (of Jane over Bill) is weakest , we find that the complement clause need not simply preserve the tense/aspect markings of the main clause ; in 4 and 5 , where influence is greater and Bill is less capable of acting independently , the complement clause is more or less fixed in relation to the tense/aspect marking of the main clause . We cannot , for example, say *Jane forced Bill [to be leaving/to have left]* .

**1.4 SYNTHESIS**

In looking at Givon's concept of a binding hierarchy , we have in effect come full circle , for the idea of a clause appearing as more or less independent calls to mind our starting point - the Givonian notion of a continuum of grammaticization . This continuum extends from the pragmatic mode (least grammaticized) through to the syntactic mode (most grammaticized) , and one linguistic reflection of this is degrees to which a clause is subject to tight subordination (cf. 1.1.2 above) .

Though Givon does not make this explicit , it seems clear enough that the scale of influence corresponds to the continuum of grammaticization : that is , the greater the influence , the tighter the subordination of complement clause to the main clause . Thus the binding hierarchy neatly brings together many of the elements I have looked at in this section : grammaticization , the functional coding of grammar , conceptual and linguistic independence , and the 'deep' congruences existing between form and notional accounts of relations between participants and processes . By way of summary :

*** GRAMMAR EMERGES GRADUALLY FROM DISCOURSE ***

**grammaticization :**

**PRAGMATIC MODE** ——— diachronic, ontogenetic, pidgin/creole ———> **SYNTACTIC MODE**

*** SO GRAMMAR IS FUNCTIONAL : IT CODES MEANINGS ***

**form/meaning correlations :**

**SURFACE** ———> **DEEP**

**DEGREES OF CONCEPTUAL/LINGUISTIC DEPENDENCE**

**pragmatic** ———> **syntactic**

Fig. 2 . **the binding hierarchy**

## 2. GRAMMAR , LEXIS AND CONTEXT : PRESENTING A HYPOTHESIS

### 2.1.1 Preliminaries : Defining grammar and lexis

The rest of this chapter is concerned with outlining a hypothesis on deep correlations between form and meaning : between grammar/lexis on the one hand , and meaning and context on the other . Givon's concept of grammar as being a functional process which codes meaning in broadly predictable ways is central , as is his framework of grammaticization . In the most general terms , I will be arguing that language - perhaps all language - can be represented on a continuum of grammaticization : the more grammaticized , the less clauses are coded independently . Unlike Givon , though , I will be arguing that we need to take much more account of lexis , and of the interdependence between lexis and grammar in

this respect . Corresponding to this linguistic continuum I propose a semantic framework which , atleast in part , keys in quite closely with Givon's concept of semantic influence/independence . However , my semantic framework is somewhat broader than Givon's . Since , however , I will be arguing that lexis as well as grammar needs to be brought into the equation , it is useful at this point to indicate in general terms how I distinguish between the two .

Grammar and lexis are two extremes at each end of what is a complex continuum . Clearly one could write an entire thesis on this matter , but I will restrict myself to a simple categorization .

What distinguishes grammar and lexis is specificity of reference ; that is , the most grammatical components of language are those which have the widest range of reference , and the most lexical are those with the most specific range of reference (Widdowson 1983:93/4) . Thus I consider inflectional morphology to be essentially a matter of grammar , because inflectional morphemes - such as the *-ed* past morpheme - may refer the lexical items on which they operate to virtually any activity , and thus their range of reference is extremely wide . The distinction , conventionally made by linguists , between *grammar words* and *content words* (eg. Bolinger 1975:121) can be mapped onto this continuum . Content words - *bicycle* , *house* etc. - have a specificity of reference which is self evidently much wider than grammar words like *by* and *to* .

### 2.1.2 Preliminaries : a brief outline of the hypothesis

The rest of this chapter is concerned with providing a concise overview of a hypothesis about the relationships between grammar , lexis and context . Since this involves a considerable diversity of argument , it may be as well to begin with an extremely brief set of statements covering the entire hypothesis :

1. **An account of the congruence between *grammar/lexis and meaning*** - here I present a form/meaning continuum , a **continuum of contextual distance** . This continuum extends from CONTEXTUAL at one end through to CONCEPTUAL at the other .

As we move from the former to the latter , we shift from meanings which express simple relationships between participants and processes in the ideational context , through to more complex meanings which are **conceptually abstracted** . That is , meanings which involve a **conceptual disengagement** from the 'concrete' , iconic representation of the ideational context . **Language reflects this semantic distinction - between contextual and conceptual - in predictable ways** . Language which specifically codes more conceptual (ie. more contextually distanced) meanings is characterized by certain lexical and grammatical features which are largely absent from language coding contextual meanings .

2. **The systematicity of grammatical rule and mutual modification** - We are accustomed to talk of a basic distinction between formulaic language -characterized by its grammatical and lexical 'fixity' and thus compared to lexical items (cf. Pawley/Syder 1983 ) - and the 'rule based' language of the grammar books , characterized by its systematic , formal structures and its emphasis on grammar (cf. Chomsky 1957/Halliday 1964) . It seems to me , though , that such a view is misleading ; instead of a more or less clear dichotomy between *rule* (grammar) and *convention/formulaicity* (lexis) , what we actually have is a much more fluid continuum , with various intermediate points where grammar and lexis interact in complex and not entirely systematic ways .

In the rest of section two I will provide an overview of point 1 above , beginning with a general account of the form/meaning congruence represented through the continuum of contextual distance , then developing this a little further by presenting an overview of the linguistic congruence involved .

## 2.2 OVERVIEW

### 2.2.1 The continuum of contextual distance and a form/meaning congruence

In terms of form , I have been struck for some time by the way in which so many syntactically complex forms seem to show , with considerable consistency across different structures , what I refer to as **inflectional restriction** . Let me return briefly to an earlier example from Givon's binding hierarchy :

6. Jane forced Bill to leave the house

Here we have a clear example of inflectional restriction on the verb phrase in the complement clause ; that is , the strength of Jane's influence over Bill is reflected in the high level of inflectional restriction - [Bill to leave] is virtually immune to grammatical inflection on the verb :

?7. Jane forced Bill ¦ to be leaving ¦ the house
¦ to have left ¦

But it is not just a matter of inflectional restriction . What is equally striking is the way in which so many complex forms involve verb forms which are not in themselves marked for any clear temporal context . For example , the infinitive form [*to leave*] in 6 , which could be past , present or future depending on the main clause verb phrase . Because the [to leave] verb phrase is itself temporally unmarked , I refer to it as being **opaque** .

But what of lexis ? Just as there is grammatical restriction , so there seems to be a class of lexical item - the statives - which are , more or less , unacceptable :

?8 Jane forced Bill ¦ to **hear** ¦ Tom
¦ to **resemble** ¦
¦ to **recognize** ¦

So I am suggesting that there are three interrelated aspects of form - grammatical restriction , opacity and lexical restriction - which are in some predictable way congruent with certain meanings . Part of this congruence will be accounted for by reference to Givon's concept of causal influence and independence -ie. there is **a correspondence between the expression of causal influence on the one hand , and opacity and grammatical/lexical restriction on the other .**

However , the framework suggested here is somewhat broader , since it is necessary to account for other examples of linguistic restriction , examples which have nothing to do with degrees of influence between causes and effects :

9a A stitch in time saves nine :

*9b A stitch in time **saved/will save** nine *(grammatical restriction)*
*9c A stitch in time **rescues** nine *(lexical restriction)*

To account for language such as the proverb in 13 (together with a variety of equally different forms) , I propose a wider framework , a **continuum of contextual distance** . Put simply , this is a framework which posits that language forms code meanings which are conceptually more or less distant from the ideational context ie. the context of participants and processes . Language which is closest to the ideational context is language which is essentially referential ; that is , it is the language we use simply to report basic ideational relationships between states, events and participants . Much of simple syntax performs this function :

10. Bill left the house

But as we move along this continuum , language forms become progressively more **distanced** from the ideational context . Contextually distanced language , as I suggested above , specifically codes conceptually abstracted meanings involving a conceptual disengagement from the representation of simple ideational relationships . There are various ways in which this can happen , and I suggest four : i) degrees of causal determinacy (the term I use to refer to Givon's 'influence') ; ii) degrees of referential abstraction (idioms and proverbs) ; iii) degrees of interpersonal coding ; iv) degrees of hypothetical meaning . I shall very briefly define each of these components , but it may help to begin with a diagrammatic representation :

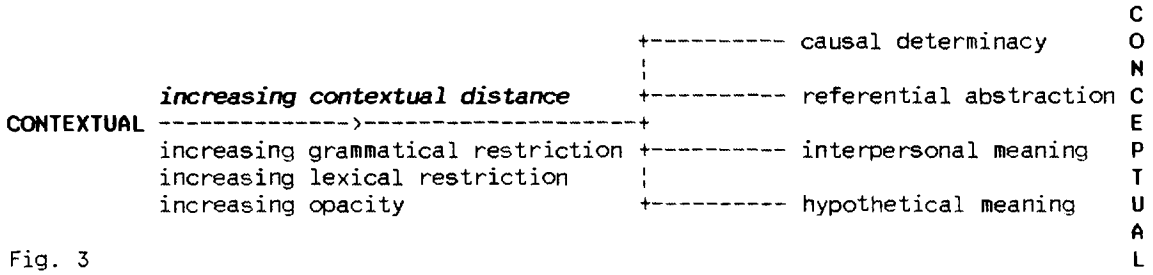



Fig. 3

The first component in figure 3 , then , is **causal determinacy** . This has to do with degrees of influence between causes and effect (cf. Givon's hierarchy) . In 11 , for example , there is no clear coding of a cause/effect relationship :

11. Jane screamed . Bill left the house

We might , depending on the context , understand 11 to imply that Bill left because Jane screamed : but even here Bill's departure is not conceived as being strongly determined by Jane's action . In 6 , however , Jane is conceived as being the direct and determining cause of Bill's departure :

6. Jane forced Bill to leave the house

**Where causes are clearly coded as in themselves directly anticipating or bringing about certain effects , they are conceived as being determining , as in 6 . The conceptualization of causal determinacy is a kind of conceptual abstraction which is far removed from expressions of simple contextual relationships (eg. 6 and 11). Congruent with this contextual distance , language which codes causal determinacy is inflectionally and lexically restricted** , as I argued with examples 7 and 8 above .

The second component - **referential abstraction** - concerns the degree to which certain language expressions serve to identify specific participants , objects and processes in the ideational context . In 10 we can pick out a clear participant (Bill) , a process (left) and an object (the house) . In 9 , though , we cannot : *a stitch in time* does not refer to any specific object or process ; rather , the entire proverb represents a kind of abstraction away from the referring function of language such as 10 . **Thus I argue that 9 is more conceptual , more abstracted and distant from the ideational context than 10 . Congruent with this is the evident inflectional and lexical restriction illustrated in 9b and 9c .**

The third component is **interpersonal meaning** . Compare 10 , essentially a description of ideational components which does not involve any lexico-syntactic coding of interpersonal elements , with 12 , which clearly does :

12. Bill , could you please leave the house ?

In 12 , then , there are specific lexico-syntactic forms - the modal stem *could you* together with the lexical insertion of *please* - which code an interpersonal ,

suasive meaning , but which do not themselves refer to ideational participants or processes . **Thus I argue that 12 is more interpersonal and therefore more contextually distant than 10 . Notice once again the restrictions on such forms , inflectional (12a) and lexical (12b) :**

?12a Could you please **be** leaving the house ?
?12b Could you please **recognize** the house ?

Finally there is **hypothetical meaning** : the more hypothetical (and thus the less 'real') , the more distanced from the 'actuality' of directly representing the ideational context . Compare , then , 10 (contextually 'close') with 13 (contextually distanced) :

13. If **Bill had left the house** , he would have .....

Notice the opacity of the verb phrase in [Bill **had left** the house] , where *had left* does not express the temporal sense of 'past perfect' ; rather , the form is used to signal the 'hypothetical distance' of past and impossible events .

It is important , at this point , to clarify the relationships between the two continua which I have now introduced . The Givonian continuum of grammaticization is essentially a linguistic framework : although he argues that grammaticization has a semantic , functional motivation , there is no clear sense in which the continuum as a whole has an explicit semantic thread . The continuum of contextual distance has both a linguistic and a semantic perspective . Semantically , it represents degrees of conceptual abstraction developing out from an ideational , essentially referential starting point . Linguistically , it shows how forms which specifically code conceptual meanings (hypothetical , interpersonal etc.) are regularly marked by congruent linguistic features - inflectional restriction , lexical restriction and opacity .

### 2.2.2 Ideational language and the ideational context

So , following figure 3 , I identify four categories of meaning each of which provides us with a framework by which to measure contextual distance : **increasing levels of hypothetical/interpersonal/referentially abstracted and determinate meanings on the meaning side , congruent with increasing degrees of linguistic**

**restriction and opacity on the side of language form .**

Central to the whole concept of contextual distance is language which is at the contextual extreme of the continuum in figure 3 ; language which simply refers to components of the ideational context (as in 14) , but which does not involve the coding of complex conceptualizations of cause and effect , of unreality and so on . This I will refer to as **contextual language** . There is no absolutely clear way of delineating contextual language , precisely because it is one point on a continuum. It can , though , be loosely defined in the following way :

a) Contextual language always involves reference to the fundamental components of the ideational context : as defined by Halliday (1975) , these are **participants** and **processes** , together with the categorisation of the **quality** and **quantity** of **things** (1975:108) .

b) Contextual language always involves expression of what Halliday calls 'the expression of logical relations' (1975:53) ie. the basic role relationships which hold between components of the ideational context : *agent/process/patient* and so forth .

c) Contextual language does not involve the coding of conceptual meanings ; rather , **it comprises the common point of departure from which the various components of contextual distance branch off** . In other words , contextual language is non hypothetical , unmarked for interpersonal meaning , directly referential rather than abstracted , and unmarked as to causal determinacy . In very general terms , all these components of conceptual meaning involve the expression of **judgements** : the perception of causal determinacy , the conception of hypothetical worlds , and so on . In contrast , ideational language focuses on the simple **reporting** of states and events .

Examples of contextual language are :

14. Jane lives in France
15. The farmer killed the duckling
16. Bill loves Anne
17. Fred threw a stone at Ken

## 3. CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL LEXICO-GRAMMAR

### 3.1 Outline

The four components of contextual distance (hypothetical , interpersonal etc.) bear a clear congruence with grammatical and lexical features . Indeed , the congruence is sufficiently systematic that I argue for a distinction between two kinds of grammatical coding : **contextual lexico-grammar** (which codes meanings at the contextual extreme of the continuum) and **conceptual lexico-grammar** (towards the conceptual extreme) . Given Givon's point that grammar must reflect its functional origins , and that there are degrees of grammaticization , we should expect to discover some kind of form/meaning congruence along the scale of grammaticization . My purpose here is to give this idea a more concrete basis , and in so doing to give greater prominence to lexis than is given by Givon .

I shall begin with **conceptual lexico-grammar** , defining some aspects of grammar and lexis which we typically find coding contextually distanced meanings . Conceptual language has , as I have already suggested , one or more of the following features:

1) **OPACITY** : where a verb phrase (main verb together with the primary auxiliaries *do/be/have*) does not in itself code temporal distinctions between past/present/future , but instead 'assumes' these either from an associated main clause verb phrase , or from context . For example , with *Bill forced Jane to leave* , the VP [to leave] assumes its past meaning from the main clause verb *forced*

2) **INFLECTIONAL RESTRICTION** : where a verb phrase (consisting of main verb together with the auxiliaries *do/be/have*) is inflectionally fixed or semi-fixed , as I argued with respect to 7 and 12a in section 2.2.1 .

3) **LEXICAL RESTRICTION** : where there are restrictions on the class of lexical item which can be used within the verb phrase . This restriction usually involves the class of **stative verbs** ie. verbs which signal non volitional states , states which cannot as a rule be brought about intentionally . So , for example , we can say *Bill forced Jane to leave Anne* (dynamic verb) but we cannot say *Bill forced Jane to resemble Anne* (stative verb) .

In contrast , **contextual lexico-grammar** - the grammar of contextual language (see 2.2.2 above) - is largely concerned with signalling the clear temporal parameters of definite ideational states and events , by which I mean states/events which are said to have taken place/existed or to be taking place/existing , and hence to be matters of contextual 'reality'. This sense of 'definiteness' , of 'reality' is coded through language which has the following features :

1) **TRANSPARENCY** - where the verb phrase ( main verb together with the primary auxiliaries *be/do/have*) has the primary function of coding the temporal features of states/events in the ideational context , through tense and aspect. Present and past tense forms often perform this function , so that with [*Bill had left*] we understand that *had left* codes the temporal context of past time . I call this *transparency* because , in contrast to conceptual/opaque forms , we can usually establish that a transparent verb phrase codes temporal meaning simply by reference to the single clause in which it operates .

2) **MAXIMUM INFLECTABILITY** - with contextual grammar , we can generally switch between one inflectional form and another without restriction . Wheras dependent clauses in conceptual grammar may be highly restricted , with contextual grammar there is in principle no such restriction :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18. The farmer | kills | the duckling |
| | killed | |
| | is killing | |
| | has killed etc. | |

3) **MINIMUM LEXICAL RESTRICTION** - again in contrast to conceptual language , there are very few restrictions on the class of lexical item which can be used, so that we can shift unrestricted between statives and non statives . The only clear exception to this is the progressive form , which is unacceptable with a number of statives .

What I have defined above is an idealization of language form at either extreme of

the continuum of contextual distance . Infact , ofcourse , the very concept of continuum implies that there are degrees of conceptual grammar just as there are degrees of contextual distance . So what we find is more or less opacity , more or less inflectability , more or less clear lexical restriction .

In the following section I provide a clearer idea of what I mean by opacity and restriction , giving examples from various components of conceptual meaning .

### 3.2 DEFINING CONCEPTUAL LEXICO-GRAMMAR : INFLECTIONAL & LEXICAL RESTRICTION

I will start with **inflectional restriction** , illustrating it by reference to causal determinacy . I have already referred to Givon's (1980) binding hierarchy , which focuses on the influence of the agent in complement structures (section 1.3.2 above) . I prefer , though , to talk in more general terms of **causal determinacy** : the degree to which a cause is expressed so as to anticipate or exercise control over a resulting effect . In 19 , Jane's expectation does not in itself serve to bring about (ie. determine) an outcome , wheras her action in 20 clearly does :

19. Jane **expected** Bill to leave
20. Jane **forced** Bill to leave

Thus 20 expresses greater determinacy than 19 , and congruent with this , 20 is more inflectionally and lexically restricted :

21. Jane **expected** Bill to ¦ **be leaving** ¦ *(low determinacy : inflectionally*
¦ **have left** ¦ *unrestricted)*

22. Jane **expected** Bill to ¦ understand ¦ her *(low determinacy : lexically*
¦ recognize ¦ *unrestricted)*

23. Jane **forced** Bill to ¦ **?be leaving** ¦ *(high determinacy : inflectional*
¦ **?have left** ¦ *restriction)*

24. Jane **forced** Bill to ¦ **?understand** ¦ her *(high determinacy : lexical*
¦ **?recognize** ¦ *restriction)*

Such lexical restrictions are usually on the class of **stative verbs** (see list in Appendix A) . Since statives generally signal **non volitional states** , they are incongruous with forms (as with 24) which signal actions brought about through the volitional intervention of others .

These inflectional and lexical restrictions are linguistic constraints which directly reflect conceptual constraints placed on the agent of the complement clause (as in 20) by the determinate action of the agent of the main clause . **This pattern , whereby lexical and inflectional constraints are congruent with conceptual constraints , recurs again and again with conceptual forms coding causal determinacy , interpersonal meaning and (sometimes) hypothetical meaning :**

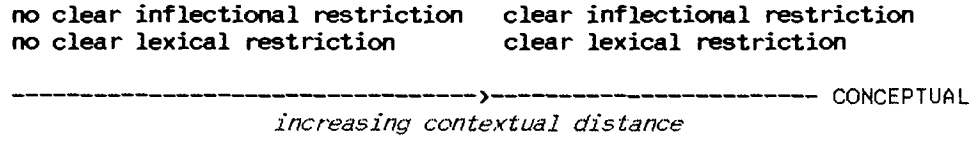
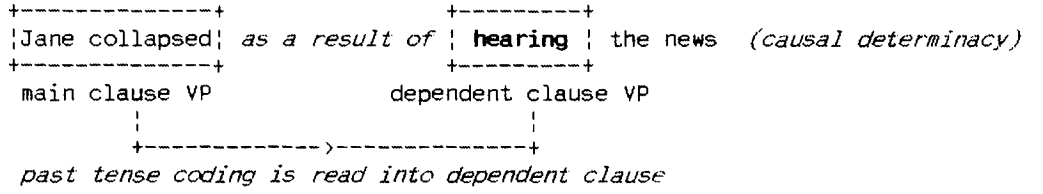



Fig. 5

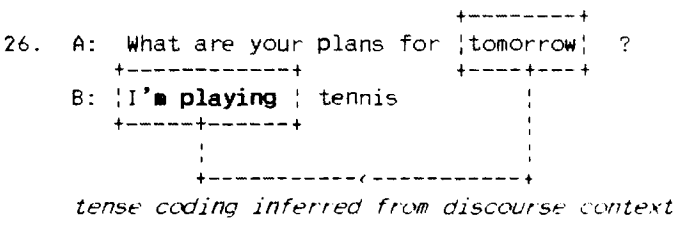
### 3.3 DEFINING CONCEPTUAL LEXICO-GRAMMAR : TRANSPARENCY & OPACITY

#### 3.3.1 Opacity and temporal coding : introduction

Opaque verb phrases , consisting of a main verb together with the primary auxiliaries *do/be/have* , **do not in themselves clearly code the temporal parameters of the state or event which they represent** . They do not , in other words , signal whether the state/event is past , present or future . What we often find is that this temporal coding has been shifted from a dependent clause verb phrase to a main clause verb phrase , as in 25 :




Alternatively , this temporal coding may shift out of the sentence altogether , into the surrounding discourse context , as with 26 :



I use the term **opaque** precisely on account of this complexity . **Opaque verb forms are not semantically self contained , but are dependent for their interpretation on co-reference either to context or to other parts of the immediate cotext :**

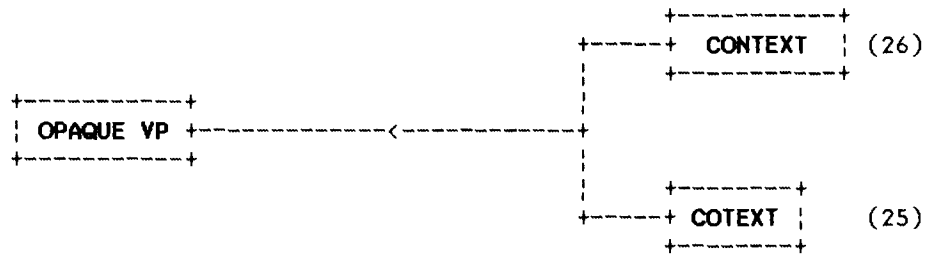
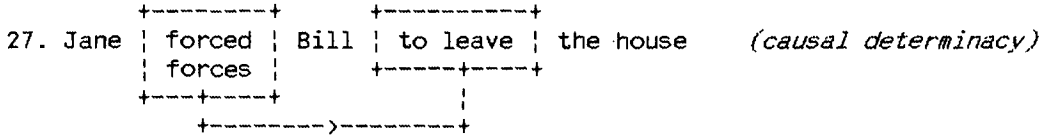
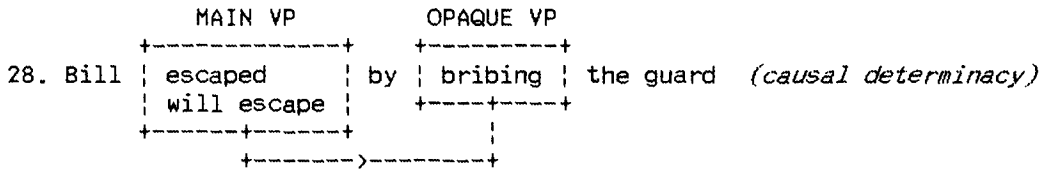



Fig. 6

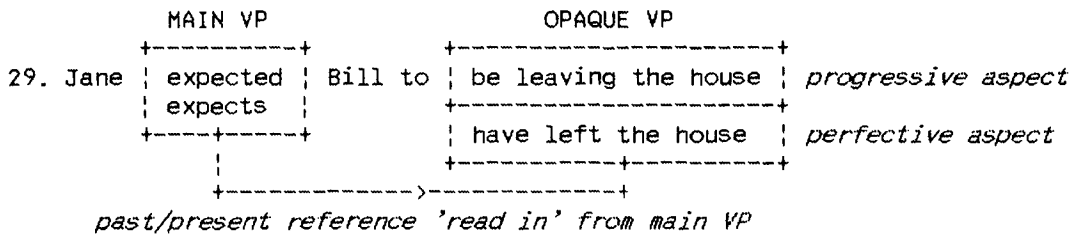
### 3.3.2 TEMPORAL OPACITY

Verb phrases which are temporally opaque **do not independently code distinctions between past/present/future** . Instead , this temporal coding is 'read into' the opaque VP from other parts of the immediate cotext :

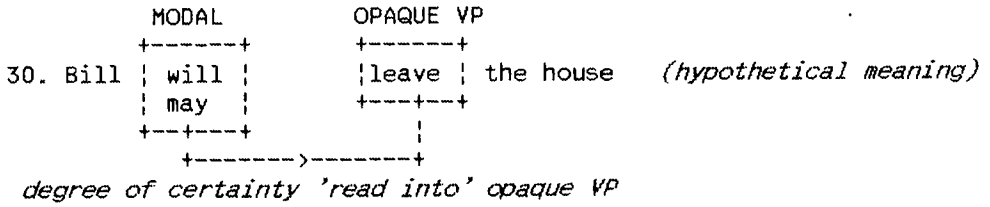


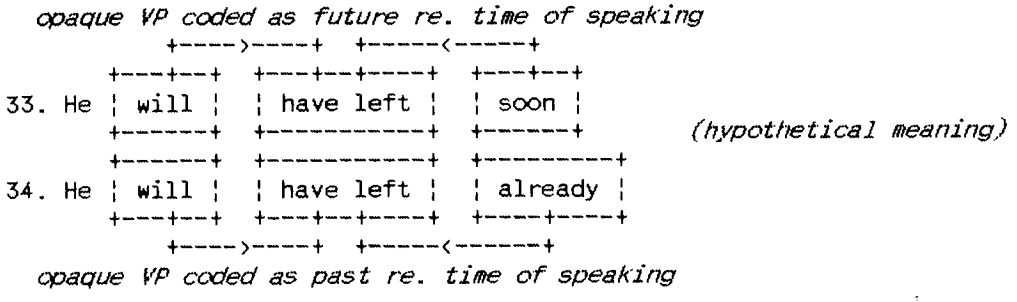

However , note that with 27 and 28 the opaque verb phrase does not independently code aspect , so that [to leave] in 27 and [leaving] in 28 are unmarked as to whether these events are perceived as 'progressive' or 'completed' . Where inflectional changes are possible , **the temporally opaque VP <u>does</u> code aspect** (as in 29) , though temporal reference is still taken from the main clause :



In addition , temporally opaque verb phrases may 'borrow' coding of **mood** , often from modal auxiliaries , as in 30 :




Here again , the opaque VP does not independently code temporal distinctions , though the opaque VP in 33/4 does code perfective aspect :




### 3.3.3 CONCEPTUAL OPACITY

Conceptually opaque verb phrases may have some or all of the features of temporally opaque VP's . Their distinguishing feature is that , in addition , **they serve to code a specific conceptual meaning** . Conceptually opaque VP's , although they resemble a transparent VP , incorporate part of its transparent , temporal meaning within a 'new' , conceptual one , as in 35 :

35. If **Bill left at 4.00** , he'd be here by now *(hypothetical meaning)*

The VP *[Bill left at 4.00]* in 35 resembles a transparent VP , coding a past meaning . But used in 35 it does not code a past meaning ; instead it codes an *unlikely condition* (and hence a hypothetical/conceptual meaning) , read in co-reference with the consequence clause . But in order to code this conceptual meaning , the 'past' transparent meaning is not entirely disregarded , since the **'temporal distance'** implicit in this sense of 'pastness' is used to code a sense of **hypothetical distance** . That is , just as a past event is temporally distanced from

the present , so in 35 a 'past' form is used to code hypothetical distance from the 'reality' of actual states/events .

A similar process can be observed with expressions of interpersonal meaning . In 36 the 'past' (temporally distanced) meaning of the auxiliary *could* is used to code a conceptual (interpersonal) sense of **social distance** , of polite deference , between interlocutors :

36. **Could** you help me ?

And , as another example :

37. I **am leaving** ¦(tomorrow) *(hypothetical and determinate meaning)*
I **leave** ¦

In 37 'present' forms are used to code a future meaning , through co-reference to cotext ( *'tomorrow'*) or context . Used transparently , these forms may code actions which are definitely going on at/around the time of speaking (present progressive) or habitually (present simple) . Furthermore , it is well known that used with a future sense , the present (progressive) forms imply that the future event is more or less definite by virtue of being the outcome of a present arrangement or present cause (Leech 1971:57-62) . So **the VP in 37 is conceptually opaque because the definiteness implicit in the transparent use of present tenses is carried over into the new conceptual meaning . Thus it is implied that the future event will (almost definitely) take place** .

### 3.3.4 SUMMARY

Opacity is a complex phenomenon , and I do not pretend to have provided a theoretically rigorous definition . Indeed , such a definition is likely to be elusive because , as with lexical and inflectional restriction , opacity is something of a 'more or less' matter . **There is no clear dividing line between transparent and opaque , nor between temporal and conceptual opacity** . Figure seven summarizes the points I have made :

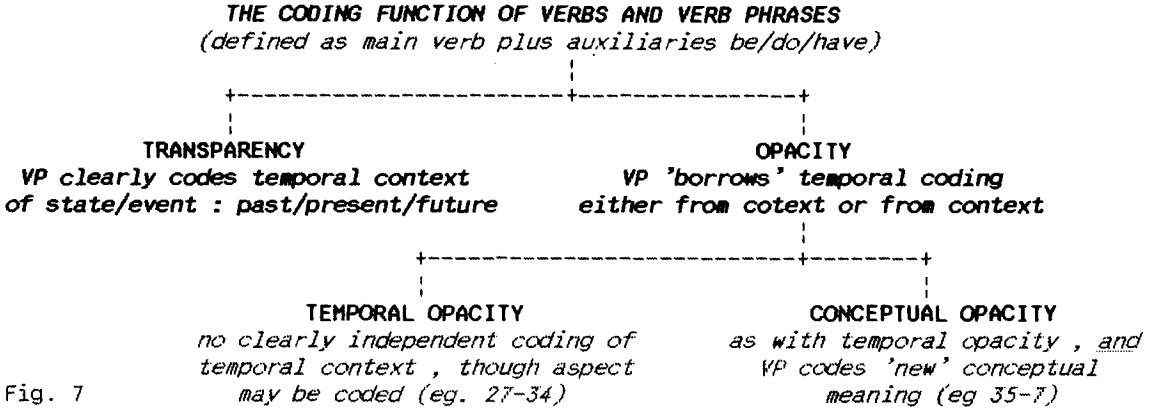



Fig. 7

### 3.4 SYNTHESIS

In this section I look at the implications of conceptual grammar for the wider hypothesis on contextual distance , looking both at the strengths and limitations of this conceptualization of form/meaning congruences .

#### 3.4.1 Conceptual form and independent clauses

I have now provided a general overview of the form/meaning congruence which underpins the continuum of contextual distance (fig.3) . The more conceptual the meaning which is coded by a particular form , the less that form resembles an **independent clause** (cf. Givon 1980:337) . Conceptual lexico-grammar is , by definition , language which is **dependent** in a number of ways : opacity involves dependence of one VP either on another or on context , inflectional restriction frequently marks a clause as conceptually dependent on , or constrained by , another , and so forth .

Because contextual distance is a matter of continuum rather than binary opposition, the distinction between contextual and conceptual lexico-grammar is not black and white . Nevertheless , the following table illustrates some of those forms which seem to fall fairly clearly within one camp or the other :

**CONTEXTUAL FORMS** :

1. **The present and present perfect tenses , whether or not progressive in aspect** - where these forms primarily code the temporal parameters of *states/events occurring at or around or up to the time of speaking*

2. **The past and past perfect tenses , whether or not progressive in aspect** - where these form primarily code ***states/events which occurred at some point or over some period in the past*** .

**CONCEPTUAL FORMS :**

1. **Future forms** : including *will* , *going to* , *present progressive (future)* All future forms are hypothetical by definition

2. **The passive form** : which , I shall argue , implies a kind of determinacy

3. **The gerund** : ie. any use of the *-ing* inflection which is opaque (eg. 10)

4. **The infinitive (bare or with *to*)** : which has no clear transparent parallel in contextual language

5. **The modal auxiliaries** : coding hypothetical and interpersonal meaning , and determinacy .

### 3.4.2 Lexico-grammatical coding and the continuum of contextual distance

Conceptual lexico-grammar codes conceptual meanings (hypothetical , interpersonal etc.) , meanings which when expressed through less grammaticized forms are not clearly coded , but remain a matter of inference : these latter are thus located towards the pragmatic end of Givon's continuum of grammaticization . Thus with 38 and 39 , the interpersonal meaning , the illocutionary force remains wide open to context in the absence of the clearer lexico-grammatical coding of 40 :

38. The policeman's crossing the road (warning? threat?) *(contextual form)*
39. I'm in the bath ! (offer ? warning ? ) *(contextual form)*

40. **Could you please** get a move on/answer the phone ? *(conceptual form)*

And similarly the more contextual form of 41 codes cause/effect , but it is only the conceptual form of 42 which clearly codes a strongly determinate cause :

41. [Jane screamed] , so [Bill left the house]
42. Jane **forced** Bill **to leave** the house

In what follows I argue that **when conceptual meanings are clearly coded in the language , some features of conceptual lexico-grammar are very likely indeed to be used** . What I am not saying , though , is that conceptual forms necessarily code conceptual meanings which are inviolable and without ambiguity . The form/meaning relationship here is certainly not arbitrary , **but neither is it completely isomorphic** . That is , there is rarely if ever a strict one-to-one relationship between form and coded conceptual meaning (as Lyons argues 1981:16) . Hence when I refer to the way in which conceptual forms 'code' conceptual meanings, what I mean is that conceptual meanings are **strongly implied** through the very form of the language .

### 3.4.3 Contextual distance and its limitations

So I am not suggesting that this form/meaning congruence is unimpeachable in all cases . Jespersen's reference to the 'more or less accidental facts of existing languages' (1924:55) is a cautionary note well worth bearing in mind ; language is not an artificial construct , deliberately and self consciously designed to make systematic the formal coding of meaning in all cases . Rather , as I suggested in 2.2.2 , we can only go so far in any attempt to account for the shape of language expression ; context , in particular , is something which poses clear limitations on semantic study . As Katz and Fodor (1963) have pointed out , any semantic theory which attempts to account for the interpretation of sentences cannot account for the 'socio-physical' setting of the act of speech (1963:176-181) .

Moreover , **I do not pretend that all language which involves conceptual form is necessarily an expression of one or other category of conceptual meaning as I have defined it** . In particular , I pay very little attention to the way in which many 'conceptual' forms are used to perform a **discourse function** , as markers of backgrounding/foregrounding , of indicating whether information is 'new' or 'old' (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:919) . Nevertheless this is clearly an important area of form/meaning congruence . To some extent it overlaps with the analysis I provide

here ; that is , there are certain conceptual forms which code a component of contextual distance and perform a discourse function . In 30 below , for example , we have a subordinate clause which involves an opaque and restricted verb phrase marking information as being backgrounded :

*(determinate cause)*
43. As a result of [**slipping** on the ice] , he broke his ankle
*(backgrounded)*

There are other apparently 'conceptual' forms which , while they clearly perform a discourse function similar to that in 43 , do not seem to code any clear conceptual meaning :

44. As well as [**doing** the shopping] , I've cleaned the entire house
*(backgrounded)*

There has been considerable discussion in the literature on precisely this point - the extent to which particular forms may , as with 43 , express what Haiman refers to as the "competing motivations ... for expression on the same linguistic dimension" (1983:781) . That is , a single form - such as an inflectionally restricted verb phrase - may simultaneously code more than one semantic parameter , as in 43 where the opaque and restricted VP *slipping* indicates that the event is both backgrounded and functions as a determinate cause .

This said , I move on in the following four sections to look at the four components of contextual distance , arguing that in each case there is a clear congruence between form and meaning which is consistent with the continuum of contextual distance as I have represented it in figure 3 .

## 4. CAUSAL DETERMINACY

### 4.1 Overview : cause and contextual distance

In 1.3.2 I discussed Givon's (1980) concept of a binding scale referring to degrees by which certain outcomes are influenced or predicted : *I hope -> I order -> I force* . These are all expressions of causal determinacy , which in very general terms I define as :

> **The degree to which a state or event is expressed as in itself anticipating or bringing about the occurrence of another state or event .**

But how , in conceptual terms , does causal determinacy represent meaning which is contextually distanced ? The contextual extreme of the continuum (fig. 3) , has to do with the simple , direct reference to components of the ideational context (section 2.2.2) . Such language effectively represents the world **as it is** (or as it is said to be) : definite states/events which have occurred or are occurring . There is no room here for explicitly coding cause/effect relationships , because such relationships involve making complex subjective judgements about the relationship between one state/event and another . The more we code such complex conceptualizations , the more conceptual ie. the more contextually distanced is our meaning .

But cause/effect is not a black and white phenomenon : there are degrees of cause/effect conceptualization which have to do with degrees of causal determinacy. That is , the more we express a cause as strongly anticipating or bringing about an effect , the more contextually distanced such a conceptualization is . Thus there are degrees of determinacy , from zero (where no kind of cause/effect relationship is expressed) through to very high (as in *I forced him to leave*) . These degrees correspond to the continuum of contextual distance : the more determinate , the more contextually distanced , and the more restricted and opaque. In this section I provide an overview of this continuum , and of the form/meaning congruence which it represents .

## 4.2 THE CODING OF DETERMINACY & DEGREES OF CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE

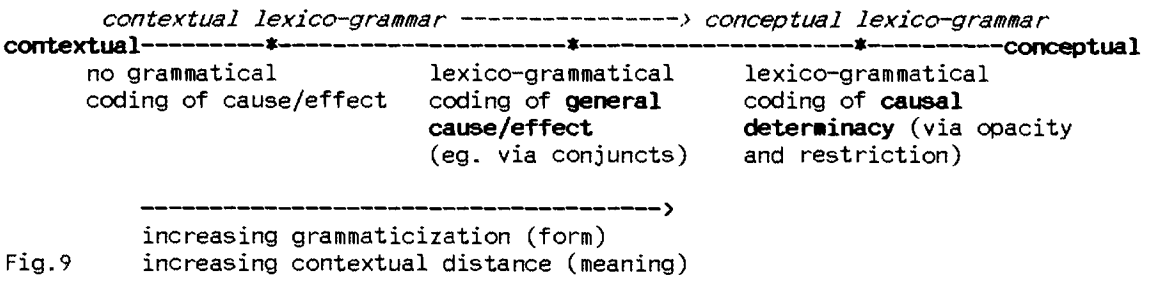



Fig.9

### 4.2.1 No coding of cause/effect

Here we are concerned with the juxtaposition of syntactically simple clauses . Such forms are **grammatically unmarked** as to determinacy , ie. there is no clear grammatical coding of determinacy (45) , though determinacy may nevertheless be strongly implied through selection of particular lexical items (46) :

45. The sun rose . The market stalls began to open
    (no sense in which stalls opening was determined by sun rising)

46. The sun rose . The **flowers** began to open

But in 46 it is only the lexical content which implies determinacy , in the sense that the sun's rising in itself brings about the opening of flowers - but such an interpretation is dependent on knowledge of the world (extralinguistic) and our presumptions are open to challenge depending on the particular ideational context (eg. battery operated plastic flowers which open quite irrespective of what the sun is doing !) .

### 4.2.2 Lexico-grammatical coding of general cause/effect

Cause/effect is grammatically coded through clauses linked by certain conjuncts , such as *because* , *so* , *therefore* . Such forms are **grammatically coded** (via the conjunct) as signalling a cause/effect relationship , but they are **unmarked as to the degree of determinacy** , which depends on lexical choice : (47) implies more determinacy than 48 :

47. The sun rose so the flowers opened

48. Bill saw the car so he bought it

So it is the lexis here rather than the grammar which indicates varying degrees of determinacy - high in 47 , low in 48 . But in the absence of conceptual lexico-grammar , the degree of implied determinacy is variable . Thus , although cause/effect is by definition a conceptual abstraction , the kind of cause/effect expressed in 47/48 is not highly conceptual .

**4.2.3 Lexico-grammatical coding of high determinacy**

High levels of determinacy are coded both grammatically and lexically . This coding is expressed through the use of highly dependent clauses which are opaque and inflectionally very restricted . High determinacy is frequently marked by such conjuncts such as *as a result of/in order to* , or by complement taking verbs such as *force* or *order* . It is on account of these latter , lexically marked forms (I ordered him to ... / she forced me to ...) that I refer in figure 9 to the lexico-grammatical coding of high determinacy . Because there is clear coding , associations of lexical items which do not in themselves imply determinacy are generally unacceptable :

*49. Bill saw the car in order to buy it
?50. Bill bought the car as a result of seeing it

Congruent with this increasing inflectional restriction is increasing lexical restriction . By lexical restriction I mean that , particularly with high coding , certain lexical items are (more or less) unacceptable , as with 49 and 50 above . In most cases these unacceptable lexical items belong to the class of **statives** , and there is a logical explanation for this . Determinacy has to do with states/events which strongly anticipate or in themselves bring about another state/event , and as such it includes the conscious . intentional determinacy of participants (*by means of/in order to* etc.) . But stative verbs refer to states which are , in most contexts , not brought about through conscious volition -

*resemble* , *hear* , *recognize* etc. Here lies the incongruity of statives , because **it is a logical nonsense to talk of someone being forced to do something which they cannot consciously implement** (? I forced him to resemble her) or of someone consciously bringing about an event through action which is itself non intentionally done (*I scared John by means of looking at him*) . In Appendix A I categorize the stative verbs .

**4.2.4 Types of high determinacy : Participant and circumstantial**

There are 2 sources to which we can attribute causal determinacy : we can attribute it to the conscious intention of a **participant** , or we can express it as determined by force of **circumstances** . These are conceptualizations with which we are extremely familiar in everyday life . Whenever we see ourselves as having deliberately made something happen , or whenever we express a wish , desire or intention to bring something about , we effectively make reference to **participant determinacy** of one degree or another . Similarly , when we see ourselves as the victims of forces beyond our control , we are conceiving of a kind of **circumstantial determinacy** . The distinction between participant and circumstantial determinacy is a crucial one , since I will be arguing in chapter four that each has its own lexico-grammatical reflexes . For now , though , it will suffice to present a definition of each , and to take note of the congruence between form and meaning which underlies the whole notion of high determinacy :

> **PARTICIPANT DETERMINACY - where a participant is said to consciously anticipate or to bring about a new state of affairs** . For example :

51. Jane lied in order to embarrass me *(Jane's action intentionally anticipates )*
52. Bill forced Fred to lie down *(Bill intentionally brings about a result)*

> **CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETERMINACY - where a state/event is expressed as itself either determining or presupposing the occurrence of another state/event , irrespective of the volition of participants whose independence is constrained by force of circumstances** . For example :

53. Fred was **murdered** *(Fred is viewed as the undergoer , subject to force of circumstances beyond his control)*

54. Bill fell as a result of **slipping** on the ice *(irrespective of Bill's wishes)*

Note again the linguistic restrictions , inflectional (eg. the fixed participle of the passive in 53) and lexical ( *?Fred was* ***resembled*** ) , together with the opacity of the 'past' participle in 53 and of the 'progressive' form in 54 .

In chapter four I will take this argument further , arguing that within the category of high determinacy there are degrees of determinacy , and that congruent with this we can observe degrees of restriction . By way of summary :

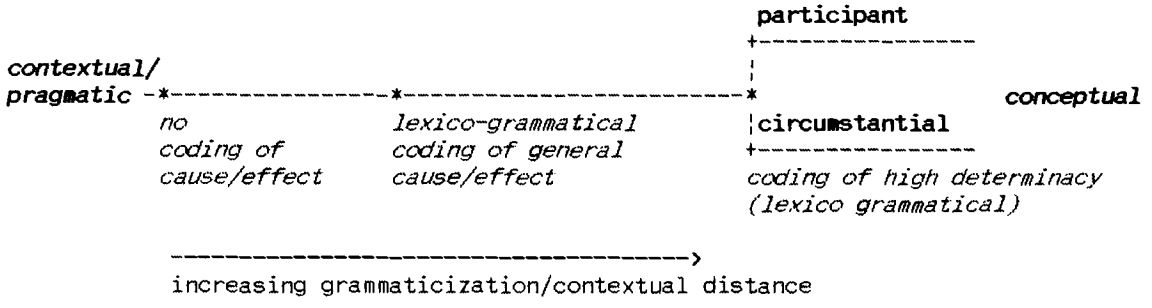



Fig. 10

**Infact determinacy , and its congruent linguistic restrictions and opacity , finds expression not only within the category of causal determinacy , but also within hypothetical meaning and interpersonal meaning** , and I shall therefore refer to it again in the following sections . In Appendix C I present an overview of the entire continuum of contextual distance , which shows the way in which determinacy recurs again and again in expressions of conceptual meanings .

## 5 HYPOTHETICAL MEANING

### 5.1 Hypothetical meaning and contextual distance : two categories

The relationship between hypothetical meaning and contextual distance is fairly self evident : if contextual language has to do with representing definite states and events in the ideational context , then whenever we use language to code states or events which are imaginary or unreal , we are necessarily expressing hypothetical meaning . Wheras contextual language reports on the world as we observe it , hypothetical language is *world creating* language .

I make a fundamental distinction , though , between two interconnected kinds of hypothetical language . The first is the language of modality ; the language we use to talk about the future , to express obligation , to make logical deductions etc.

My second category is the language we use to express degrees of unreality : we may simply assert something as true (*Bill left*) , we may question its likelihood (*Bill may leave)* , or we may 'create' a proposition which is entirely unreal and hypothetical (*Had Bill left* ...) . What we have here is increasing degrees of unreality , and thus of contextual distance . In the argument which follows I identify a predictable linguistic congruence with this continuum .

### 5.2 PARTICIPANT AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL MODALITY

In this section I introduce a distinction between **participant and circumstantial modality** , suggesting that looking at modality in this way gives us interesting insights into ***the expression of the motivating force behind people's actions*** .

We can signal **participant modality** in one of two ways . Firstly , we may refer to **a future volitional action whose realization is strongly anticipated at the moment of speaking by the agent** (55) **or by the speaker** (56) :

55. Jane's **going to** leave , her mind is made up !
56. Jane **must** leave , I insist on it !

Thus in 55 the speaker is talking of Jane's leaving as something which Jane currently plans/anticipates bringing about . Jane , in other words , is understood

to hold a current intention to bring about a future event . In 56 the speaker implies a present determination to bring about Jane's leaving . This meaning is strongly related to participant determinacy (4.2.4) ; the only difference is that with participant determinacy , we tend to use language which specifically refers to a state/event acting as a determining cause (eg. *Jane lied in order to leave)* , wheras in 55 and 56 the speaker merely implies a determining state -a state of mind (Jane's intention in 55 , the speaker's in 56) . I will refer to this kind of participant modality as **strong participant modality** , strong on account of the implicit sense of clear determinacy .

Secondly , we can refer to **a volitional action (past , present or future) which by implication simply involves the conscious volition of the participant agent , but which is not in any sense anticipated or determined** , as in 57 below :

57. Jane ¦ **should leave** ¦ She has responsibilities !
¦ **should have left** ¦

With 57 there is no sense in which Jane's action is directly sought , determined , anticipated , but there is still the implication that Jane's leaving is an act of conscious volition .

We signal **circumstantial modality** when we refer to **an action in which , by implication , it is understood that the participant may be an *undergoer*** or ***experiencer*** **of events motivated from 'outside' the participant herself** . As with participant modality , circumstantial modality comes in two guises .

The first I refer to as **strong circumstantial modality** : by this I mean the implication that there are circumstantial forces which act so as to strongly anticipate the occurrence of an event , so strongly that the event is understood to be fixed/arranged at the time of speaking :

58. We're meeting Bill tomorrow at 5.00
59. Jane's going to be meeting Bill tomorrow

In both 58 and 59 the meeting with Bill is expressed as something which is already

determined and a matter of circumstantial fact , whether or not it is the agent's own intention which is the source of this determinacy .

**Weak circumstantial determinacy** carries the implication that , although there are again circumstantial forces at work , they are not strongly determinate ; we do not imply *this event will happen* but only *there are circumstantial forces which to some extent anticipate it :*

60. She needs to / has to | meet with Bill tomorrow

By way of summary :

| **MODALITY**<br>**accounting for the motivation behind people's actions** | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **WEAK** | **STRONG** |
| **CIRCUMSTANTIAL** | event is weakly anticipated by circumstances which may be external to participant agent *example : 60* | event is strongly determined by circumstances which may be external to participant agent *examples : 58/59* |
| **PARTICIPANT** | action which implicitly involves the volition of participant/agent, but which is not clearly anticipated or determined *examples: 57* | action involving participant which is strongly either by the speaker (56) or by participant agent (55) |

This participant/circumstance distinction is not , ofcourse , an entirely new one , since it is related to the established distinction between **intrinsic** and **extrinsic modality** . Quirk et al. define intrinsic modality as involving "some kind of intrinsic human control over events" (1985:219) , and extrinsic modality as being essentially concerned with "human judgement of what is or is not likely to happen" (ibid.) . Others have made a similar distinction between deontic (intrinsic) and epistemic (extrinsic) modality (eg. Lyons 1977:823/796) . The participant element in intrinsic modality should be clear - human control necessarily implies the capacity to act on one's own volition , while absence of human control implies that actions may be motivated through circumstances .

There is a **form/meaning congruence** here which is very similar to causal determinacy . There is a difference , though . With causal determinacy , inflectional restriction means that we reach a point where only one inflection is possible (as with *I forced her* ***to leave)*** . With modality it is more a matter of **one inflection among a number of possible inflections being singled out as the 'marked' coding form for participant or circumstantial meaning** . Thus with will/going to , it is particularly the infinitive form which implies participant modality (as with 55) , but the gerund form which implies circumstantial modality (as with 58) . **Opacity** is involved with all these expressions , functioning as a marker of hypothetical meaning ; but it is inflectional and lexical restriction which serve to distinguish one category of modality from another :

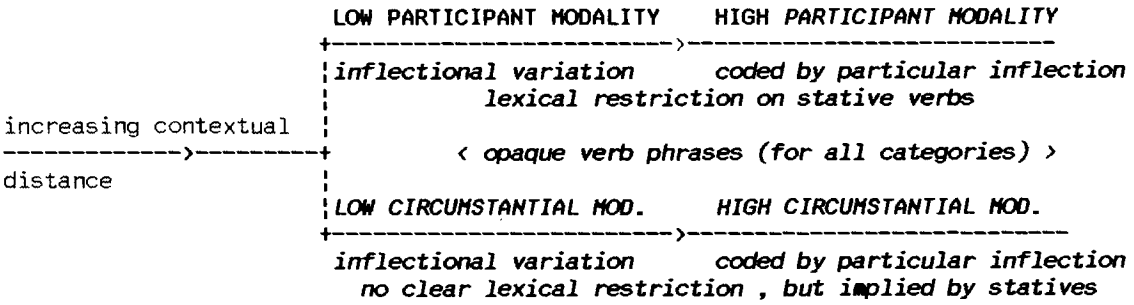



Fig. 11

In 5.2.1 I expand on figure 11 by referring to a variety of modal meanings . One cautionary point , though , needs to be made right at the start . With modality we are in an area of form/meaning congruence which is highly context dependent . Thus the framework outlined in figure 11 represents only a generalized picture - there are many exceptions , which I will point out in the course of the discussion .

Modality is traditionally divided up into a number of semantic areas : obligation , future possibility etc. For lack of space , I will look only at future probability and compulsion . I will deal with permission in chapter five .

### 5.2.1 Coding Future Probability

The framework I argue for here is summarized in figure 12 :

| ***HIGH CIRCUMSTANTIAL PROBABILITY*** | ***HIGH PARTICIPANT PROBABILITY*** |
|---|---|
| *will/going to + -ing* | *will/going to + inf. : *statives* |
| opaque present progressive *(-ing)* | |
| no lexical restriction but implied by statives | lexical restriction on statives |

Fig. 12

Here the participant/circumstance distinction is coded largely through particular , marked inflections . Thus the infinitive form specifically codes strong participant modality (as with 55/61a) , while the *will/going to + -ing* form specifically codes strong circumstantial modality (as in 59/62b) :

61a I've decided that I **will/am going to** | **return** here soon *(participant)*
61b | ?**be** returning here soon *(?participant)*

62a According to my schedule I **will/am going to** | **return** here soon *(circumstance)*
62b | **be** returning here soon *(circ.)*

In terms of lexis , statives imply high circumstantial modality , irrespective of the verbal inflection (63) as does a non animate subject (64) :

63. Jane | is going to | **hear** from me very soon
| will | **recognize** Bill as soon as she sees him

64. That wall is going to collapse

In 63 the use of the stative verb codes circumstantial modality , implying that these things will happen irrespective of whether Jane consciously intends to bring them about .

However , while circumstantial and participant meanings attach to particular inflections , any inflectional form may imply simply that a **prediction** is being made ; in this context , the infinitive and -ing forms are neutralized and do not signal any particular source of determinacy , either participant or circumstantial:

65. You are going to | finish | very soon . I see it in the crystal ball
will | be finishing |
| have finished |

I believe that the **present progressive (future)** is equally relevant here , falling squarely into the category of **strong circumstantial probability** : it implies a present intention (though not necessarily of the agent/participant) to bring about a future event . Semantically , it is well established that the progressive (future) form carries a strong sense of a future event being currently anticipated. Leech , for example , talks of the expression of a "future event anticipated by virtue of a present plan , programme or arrangement" (1971:57) . Congruent with this , the progressive (future) form is **conceptually opaque** (as I argued in 3.3.3); that is , the 'definiteness' of the 'present' form is used to code the near certainty of a future event . The progressive (future) form is also conceptual on account of being more **lexically restricted** (67) than its transparent (literally present) counterpart (66) :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66. I'm | hearing strange noises<br>feeling sick<br>seeing stars | | 67. I'm | ?hearing strange noises<br>?feeling sick<br>?seeing stars | tomorrow |

The statives in 67 are incongruous because an event which is determined through present and deliberate arrangement cannot involve states which are non volitional . However , both transparent and opaque forms are unacceptable with statives which imply innate states of affairs , such as 'be' or 'resemble' .

### 5.2.2 Coding Compulsion

The pattern I argue for here is outlined in figure 13 :

| ***WEAK CIRCUMSTANTIAL COMPULSION*** | ***STRONG PARTICIPANT COMPULSION*** |
|---|---|
| **have / need to** + variety of inflections | **must + inf.** (*statives) |
| ----------> | |
| inflectionally variable (61) | inflectionally restricted (59) |
| limited lexical restriction (62) | lexically restricted (60) |
| ----------> | |
| *increasing contextual distance* | |

Fig. 13

The modal *must* switches between a participant (compulsion) and a non determinate (logical necessity) meaning depending on the inflection on the associated verb . **Coding of participant modality here is lexically and inflectionally restricted ; coding of logical necessity is not** . Expressions With the form *must + infinitive* ,

the main verb is not independently inflected and there is a congruent implication of high participant modality ; thus in 68 the speaker seeks to determine/bring about Jane's action , and it is presupposed that Jane can act volitionally :

68. Jane must **finish** her thesis !

This participant modality is **inflectionally restricted** , so that the inflections in 69 , which resemble more the form of independent clauses , suggests that the participant meaning may be neutralized , and that instead a *logical necessity* meaning is intended :

69. Jane must ¦ **have finished** ¦ her thesis *(switch to logical necessity)*
¦ **be** finish**ing** ¦

Similarly the *must*/strong participant congruence is **lexically restricted** - statives neutralize the participant meaning , turning it into logical necessity , in the same way as the inflections did in 69 :

70. Jane must ¦ **have** a lot of money *(switch to logical necessity)*
¦ **be** in Lima

The modals *have/need to* imply a kind of weak circumstantial imperative which is external to the participant involved ; thus wheras *must* implies speaker authority , *have to* implies that "the authority comes from no particular source" (Leech 1971:75) . So *have to* and *need to* express circumstantial modality . But there is also a difference in terms of determinacy . With *must* there is a strong implication of authority , a sense of a force which strongly anticipates the bringing about of a new state of affairs , as in 68 above . With *need/have to* , this sense of anticipation is intuitively weaker : Leech refers to the distinction between *need* and *must* in terms of an increasing "scale of intensity" (1971:95) .

Since *need/have to* are circumstantial and signal weak determinacy wheras *must* is participant and signals strong determinacy , **the former are both inflectionally and lexically less restricted than the latter** :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 71. Jane | needs to<br>has to | **finish**<br>**be** finishing<br>**have** finished | her thesis | *(inflections possible within category of obligation)* |
| 72. Jane | needs to<br>has to | **be** in Lima<br>**have** a lot of money | | |

## 5.3 DEGREES OF HYPOTHETICAL DISTANCE AND THE CONTINUUM OF CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE

### 5.3.1 Introduction and overview

In figure 14 I summarize the continuum of contextual distance as it relates to degrees of hypothetical distance :

increasing contextual distance >

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **probable with grounds** | **possible/unlikely with grounds** | **possible without grounds** | **impossibility with belief or knowledge** |
| *coded through conceptual opacity or via part./circumstantial modality* | | *coded through temporal opacity* | *coded through conceptual opacity* |

Fig. 14

What this continuum represents is **degrees by which the probability or improbability of a state/event taking place , ie. becoming a matter of contextual reality , is held to be justified through the speaker having grounds to back up his assertion .** Thus the least conceptual type of hypothetical meaning is coded when the speaker implies *X is probable , and I have grounds with which to back this up* , as in 73 :

73. Jane's going to leave tomorrow *(participant modality : knowledge of agent intention)*

Somewhat more hypothetical , yet adjacent on the continuum in figure 14 , is what I refer to as *possible/unlikely with grounds* . Here the speaker again implies he has grounds to back up the possible truth of his statement - and to this extent his meaning is not hypothetically remote - yet he also implies that *X* is subject to greater indeterminacy than with 73 . Thus 74 implies 'quite possible to occur' , while 75 implies 'quite unlikely to occur' , where **both meanings are implied to be equally justifiable** :

74. If (it's true that) **Jane's going to leave tomorrow** , then ....
75. If **Jane left tomorrow** , we'd be in trouble *(conceptual opacity)*

So although the condition in 75 is held to be unlikely , the speaker remains 'in touch' with the 'real' world by virtue of implying grounds to justify such improbability ; as Quirk et al. point out , with such clauses "**it is clearly expected** that the condition will not be fulfilled" (1973:325 , my highlighting) . So in both 74 and 75 the speaker implies he has grounds for assessing the likelihood of the condition being fulfilled .

More conceptual still , speaker may simply code a proposition as being possible , but without the implication that he has grounds to back this up . In the absence of grounds , his meaning is all the more 'theoretical' or hypothetical than with 74/5:

76. Jane could leave tomorrow *(temporally opaque)*

At the conceptual and hypothetical extreme , the speaker 'creates a world' which he believes to be impossible , and thus to be completely unreal . Here , by definition , the speaker implies there is no possibility whatsoever of the state/event taking place , or having taken place :

77. If **Jane had left yesterday** , she would've arrived by now *(conceptual opacity)*

Following on from figure 14 , I argue that **when these degrees of hypothetical distance are grammatically coded in the language , there are form/meaning congruences involved** .

### 5.3.2 THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

#### 5.3.2.1 The grammatical coding of grounds

I look here at two ways in which grounds are grammatically coded in the language , which I first summarize in figure 15 :

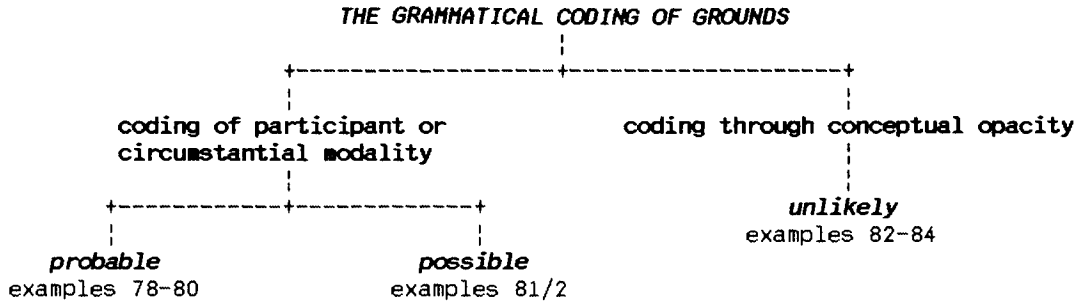



Fig. 15

I will start here with **the coding of <u>probability</u> <u>with</u> <u>grounds</u>** through participant or circumstantial modality . **The coding of participant or circumstantial modality** (cf. section 5.2) **in itself implies grounds** , either through speaker knowledge of the agent's intention (as with the infinitive form in 78) , or through knowledge of a present circumstantial cause (as with the -ing form in 78) :

78. Jane ¦ **will** ¦ **leave** soon *(participant modality)*
¦ **is going to** ¦ **be leaving** soon *(circumstantial modality)*

In other words , expressions of participant/circumstantial modality are expressions of grounds .

Participant or circumstantial modality may also be implied through forms which are not just temporally opaque (as with 78) , but conceptually opaque (as I argued in 3.3.3 and 5.2 ) :

79. I meet Jane tomorrow *(circumstantial modality)*
80. I'm meeting Jane tomorrow *(circumstantial modality)*

Like with 78 , these opaque forms imply speaker knowledge of a current plan or arrangement , conveying a sense of near certainty which is carried over from the transparent use of present and present progressive forms .

As for **the coding of <u>possibility</u> <u>with</u> <u>grounds</u>** , some of the above forms can be modified so as to reduce the level of likelihood through cotext , as with their use with the subordinator *if* together with the consequence clause in 81 :

81. If Jane ¦ **is leaving** ¦ tomorrow , then we're in trouble
¦ **is going to leave** ¦
¦ **is going to be leaving** ¦

But grounds are still coded here through participant/circumstantial modality ; so that it is only the level of probability which is altered .

Alternatively , possibility with grounds can be coded through the modal *may* :

82. Jane **may** ¦ leave ¦ soon *(participant modality : possibility)*
¦ be leaving ¦ *(circumstantial modality : possibility)*

I have not previously discussed the modal *may* ; but *may* functions here in a way very similar to *will* and *going to* : that is , it implies participant modality with the infinitive , or circumstantial modality with the -ing form . In contrast to the more hypothetical modal *can* , *may* is said to have a **'factual'** orientation , as opposed to a **'theoretical'** one (cf. Leech 1971:75) .

A state/event may be coded as **unlikely with grounds** through **conceptually opaque forms which do not signal participant or circumstantial modality :**

83. If **Jane left tomorrow** , we'd be in trouble
84. If **Jane were leaving now** , things could get very difficult
85. I wish **Jane would leave**

Here the 'temporal distance' of 'past' forms is used to code the hypothetical distance of an event which is deemed unlikely to occur . But again there is the implication that speaker has **grounds** for so thinking , as I argued in 5.3.1 above .

### 5.3.2.2 The grammatical coding of possibility without grounds

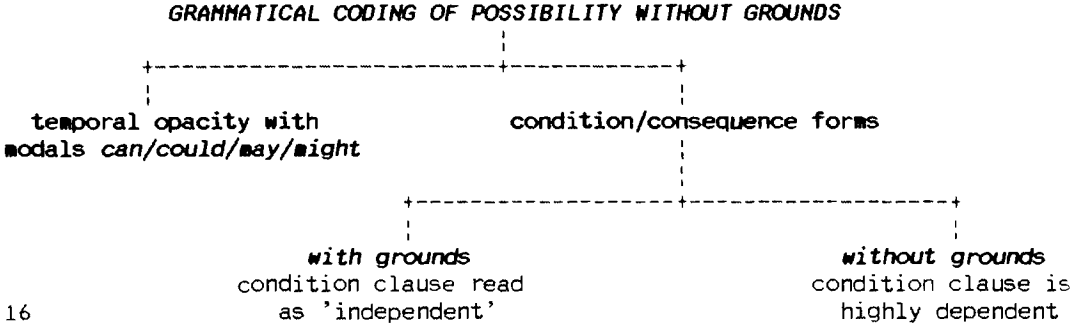



Fig. 16

Possibility without grounds is often coded through temporally opaque forms which co-refer to modal auxiliaries , from which they code mood (cf. 3.3) :

86. Jane **could** leave tomorrow

87. Jane **may/might/could** ¦ have left yesterday
¦ be leaving now

In contrast to the use of *may* in 82 , *can/could* do not code participant or circumstantial modality , and therefore they do not code grounds : while may has a 'factual' orientation , can has a 'theoretical' orientation (Leech 1971:75) . That is , can/could merely imply that the speaker hypothesizes about the theoretical ability of the agent to perform a particular action (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:222/3) .

The forms in 87 do not code grounds - there is no clear implication of participant or circumstantial modality - and consequently they are unlikely to be seen to suggest that the speaker has grounds **unless there is further evidence of this through context** . That is , the forms do not in themselves imply that grounds are available : they are essentially 'theoretical hypotheses' .

With **condition/consequence forms** , it is not always clear whether or not grounds are implied :

88. If (it's true that) ¦ Jane left yesterday ¦ she'll be here very soon
¦ is leaving now ¦
¦ leaves tomorrow ¦

One interpretation , highlighted through the insertion of *it's true that* , is that the condition is supported by grounds . That is , [Jane leaves tomorrow] is read rather as an independent clause , introduced by *that* and thus to some extent both **conceptually and linguistically distanced** from the modifying *if* subordinator . In this case [Jane leaves tomorrow] is seen to code circumstantial modality , as it does as an independent clause which is conceptually opaque (present tense with future meaning) .

Alternatively , and particularly in the absence of the *it's true that* insertion , the condition clause is directly modified and conceptually circumscribed by the *if* subordinator , thereby no longer coding grounds , but instead implying an event which is merely **theoretically possible** .

#### 5.3.2.3 The grammatical coding of impossibility

**Impossibility is grammatically coded through conceptual opacity** ie. through the use of 'past' forms whose temporal distance from the present is given a new , conceptual orientation , coding hypothetical distance :

89. It's time **you were in bed** *(present reference : knowledge of impossibility)*
90. I wish **I were you** *(present reference : knowledge of impossibility)*
91. **Had Jane left yesterday** , she'd have .. *(past ref.: belief in impossibility)*
92. It's not as though **we were poor** *(present reference : knowledge)*

Wheras the conceptual opacity of *unlikely with grounds* often uses 'simple past' forms (as in 83-85) , the greater hypothetical distance of *impossibility* is often coded through 'past perfect' forms , where the greater temporal distance denotes greater hypothetical distance . The grammatical coding of impossibility has no clear future reference , because the future by definition must to some degree be uncertain .

#### 5.3.2.4 SUMMARY

I have argued for a deep congruence between hypothetical meaning and the language we use to express it , a congruence which is summarized in figure 14 . Rather than explain this simply by using the traditional distinctions between degrees of probability in hypothetical meaning (eg. Leech 1989:188/9) , I have made a distinction between grounds and absence of grounds . I believe that these terms express quite accurately the congruence between form and meaning . If we have or imply we have grounds for making a hypothesis , then by definition our meaning is more contextually close than if we do not .

## 6. REFERENTIAL ABSTRACTION AND CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE : IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

### 6.1 Overview

In section 6 I argue that idioms and proverbs express a form of contextual distance whereby components of the ideational context (participants , objects , processes) are not separately coded or referred to in the language . Rather , idioms and proverbs express degrees of referential abstraction : proverbs are at the conceptual extreme here , so that expressions such as *it takes two to tango* cannot be segmented into discrete ideational referents (meaning) , and congruent with this there are **degrees of lexical and inflectional restriction** (form) .

### 6.2 INTRODUCTION : DEFINING IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

There has been much discussion in the literature about what exactly constitutes an idiom . Most definitions make reference to the way in which idioms lack the 'rule-governed' systematicity of grammatical structures . According to Mitchell (1971) , for example , an idiom is :

> ...immutable in the sense that its parts are unproductive in relation to the whole in terms of the normal operational processes of substitution , transposition , expansion etc.
>
> (1971:57)

Thus idioms consist of parts which cannot be regularly substituted by alternatives. For example , in 93 the segment *cook ---'s goose* cannot be further broken down :

93. This will cook Arthur's goose

So that we cannot say *this will cook Arthur's hen* , for example . Cruise refers to this unproductive segment as a *single semantic constituent* (1986:37) , contrasting it with *this* , *will* and *Arthur* , which are substitutible and which are thus *regular semantic constituents* .

Idioms and proverbs have a number of characteristic **grammatical and lexical restrictions** . Cruise points out that lexically , they behave like 'lexical complexes' (1986:37) . One test of this is that they **resist interruption** , so that

we cannot say *to pull someone's left leg* . Another test is that they resist re-ordering of parts :

> ... *What John pulled was his sister's leg* has no idiomatic reading , wheras *What John did was pull his sister's leg* , which leaves the idiom 'physically intact' , has .
>
> (1986:38)

Grammatically , they are sometimes **inflectionally restricted** : we cannot say , for example , *the bucket was kicked* (Cowie 1981:230) , though we can sometimes inflect in other ways , as with *he pulled his socks up / he must pull his socks up* (Mathews 1974) .

But idioms are not all alike : some express meanings which have no clear 'literal' interpretation , others are still relatively transparent . This has led commentators to talk of **degrees of idiomaticity** . Cowie (1988) , for example , points out that some idioms , such as *do a U-turn* , has both a figurative sense and at the same time preserves a current literal interpretation , wheras *blow the gaff* or *spill the beans* have become less literal , more figurative .(1988:134/5) .

Infact , there are two continua here . First there is the continuum of figurative/literal , a continuum which is essentially about meaning . Second , there is the continuum whereby idioms behave more or less like lexical items (resisting interruption and so on) , and more or less like fully productive structures (being inflectable etc.) . This second continuum is form oriented . Each of these separate continua have been extensively discussed in the literature . Cowie , for example , says that the accessibility of particular idioms to inflectional transformations remains largely a matter of the individual idiom , so that " there is a case for ... stating transformational restrictions in terms of individual composites" (1981:230) . But there has been relatively little discussion of how the two continua might be synthesized on a principled basis (but see discussion in Chafe 1970/Newmeyer 1974) .

In the following sections I propose that through the continuum of contextual distance it is possible to synthesize the two continua , so that we end up with a framework of analysis which helps to explain idioms and proverbs in terms of a form/meaning congruence .

### 6.3 CONTEXTUAL COMPONENTS AND REFERENTIAL ABSTRACTION

I referred above to Cruise's concept of semantic constituency , whereby those parts of an idiom which cannot be substituted by other linguistic items of similar rank are 'single semantic constituents' . So in 94 , [bury the hatchet] would form a single semantic constituent :

94. Thank God Bill decided to [bury the hatchet]

We could not , for example , substitute *bury the hatchet* with *bury the axe* or *get rid of the hatchet* . However , there is a very definite sense in which *bury the hatchet* can be segmented into two components . Its meaning is something like *forget an argument* or *set aside a disagreement* . Although an accurate paraphrase is context dependent , there is a definite sense in which both *bury* and *hatchet* have distinct referents in the ideational context :

| | PROCESS | 'OBJECT' |
|---|---|---|
| Bill decided to | bury | the hatchet |
| | *forget* | *the argument* |
| | *set aside* | *the disagreement* |

So , while *bury the hatchet* is indeed a single semantic constituent (on the basis of Cruise's definition) , it has two **contextual components** ; that is , it refers separately to two specific features of a particular ideational context , a process and an 'object' or topic . This is not quite identical to Cowie's (1988) figurative/literal perspective . *Bury the hatchet* is more figurative than literal ( *the hatchet* is particularly opaque in this sense) ; yet it remains relatively 'transparent' in terms of its two contextual references .

Other idioms have only one contextual component :

95. Cecil [kicked the bucket]

The paraphrase for *kick the bucket* is something like *die* or *expire* or *snuff it* ; whatever the choice , invariably we make reference to a single process in the ideational context . As Mitchell points out , "the whole often corresponds to a cognitively similar single form" (1971:57) . 95 , then , has both one semantic and one contextual constituent .

What , then , of proverbs ? It seems to me that the distinguishing feature of most proverbs is that they code no specific contextual features at all :

96. It takes two to tango
97. beggars can't be choosers

Ofcourse there is a sense in which *two* in 96 and *beggars/choosers* in 97 refer to participants in the ideational context . However , even when these forms are used in specific situations , there is no specific reference to specific contextual components . Proverbs , that is , are essentially **generic** ; by their very nature they involve us in shifting out from the specifics of actual , concrete contextual referents into the world of generalization and abstraction . In this sense , proverbs are highly contextually distanced , because by virtue of their abstraction , they are remote from the specifics of definite contextual reference and contextual language .

Indeed , I argue that **just as proverbs so defined are more contextually distant than idioms , so idioms which code only one specific contextual component are more distanced than those which code two** . There is , then , a continuum of contextual distance here ; a continuum in which we can observe a gradual shift from more to less coding of specific ideational components :

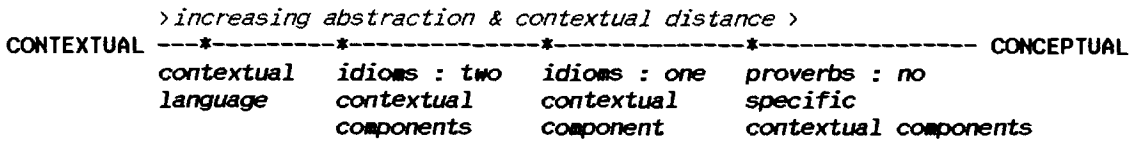



Fig. 17

### 6.4 THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

In 6.2 I mentioned a number of criteria - some lexical, some grammatical - which are used to describe idioms . Infact , all these criteria refer to ways in which language expressions are **more or less fixed** in terms of their component parts . Thus , while idioms and proverbs all involve a degree of lexical fixity by definition (and are all more contextually distanced than contextual language) , some are more fixed than others . That is , some have inflectable verb phrases , some do not ; some can be lexically interrupted , some cannot ; some can be reordered , some cannot . To maintain a form/meaning congruence in line with figure 17 , it is necessary to argue that these various criteria can be predicted on the basis of their contextual components ; to argue , infact , that idioms with two clear contextual components are more variable (inflectable , accessible to re-ordering etc) than those with only one , and so on :

| CRITERIA FOR FIXITY | 2 component idioms | 1 component idioms | proverbs |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Inflectable ? (coding past/present/future)* | YES | YES | NO |
| *Passivizable ?* | YES | NO | NO |
| *Can be re-ordered ?* | YES | NO | NO |
| *Can be interrupted ?* | YES | (?)NO | (?)NO |

Fig. 18

Once again , then , degrees of contextual distance (in this case , degrees of abstraction) are congruent with degrees of conceptual lexico-grammar . The more linguistically 'fixed' , the less such expressions behave like transparent , independent clauses .

However , as with all components of contextual distance , we are dealing here not with stable demarcations but with the *'more or less'* , with the 'shading' of one category into another which is implicit in the very concept of a continuum . Thus there are fuzzy boundaries , in terms of contextual reference , between proverbs/idioms , and between one and two component idioms ; I shall refer to this element of indeterminacy in the course of the following discussion .

### 6.4.1 Proverbs : a form/meaning congruence

Proverbs express meanings which are *timeless* , which are *generic* ; according to Seidl, they express "a general truth which relates to everyday experience" (Seidl/McMordie 1978:241) . They are highly abstracted from the concrete segmentation of ideational processes and participants . Congruent with this level of referential abstraction , proverbs show two features of highly conceptual language . Firstly , they are substantially **lexically restricted** , often resisting lexical interruption (98/99) or alteration (100) :

?98. Necessity is the mother of [*true*] invention
?99. A rolling stone gathers no [*inconvenient*] moss
?100. The early riser catches the worm

They are not , though , completely fixed in their lexical content . It is generally possible to interrupt a proverb where such an interruption emphasizes both literal and non literal meaning , and provided the lexical content of the original proverb remains unaltered :

101. Beggars [*simply*] can't be choosers
102. No news is [*definitely*] good news

Furthermore , some proverbs appear more contextually abstracted than others . *All that glitters is not gold* is particularly abstract , while *Too many cooks spoil the broth* seems to suggest that some contextual , referential distinctions are being implied which may be identifiable and paraphrasable on particular occasions of use:

103. Too many [cooks] [spoil] [the broth]
*Too many [decision makers] [confuse] [the operation]*

In such cases there may be a congruent accessibility to increased lexical interruption:

104. Too many *[self appointed]* cooks *[may completely]* spoil the broth

Proverbs are generally subject to tight inflectional restriction , so that any shift of verbal inflection is unacceptable :

?105. Better the devil you **knew**
?106. A rolling stone **will gather** no moss

What these inflections do , in effect , is suggest that there is a particular , definite referential framework , a specific context which is being built into the syntactic form of the proverb : reference to a past state in 105 , and perhaps to a future event in 106 . Such specificity is incongruous given the timeless quality intended by the proverb.

### 6.4.2 One component idioms : the form/meaning congruence

My concern here is only with idioms with atleast one verb phrase , so that expressions such as *at peace with* and *in the face of* are not my concern . Where such verbal idioms have only one contextual constituent , this constituent is invariably a specific **process** (state/event) in the ideational context . Ofcourse in expressions such as *Bill kicked the bucket* , there is also a participant (Bill) , but my interest is strictly in the idiom itself .

I include most **phrasal verbs** within the category of one component idioms . Because such expressions make specific contextual reference to an ideational process , the language which carries this reference - the verb phrase - can be inflected to code past , present or future references :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 107. Bill | kicked<br>has kicked<br>will kick | the bucket | 108. Jim | pulled<br>had pulled<br>was pulling | a fast one |
| 109. I | gave<br>have given<br>will give | Jane the slip | 110. Bill | reads<br>was reading<br>has read | between the lines |

Note how expressions such as 109 and 110 appear to code an object - *the slip* , *the lines* - as well as a process . However , in terms of the actual , non literal reference , these words are all part of the verb phrase . That is , a 'contextual' paraphrase of 109 does not attach a referent to *slip* ; rather , *give the slip* codes a single process which we might paraphrase as *evade* or *escape from* .

But because these expressions code only one feature of the ideational context , they are still quite restricted in form . Thus they cannot be passivized (a process which involves re-ordering of parts (111/2) , nor can they be interrupted when such interruption is consistent only with the literal meaning (113) ; however , as with proverbs , lexical additions which enhance or emphasize the non literal meaning are sometimes acceptable (114/5) :

*111. The bucket was kicked by Bill *112. The slip was given to Jane by Bill

?113. Bill read [*very carefully*] between [*all*] the lines

114. Jim pulled a *[very]* fast one 115. He's fallen [*completely*] in love

### 6.4.3 Two component idioms : the form/meaning congruence

Two component idioms are those which make reference both to a process and to an 'object' or other associated argument in the ideational context . Because they are, in this sense , **more referential to the ideational context (ie. they refer to more contextual components) , they are less conceptual , and have more of the characteristics of independent clauses :**

| | *PROCESS* | *'OBJECT'* |
|---|---|---|
| 116. Jane | broke<br>*dispelled* | the ice<br>*the tension* |
| 117. Bill | held<br>*looked after/attended to* | the fort<br>*the house/office etc.* |
| 118. Liz | gained<br>*achieved* | the upper hand<br>*an advantageous position* |
| 119. Jane | set (rolling)<br>*started /initiated* | the ball<br>*the discussion/proceedings* |

Self evidently , each of these examples can be inflected to code past/present/future reference , as with one component idioms . They are , in addition , somewhat more accessible to passivization/reordering :

120. The ice was broken by Jane
121. The fort was held by Bill
122. The upper hand was gained by Liz
123. The ball was set rolling by Jane

Most often such two component idioms have a verb phrase (*hold*) and a noun phrase (*the fort*) which are associated by the same kind of logical role relationship which exists between their contextual paraphrases *(attend to - the [house])* . In other words , *Bill held the fort* represents an agent/process/patient frame in just the same way as its paraphrase does . In contrast , a one component idiom -such as *Bill kicked the bucket* - is only agent/process/patient in its non literal , idiomatic sense . I think that the kind of congruence between literal (contextual) and non literal (idiomatic) meaning helps in explaining the greater linguistic flexibility of two component idioms . That is , we can passivize 120-123 just as we can passivize their contextual paraphrases : *the proceedings were started by Jane* .

Newmeyer (1974) makes a very similar point to this . According to Newmeyer , idioms which passivize - *pop the question , burn one's fingers , spill the beans* - have two crucial features in common :

> First , the predicates in their literal senses ... allow passivization . One's leg can be pulled literally as well as idiomatically . Secondly , the actual meanings of these idioms ... contain Passive-governing predicates . Thus one can say that 'someone was teased' (someone's leg was pulled) , that 'peace was made' (the hatchet was buried) ..... We also find a host of idioms which do not passivize . Among them are the following : *kick the bucket , shoot the bull , blow one's top* .... These all contain semantic one-place predicates . These idioms may be paraphrased very roughly as *die , talk* ... and *explode* .
>
> (1974:329/30)

With lexical interruption , the fact that it is not only the verb phrase but also the noun phrase which refers to a contextual component means that any interruption which modifies the NP is acceptable , provided it is semantically congruent with

both literal and non literal meanings :

124. She [spilled] [**all** the beans] this time !
*[told (him)] [**everything** about X]*

125. He's finally agreed to [bury] [a **very old** hatchet]
*[forget] [a **very old** argument]*

There is , then , a general tendency whereby two component idioms can be interrupted on a wider scale than one component idioms or proverbs . With the latter , most permissible interruptions perform an emphasizing function (114/5) . With two component idioms , more context specific lexical insertions are possible , as in 124 and 125 above .

## 6.5 SUMMARY

In figure 17 I outlined a continuum of contextual distance which extends from contextual/transparent language through to proverbs which are highly restricted both lexically and grammatically . Congruent with this is a semantic continuum which represents increasing degrees of referential abstraction from clear coding of ideational components . It is , I have emphasized , a matter of continuum rather than of discrete , self contained categories , and thus the form/meaning congruence needs to be appraised in these terms . It has been necessary , given limitations on space , to illustrate the hypothesis here only with respect to a small number of linguistic examples , but in Appendix B I provide a much fuller list of the expressions which fall into each of my three categories .

## 7. INTERPERSONAL MEANING AND CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE

### 7.1 *World to words* : contextual distance and interpersonal meaning

My concern here is largely with the category of suasive speech act expressions , and with the extent to which such expressions code conceptual meaning and show congruent features of conceptual lexico-grammar . In section 7 I simply provide an overview of interpersonal meaning , since all of chapter five is devoted to expanding on the interpersonal component .

How is interpersonal meaning coded in language ? At the contextual end of the continuum of contextual distance , language codes only ideational meanings , expressing what Halliday refers to as "the *observer* function of language , language as a means of talking about the real world" (1970:143) . At the conceptual end , language specifically codes elements of the interpersonal context , thereby giving clear expression to what Halliday calls "the *intruder* function of language" (1975:17) . So in terms of the functional coding of language , the continuum of contextual distance represents a development from simply *observing/reporting/describing* at the contextual end , through to the specific lexico-grammatical coding of interpersonal engagement at the conceptual end .

Searle (1979) provides a very clear way of distinguishing between these two orientations :

> Some illocutions have as part of their illocutionary point to get the words ..to match the world , others to get the world to match the words. Assertions are in the former category , promises and requests are in the latter .
>
> (1979:3)

Searle's *words to world* corresponds to Halliday's *observer function* , while *world to words* matches his *intruder function* . These concepts relate to the continuum of contextual distance in the following way :

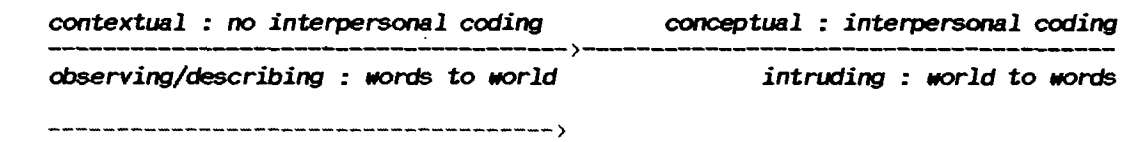



Fig. 19

I identify three elements of conceptual meaning which are specifically relevant to the coding of suasion . The first I call **interlocutor dependence** ; that is , **signalling that a future action , desired by one interlocutor , is subject to the willingness of another :**

126. Could you do the shopping ?
127. Shall I give you a hand ?

The more such interlocutor dependence is coded in the language , the more the speaker tends to use conceptual forms : forms which are opaque , and which are lexically and inflectionally restricted .

My second meaning element I call **speaker determinacy : the more clearly the speaker expresses his/her personal and authoritative commitment to the bringing about of an action , the more determinate is his or her meaning :**

128. I order you to do the shopping !

Speaker determinacy is closely related to participant determinacy (section 4) and participant modality (section 5) , which are its ideational counterparts . The more such determinacy is coded , the more likely it is that conceptual forms will be used -forms which are lexically and inflectionally restricted .

The third element is **circumstantial justification** . This involves the implication that **there are grounds within the ideational context to justify the hearer's performing action X , while the speaker holds back from signalling personal commitment :**

129. Perhaps you ought to do the shopping

Forms which clearly code this meaning are generally opaque , but are more open to lexical and inflectional variation .

With interpersonal meaning , the continuum of contextual distance runs from the coding of ideational (but not of interpersonal) meaning at the contextual end , through to the clear lexico-grammatical coding of interpersonal meaning in any of the three ways I outlined above :

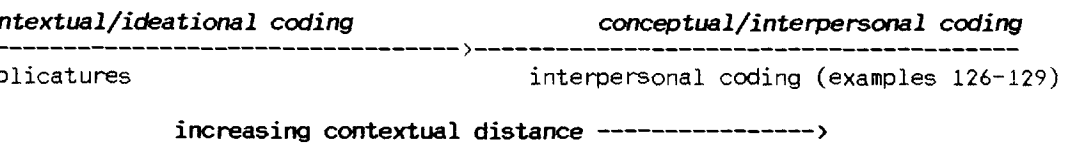



Fig. 20

## 7.2 CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE , INTERPERSONAL CODING AND THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 7.2.1 Coding the interpersonal context : *want* and *willing*

Halliday's **ideational** component concerns the participants , processes , objects and things which form the substance of what is being talked about (cf. 2.2.2) ; in contrast , the **interpersonal** component is the component through which "the speaker adopts a role ... vis-a-vis the participants in the speech situation , and also assigns roles to the other participants ..." (1975:17) .

When the speaker codes **interlocutor dependence** (as in 126/7) , s/he necessarily assigns a role both to speaker and to hearer : one role has to do with *willingness* that action *X* should be implemented , the other has to do with *volition* - coding the *want* that *X* be brought about . These two roles can be briefly summarized as **WILLING** and **WANT** (Mitchell 1981) . Brown and Levinson talk about this same distinction in terms of the communicative parameters which they express . The WANT component keys in to the **desire to be unimpeded** in getting something done ; the WILLING component keys in to the **desire to save face** , to "be approved of in certain respects" (1978:63) .

**When speaker codes *speaker determinacy* , it is the desire to remain unimpeded (want) which takes priority over the desire to save face (willing) , as in 128 .**

### 7.2.2 Conceptual lexico-grammar & the form/meaning congruence

When interlocutor dependence or strong speaker determinacy are coded in the language , we tend to find that such language is **lexically and inflectionally restricted** . Strong speaker determinacy cannot occur with strong interlocutor dependence , because dependence by definition reduces the level of possible determinacy . Thus the inflectional and lexical restrictions of 134/5 are largely on account of speaker determinacy :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 134 I order you to | leave | 135 I order you to | ?hear | John |
| | *be leaving | | ?understand | |

**Here the <u>conceptual</u> <u>constraints</u> which the speaker's determinacy places on the hearer is paralleled by and congruent with the <u>linguistic</u> <u>constraints</u> on inflectional and lexical choice .**

Similarly , strong interlocutor dependence cannot occur with strong determinacy , so that the inflectional (136) and lexical (137) restrictions below are largely on account of the coding of interlocutor dependence :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ?136 Could you | help me ? | ?137 Could you | hear me ? *(* directive)* |
| | *be helping me ? | | understand John ? |

**Conceptually , the expression of interlocutor dependence implies that the action of one interlocutor is constrained by its dependence on the sanction of another . This <u>conceptual</u> <u>constraint</u> is again congruent with the <u>linguistic</u> <u>constraints</u> on inflectional and lexical choice .**

127-130 , then , occur at the conceptual extreme of the continuum in Fig. 19. Forms which code **circumstantial justification** (129) code neither interlocutor dependence nor strong (speaker) determinacy . Precisely because they imply justifying grounds

**within the ideational context** , they are generally less contextually distant , conceptually closer to the ideational context and thus more accessible to lexical and grammatical variation :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 138 You ought to | go<br>**be going** | to the convention | 139 You ought to | **hear** John !<br>**understand** John | |

**In 131 the speaker holds back from clearly constraining the hearer's freedom of action : he implies merely *this action is in your interests* . Congruent with this , the complement VP is less linguistically constrained being less inflectionally or lexically restricted .**

So the continuum of contextual distance , applied to the interpersonal context , looks as follows :

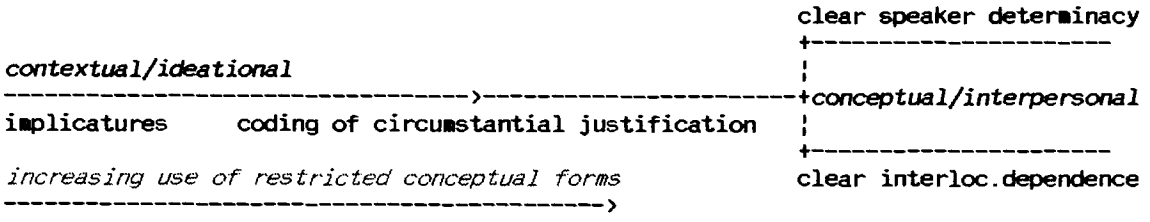



Fig. 21

### 7.3 SUMMARY

I have argued that the clear lexico-grammatical coding of the interpersonal context involves coding of either interlocutor dependence or speaker determinacy or circumstantial justification . This can be represented on a continuum of contextual distance (fig 20/21) , whereby the strongest interpersonal coding (speaker determinacy and interlocutor dependence) is congruent with the greatest lexical and grammatical restriction .

## 8. GRAMMAR , SYSTEM AND RULE : THE NATURE OF LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE

### 8.1 Introduction

In this final section I step back from the detailed analysis of conceptual meanings , and consider some of the wider implications of the continuum of contextual distance . Grammarians are accustomed to talking of *grammar* and *grammatical structures* in terms of language which is **rule based** (cf. discussion of Chomsky and Halliday in chapter one) . Although the rigid , almost scientific framework of TG has undergone considerable criticism and modification (Brown 1982), there is still a definite trend towards equating *grammar* with *rule* , neglecting the role of context and lexis , and concentrating - by and large - only on superficial correspondences between form and meaning . The more we look at relationships between grammar and lexis and context , the more we are likely to find evidence of a deeper interdependency , an interdependency which shows that the coding of meaning is not a simple matter of grammatical rule and lexical exemplification .

What the continuum of contextual distance demonstrates , I believe , is that there is no simple , categorical definition of grammatical structure in relation to the meaning it expresses . An exposition of grammatical rule is simply not enough ; conceptual meanings are dependent on particular combinations of grammatical and lexical and contextual factors . However , although such a view is hard to trace in the grammar books , it is grist to the mill for those linguists whose work is based within **formulaic language** . Pawley and Syder , as I mentioned in chapter one , look at aspects of this , talking in terms of **lexicalization** , and defining lexicalized expressions as units :

> ... of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed ...
>
> (1983:191)

This throws up a crucial question : since both formulaic language and 'fully grammatical' language (of the kind I have been looking at) have in common a degree of lexical and grammatical 'fixity' , are we justified in making a rigid distinction between the two ? . The difference is one of degree : formulaic units

may well be stored largely as lexicalized units , but many lexico-grammatical forms also have some of the features of lexicalized , formulaic expression.

## 8.2 IDIOMS , SPEECH ACTS & GRAMMATICIZATION : THE GRAMMAR/LEXIS CONTINUUM

I began this chapter with a discussion of Givon's concept of functional grammar and grammaticization . At this point it is worth adding a cautionary note . There is , I believe , a danger of interpreting the term *grammaticization* too narrowly , of implying that what counts is grammar but not lexis . But on Givon's own account , the logical extreme of grammaticization is **lexicalization** :

> If language constantly "takes discourse structure and condenses it - via syntacticization - into syntactic structure," one would presumably expect human languages to become increasingly syntacticized over time . In fact this is not the case . Rather , syntactic structure in time ERODES via processes of ... LEXICALIZATION .
>
> (1979a:83)

A full consideration of this point would be outside the scope of this enquiry . The point is worth making , though , that through the continuum of contextual distance, we can 'chart' the emergence of conceptual **lexico**-grammar : what this means , in most cases , is increasing lexical predictability (through lexical restriction) as well as increasing inflectional restriction and opacity . Conceptual forms , we might say , show evidence both of grammaticization **and of lexicalization** . There is no clear dividing line between the two . Two components of conceptual meaning which have this characteristic - referential abstraction (idioms/proverbs) and interpersonal coding (speech acts) - have been seen as so lexicalized , so unsystematic in their form/meaning relationship that they warrant separate treatment from the 'main body' of rule based structure . But how justified is such a view ?

It has been argued that **speech act expressions** are not accessible to rule-governed, systematic description . Thus Brumfit (1979) argues that 'functions' and functional exponents , immune to systemization , should not form part of organised syllabus content . This view has recently been echoed by Crombie (1985a:13/14) . What I have tried to demonstrate in section seven is that speech act expressions are

subject to very much the same kind of deep notional pressures as are other , explicitly ideational categories of language form . No doubt it is true that the former are generally more context dependent than the latter . Nevertheless **in both cases there is a continuum at work** : just as implicatures are context dependent because their illocutionary force remains uncoded in the language , so other , interpropositional values remain off record and context dependent where they are not lexico-grammatically coded :

149. Jane walked in . Bill fainted *( sequence ? simultaneity ? causal ?)*

Similarly , both speech act expressions and expressions of (for example) causal determinacy can be lexically and inflectionally restricted , and in both cases such restrictions appear as linguistic reflections of common conceptual meanings .

The other component of conceptual meaning which is frequently considered to be relatively unsystematic or unproductive in its linguistic form is referential abstraction : **idioms and proverbs** . As with formulaic language , there is no doubt that the lexical content of idioms is more predictable , more restricted than is the case , say , with expressions of causal determinacy or of participant modality. As I pointed out in section six , grammarians generally accept that idioms are 'part grammatical , part lexical', and the shortcomings of a 'purely' grammatical or a 'purely' lexical account of idioms are well known (Weinreich 1969) . But , as with speech act expressions , what is missing from such accounts is any principled attempt to 'explain' the form/meaning congruence of idioms in terms which share common ground with other , more 'productive' areas of language form .

In short , there is a danger of *over-compartmentalizing* , of saying in somewhat simplistic terms that speech act expressions and idioms (like formulaic language) fall into the relatively unsystematic , middle ground between grammar and lexis , while what is left is essentially productive , explicable through grammatical rule. An alternative view , and the one which forms the basis of this thesis , is do away entirely with this *either/or* approach , to fully take on board the fundamental

interdependency of grammar , lexis and context , and to make central the concept of continua and the deep functional motivations for lexico-grammar which they help to represent and explain .

### 8.3 THE MENTAL LEXICON AND DEGREES OF ANALYSABILITY

Pawley and Syder's description of lexicalized units - in terms of their degrees of grammatical and lexical fixity - is not entirely distinct from the kind of inflectional and lexical restriction typical of the conceptual form/meaning congruence . They refer to this semi-fixed class of lexicalized forms as a "phrase book with grammatical notes" , which occupies "an intermediate position between the general grammatical patterns (described in terms of productive rules ...) and the list of unitary lexical items" (1983:220) ; their conclusion is:

> any strict compartmentalization [between productive rules and unitary lexical items] would not truly reflect the native speaker's grammatical knowledge if the facts are ... that lexicalization and productivity are each matters of degree . (1983:220)

Clearly there is a distinction between restricted conceptual forms and fully lexicalized , formulaic expressions such as *How are you ?* . But the difference , in language terms , is essentially one of degree . Pawley and Syder are largely concerned with the distinction between fixed expressions , such as *how are you* , and semi-fixed expressions , such as *lead up the garden path/be led up the garden path* . But the applications of the above quote are more far reaching than this , as I have already suggested .

What are the implications here for the mental storage of linguistic knowledge ? According to Peters (1983) , expressions may be stored in the mental lexicon , as single lexicalized units , or they may be constructed *de novo* from discrete morphemes : language users have access both to a mental lexicon and to linguistic knowledge actively processed utilizing the productive rules of syntax . Grammar and lexis are thus seen to be complementary in a "dynamic and redundant way" (1983:90). I have argued that many conceptual form/meaning pairings are subject to lexical and inflectional restrictions , and that it would be difficult to account for these

restrictions purely in terms of productive syntactic rule . Consequently there must be a case for hypothesizing that **the mental storage of conceptual forms may itself involve some form of interaction between analysed knowledge of productive grammatical rules on the one hand , and a more intuitive 'knowledge' about the grammar/lexis/context interdependence on the other .**

Bialystok (1978/81/82) identifies two 'knowledge sources' : **analysability** , which concerns the extent of our conscious , metalinguistic knowledge of language structure , and **automaticity** , dealing with the "relative access the learner has to the knowledge , irrespective of its degree of analysis" (1982:183) . According to Bialystok , if we have unanalysed knowledge of certain linguistic forms , then :

> We may , for example , distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences without being aware of the basis of judgement .... Although unanalysed knowledge is structured , the mental representation does not include access to that structure , and so transformations and operations on that knowledge are precluded .
>
> (1982:183)

It seems to me intuitively likely that subtle interdependencies between grammar , lexis and context , and the kind of mutual modification between them which I described in section 7 , constitute knowledge which even for native speakers is **likely to remain only partially analysed** . That is not to say that there is no case for confronting these interdependencies explicitly in the language classroom ; but what needs to be borne in mind is that there are limits to the clear , rule based derivation of such form/meaning congruences . As Sharwood Smith (1988) has put it :

> A closer look at the issues ... reveals how simplistic such inferences are and how dubious the distinction is between two theoretically distinct types of knowledge where no allowance is made for different degrees of explicitness and the possibility of interaction between different types of competences .
>
> (1988:51)

Yet for Bialystok , it is full analysability , which seems to presuppose a conscious , rule based ability to analyze language as system (1981:65) , which is the ultimate end-point :

> development [of language proficiency] involves achieving an analysed understanding of ..... information which was already known in less specialized forms .
>
> (1982:183)

In short , different forms of language presuppose accessibility to different degrees of analysability . Generally speaking , the more lexically and grammatically restricted a particular form/meaning pairing is , and the more it is open to mutual modification between cotext and context , the less 'fully analysable' it is likely to be in Bialystok's sense . At the same time , such forms are , to a greater or lesser degree , both grammaticized and lexicalized , taking on some of the features of what Pawley and Syder refer to as lexicalized units . It is arguable , I think , that virtually all language forms and expressions may be best analyzed in terms of their place on one or more continua : continua which are based atleast in part on the notion that grammar and lexis , cotext and context are fundamentally interdependent .

# CHAPTER FOUR

## *CAUSAL DETERMINACY : A FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE*

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In chapter 3 (section 4) I introduced the idea of causal determinacy , and argued that using the continuum of contextual distance , we can observe how cause/effect relationships gradually get coded in the language . The type of cause/effect coding which is most lexically and inflectionally restricted is causal determinacy , which I defined in the following way :

> **The degree to which a state or event is expressed as in itself anticipating or bringing about the occurrence of another state or event**

I suggested that there are two sources to which we can attribute causal determinacy: we can attribute it to the conscious intentional act of a participant **(participant determinacy)** , or to 'force of circumstances' **(circumstantial determinacy)** . I defined these two categories of determinacy as follows :

> **PARTICIPANT DETERMINACY - where a participant is said to consciously anticipate or to bring about a new state of affairs** . For example :

1. Jane lied in order to embarrass me *(Jane's action intentionally anticipates)*
2. Bill forced Fred to lie down *(Bill intentionally brings about a result)*

> **CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETERMINACY - where a state/event is expressed as itself determining the occurrence of another state/event , irrespective of the volition of participants whose independence is constrained by force of circumstances** . For example :

3. Fred was **murdered** *(Fred is viewed as the undergoer , subject to force of circumstances beyond his control)*
4. Bill fell as a result of **slipping** on the ice *(irrespective of Bill's wishes)*

What I want to do in chapter four is look in greater detail at some of the many ways in which participant and circumstantial determinacy become lexico-

grammatically coded . This coding involves the use of conceptual forms - forms which are lexically and grammatically restricted , and which are opaque . **The stronger the degree of participant or circumstantial determinacy , the more restricted is the language which expresses it .**

The format of chapter four is as follows . In section two I will look at examples of participant determinacy , and in section three at circumstantial determinacy . In both cases I begin with an overview , summarizing the relevant forms of conceptual lexico-grammar together with those aspects of conceptual meaning which with which they are congruent . This is followed , both in section two and in section three , by a more detailed analysis of a selection of lexico-grammatical forms , in which I seek to establish through detailed exemplification how it is that each linguistic configuration is functionally motivated , and codes one or other aspect of determinacy .

## 2. PARTICIPANT DETERMINACY AND THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 2.1 DEGREES OF PARTICIPANT DETERMINACY ; ANTICIPATION AND CONTROL

I have defined determinacy in terms of a cause expressed as 'either anticipating or bringing about' a certain effect . What we have here is a distinction between two types of determinacy . Firstly , there is **anticipation** , where **the effect is not actually brought about the determinate cause** ie. where **the effect does not clearly take place , but remains a mental image** :

5. She hopes to win the competition
6. Greg lied in order to save Jane's life

By definition , anticipation is a relatively weak form of determinacy , since the effect does not necessarily take place . Thus winning the competition (5) and saving Jane's life (6) are effects which are perceived as mental images - effects which are intended or desired but which are not directly realized . But even within the category of anticipation , there are degrees of determinacy - we can anticipate the occurrence of a state/event more or less strongly . The weakest form of

anticipation is **expectation** : where a participant believes X will occur , but does nothing consciously or actively to bring it about eg. *I reckon she'll win* .
My second category , **hope/wish** , is stronger in the sense that the participant clearly has a personal stake : it is where a participant wishes for a state/event to take place , but again does nothing consciously to bring it about eg. *she wants to win* . Stronger still is the category of **intention** : here there is a strong implication of anticipated success (*she intends to win*) , and sometimes of preparatory action taken (*she plotted to win*) .

If we move further along this continuum of increasing determinacy , we move out of anticipation and into the category of **control** - that is , expressing a cause which in itself implies the bringing about of a determined effect , as in 2 above . Within participant determinacy , I refer to this as **preemption** , where the participant unambiguously succeeds in bringing about (or preventing) a new state/event . Thus the conceptual end of the continuum of contextual distance looks as follows :

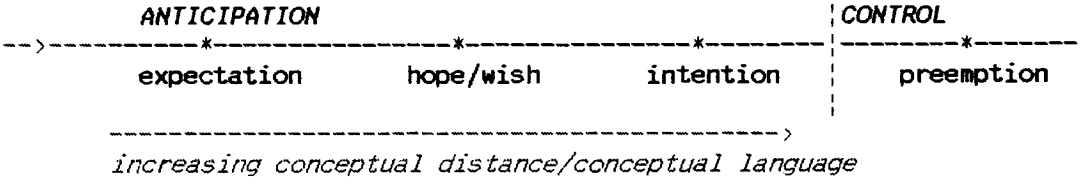



Fig. 1 Continuum of contextual distance : coding of high causal determinacy

What figure one shows is that segment of the continuum of contextual distance which represents lexico-grammatical coding of high determinacy : that is , it is only a part , and the most contextually distanced part , of the whole continuum which I presented in chapter 3 (4.2.3) . The continuum in figure one , then , is located on a wider continuum :

| contextual | | conceptual |
|---|---|---|
| **no** grammatical coding of cause/effect | grammatical coding of cause/effect | *expectation wish/desire intention preemption* **lexico-grammatical coding of high determinacy** |

Fig. 2 *Entire continuum of contextual distance relating to participant determinacy*

## 2.2 THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE : OVERVIEW

In this section I identify and define four features of conceptual lexico-grammar which are **increasingly in evidence as we move from expectation through to preemption** ie. as we move towards the conceptual extreme of the continuum in figure 1/2 .

### 2.2.1 Inflectional restriction : from less to more restricted

Many forms which lexico-grammatically code *expectation* and *hope/wish* (relatively 'low' on the continuum) are **inflectable** :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7a | I expected her to | leave | by 4.00 | *(expectation)* |
| 7b | I hope to | **be leaving** | | *(wish/desire)* |
| | | **have left** | | |

In contrast , forms which code more contextually distanced (ie. more determinate) meanings - such as **preemption** - are **rarely open to such inflectional change** :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | Jane forced Bill to | leave | 9. Bill prevented Jane from | leaving |
| | | **?have left** | | **?having left** |
| | | **?be leaving** | | |

It seems to me that there is a direct link here between the degree to which the agent of the complement clause is able to act independently (more freedom in 7 , less in 8/9) , and the congruent inflectability of the complement clause . In other words , **the more conceptually constrained , the more inflectionally constrained .**

> **What we find is a gradual development from inflectional change which if fully acceptable (expressing relatively low determinacy) , through a range of forms whose inflectional change is only marginally acceptable , and ending up with inflections coding high determinacy which show , as with 8 , very tight inflectional restriction .**

However , it is important to recognize that **these inflectional variations are dependent on the kind of verb used in the complement clause** . For example , verbs which denote actions which are intrinsically punctual , or of short duration , cannot be given a *be + -ing* inflection , even if the degree of determinacy is such

that this kind of inflectional variation would otherwise be possible . Compare , then , 10 below with 7a above :

10. I expect her to ¦ slam ¦ the door in my face
¦ **?be slamming** ¦

**2.2.2 Opacity & *that* complementation : from independent to dependent clause**

Generally speaking , the distinction between temporal and conceptual opacity does not correspond clearly or systematically with distinctions between one form of participant determinacy and another . All categories of participant determinacy may be coded through opaque forms , wheras less conceptual forms which code a general cause/effect relation are rarely opaque :

11. [Jane left] because [it was getting late]

But there is one important distinction : **expressions of relatively low participant determinacy (expectation etc.) do not generally require opaque coding** , since they can very often be coded through *that* + independent clause . **Expressions of high determinacy , on the other hand , are <u>necessarily</u> <u>opaque</u>** - compare 12a with 12b below :

12a I expected (that) **[she was going to leave on Thursday]**
*12b I forced her (that) *she was going to leave on Thursday*

Indeed , it is a feature of conceptual forms that they resemble independent clauses (ie. clauses which can stand alone) less and less as they become more determinate, contextually distant and grammaticized (cf. Givon 1980:337 and chapter 3:1.3.2) . So it is that forms coding expectation (relatively weak determinacy :12a) can generally take this kind of 'independent' complementation , while forms coding preemption (much stronger determinacy) do not (12b) .

As with inflection , restrictions on the independent form of complement clauses are congruent with conceptual restrictions on effects which are constrained by determinate causes . The more strongly an effect is determined , the less it is likely to be coded as a independent clause .

Furthermore , there is a significant correspondence between inflectional restriction and the coding of aspect within opaque VP's . **Forms which are inflectionally restricted are also forms whose opaque verb phrase does not independently code aspect , as with *[leave]* in example 8 and *[leaving]* in example 9 above .** So , whenever I refer to VP's which are subject to tight inflectional restriction , **it is invariably the case that these VP's are also highly opaque ,** coding neither past/present/future nor aspect .

### 2.2.3 Lexical restriction : from less to more restricted

I pointed out in chapter 3 that stative verbs generally signal states which are not brought about through volitional action (see appendix A) . They are thus incongruous with forms which presuppose that a volitional action is being determined :

?13. Jane forced Bill to ¦ **resemble** ¦ Harry
¦ **understand** ¦

In very general terms , forms which code weak anticipation (expectation or wish/desire) are rather more acceptable with statives than forms (such as 13) which code strong control , so that **lexical restriction increases as more conceptual and determinate meaning is expressed :**

14. Jane ¦ expected ¦ Bill to ¦ **resemble** ¦ Harry
¦ wanted ¦ ¦ **understand** ¦

In 14 , for example , the weakness of Jane's anticipation is such that it exerts no clear influence on Bill , who remains free to act independently . Since no intentional influence is involved , there is no constraint on the nature of Bill's expected action , which may or may not be volitional . This increasing unacceptability of statives along the continuum of contextual distance is , though, no more than a general trend (Givon 1975:62/3) .

It is worth stressing that many forms which code participant determinacy involve not simply grammatical but clearly **lexico**-grammatical coding . Thus the

inflectability of the verb in the complement clause in 7-9 can be seen partly as a response to the degree of determinacy implicit in the main verb : *force* implies much greater determinacy than *expect* or *hope* .

So the overall pattern is :

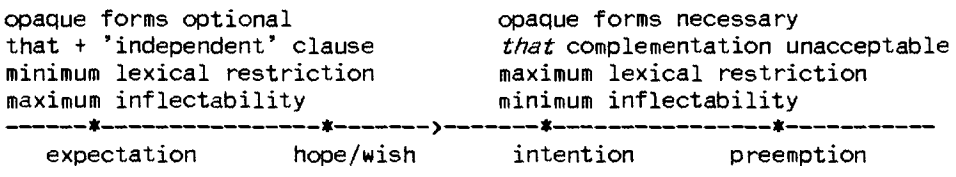



Fig. 2 : *High determinacy (participant) : increasing conceptual form/contextual distance*

There are a great many verbs and forms which code the various stages along this continuum , and with this substantial diversity of language comes an increase in the complexity of the form/meaning correspondences . Each of the 4 categories introduced above (expectation etc.) can be further broken down , so that **each has a strong and a weak determinacy** : by developing the semantic framework in this way , it is possible to account for many more form/meaning congruences . In the following sections I expand considerably on the above scheme .

## 2.3. EXPECTATION : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

Expectation is a relatively weak form of anticipation (cf. figure 1) , and as such it may be expressed through forms which are relatively inflectable , lexically unrestricted , and relatively 'independent' . . Dealing first with independence , many forms which code expectation can be used with the optional complementizer *that* , which introduces a clause which is independent ie. which can stand alone , and which is thus not necessarily opaque :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15. I | expect<br>reckon<br>anticipate | (that) | **[she's going to win]** |

I will argue later that many of the more determinate form/meaning congruences

cannot take this kind of independent clause structure , so that the greater the level of determinacy , the less forms resemble relatively ungrammaticized independent clauses , as predicted by Givon (1980:337) and as discussed in chapter 3 (1.3.2) .

The absence of direct causal influence between the agent of the main clause and the agent of the complement clause leaves the latter relatively unconstrained (as I argued in 2.2 above) , so that even with opaque forms , there are no clear inflectional (16) or lexical (17) restrictions :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I | expect | to | **hear** from her | soon |
| | reckon | | **be hearing** from her | |
| | | | **have heard** from her | |
| 17. I | expect | to | **see** him soon | |
| | reckon | | **understand** most of what they say | |
| | | | **recognize** him even after 10 years | |

## 2.4 HOPE/WISH : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

The category of *hope/wish* is a little more complex than *expectation* . In general terms , it implies a higher degree of determinacy , stronger anticipation than is the case with *expectation* , because the main clause agent has **a clear personal stake in the occurrence or otherwise of the desired state/event** . With expectation , there is no sense of personal involvement - *I expect X to happen , but I don't care whether it does or not* - but when we use verbs such as *hope* or *want* or *desire* there is implicitly a clear element of such involvement . But there are degrees of personal commitment , even within the category of *hope/wish* . Some verbs , such as *want/prefer/hope* , signal a degree of personal commitment which is less strong , less intense than forms such as *long to* or adjectival forms such as *eager to* . I therefore distinguish between two sub-categories here , **low personal commitment** and **high personal commitment** :

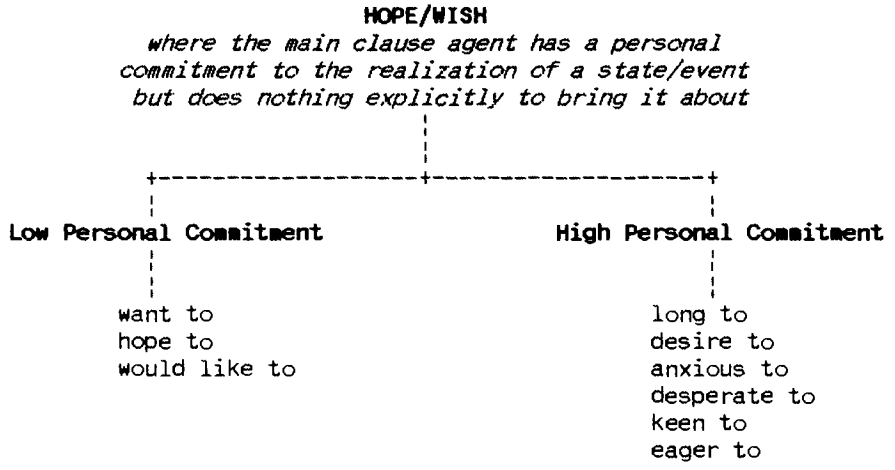



Fig. 3

Givon (1980) also talks about 'emotional commitment' as a marker of the degree of 'binding' between main and complement clauses : however , since his perspective is cross-linguistic , he looks only at a very few verbs in English , and his 'binding scale' (which I referred to in chapter 3/section 1.3.2) is somewhat different from the continuum presented here (1980:369) .

What I would like to argue is that the distinction in figure 3 is effectively a distinction between two adjacent levels of determinacy , so that **the stronger the implicit personal commitment , the more determinate , the more contextually distanced** . Congruent with this , stronger commitment is expressed through forms which are **more inflectionally restricted** . Thus relatively low personal commitment is coded through forms which are somewhat more inflectable (18) than relatively high personal commitment (19) :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18. Jane | wants to<br>hopes to<br>would like to | **finish**<br>**be finishing**<br>**have finished** | her work by tomorrow |
| 19. Jane | longs to<br>desires to<br>is keen to<br>is desperate to | **finish**<br>**??be finishing**<br>**?have finished** | her work |

With 19 the desired result (*finishing her work*) is subject to greater determinacy ,

and is more explicitly constrained through Jane's stronger emotional commitment to bringing it about .

However , I do not wish to argue that the distinction between 18 and 19 is unambiguous , nor that the inflections in 19 are completely unacceptable . What we have , rather , is a distinction between full acceptability (18) and cases of marginal acceptability , rather than a clear cut distinction between 'acceptable/grammatical' on the one hand , and unacceptable/ungrammatical on the other . Furthermore , there is no clear congruence between low/high commitment and the use of relatively transparent clauses .

As with *expectation* , forms which code *wish/desire* are not generally subject to lexical restriction , because the degree of determinacy between 'cause' and 'effect' is limited : in neither case does the agent of the main clause actually attempt to bring about a new state/event , or impose his/her volition such that the agent of the complement clause is directly constrained . Thus the use of most stative verbs is perfectly acceptable :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20. Bill | wants to | **hear** from his son |
| | hopes to | **understand** the poem |
| | is keen to | **enjoy** himself |
| | longs to | |

## 2.5 INTENTION : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 2.5.1 Intention : the semantic perspective

With *intention* we have a category which is clearly more determinate than either *expectation* or *wish/desire* . *Intention* I define in terms of a **clear intent to bring about a certain state/event** . As with *wish/desire* , there are sub-categories here which have to do with degrees of determinacy within the overall category of *intention* , categories which each have their own particular form/meaning congruences . In figure 4 I outline these distinctions , which I then go on to discuss :

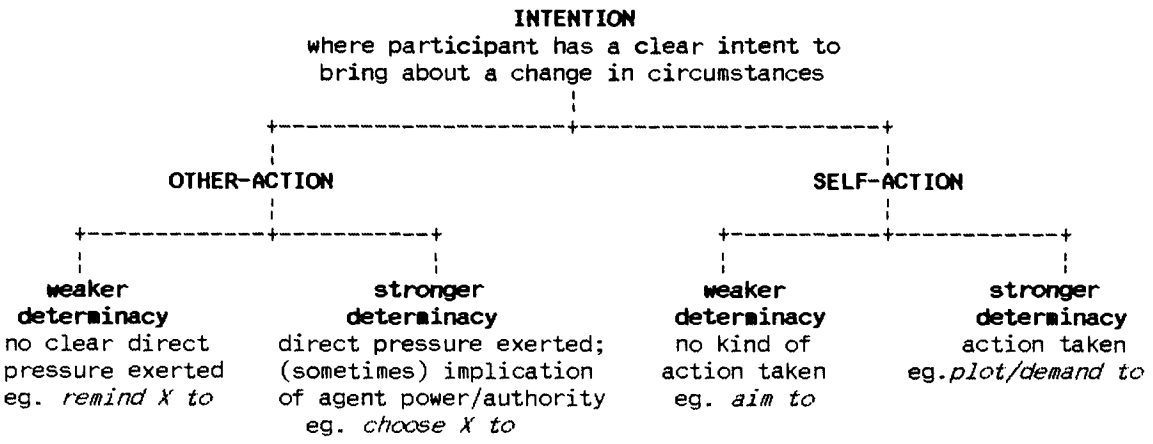



Fig. 4

I distinguish firstly between **self-action** - that is , the intention of a participant to personally bring about a state/event - and **other-action** , where the causal participant intends to get someone else to act . Within each of these categories , there are degrees of determinacy : **degrees by which the main clause agent constrains the freedom of action of the complement clause agent** . With other-intention there are two distinct levels of determinacy . One , which implies relatively low determinacy , involves verbs such as *remind* or *recommend* , where the intended action is only indirectly and impersonally sought -that is , there is **no clear sense in which the main clause agent exerts any kind of direct pressure on the agent of the complement clause in order to get X done** :

21. He ¦ **reminded** ¦ Jim to check the accounts
¦ **advised** ¦

When used interpersonally , such forms code what I have called *circumstantial justification* (cf. chapter 3/7.2) . But some forms expressing other-action may signal stronger determinacy than this , as with 22 and 23 :

22. He **chose** Jim to check the accounts
23. He **challenged** Jim to check the accounts

In 22 the main clause agent is understood to have a degree of power/authority to bring about a change of circumstances , while in both 22 and 23 the implication is

that the agent exerts direct pressure to get *X* done , in contrast to 19 .

With **self-action** , some forms signal that **action is or will be put into effect which may in itself realize the intended result** ; such forms signal a relatively high level of determinacy , as in 24 and 25 below :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24. She | **prepared** | to defeat her enemy | 25.She **left** | in order to embarrass him |
| | **plotted** | | | rather than waste her time |
| | **voted** | | | |
| | **battled** | | | |

Thus the very concept of *plotting* or *battling* indicates that action is taken in order to achieve a determined result . Stronger determinacy is also indicated through forms which imply that a kind of **preparatory action** is underway (in the sense that the desired result is actively put forward/argued for) , and that **the agent has a strong personal commitment to bringing *X* about in the face of potential opposition from others** , as in 26 :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 26. She | **argued for** | reducing the level of taxation |
| | **insisted on** | |
| | **proposed** | |

In contrast , other forms signal **merely that the agent has a certain objective in mind** , but not that any action is necessarily taken , so that the intended objective remains **no more than a mental image** . Thus 27 signals a level of determinacy which is weaker than 24-26 :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27. She | **decided** | to embarrass him |
| | **planned** | |
| | **aimed** | |

In the next section I take these semantic distinctions (summarized in fig. 4) and argue for a form/meaning congruence which is different from one category to another .

## 2.5.2 INTENTION : THE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

### 2.5.2.1 Overview

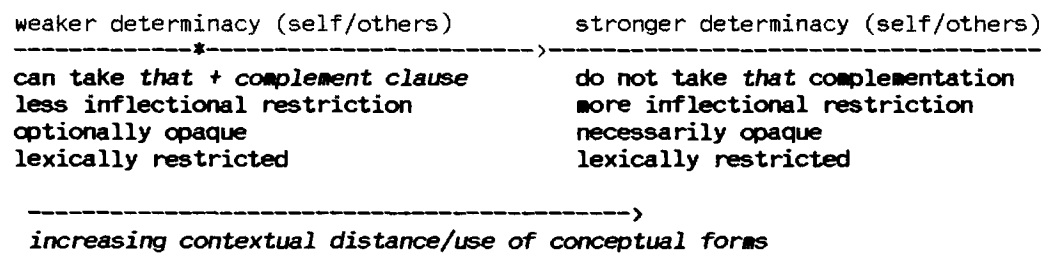



Fig. 5 *Participant determinacy : intention & the form/meaning congruence*

The distinctions sketched out in 2.5.1 above are congruent with degrees of conceptual lexico-grammar : those forms which signal a stronger level of determinacy are also those forms which **show more inflectional restriction** , so that **the more an intended result is strongly constrained/determined to take place , the more its linguistic expression is similarly constrained by inflectional restriction** .

Weaker determinacy can generally be expressed through ***that* complementation** , where the complement clause resembles the form of independent clauses which can stand alone .

Virtually all forms coding intention are **lexically restricted** because (unlike *expectation* and *wish/desire*) the very concept of intentional action is incongruous with stative verbs .

### 2.5.2.2 Other action : the form/meaning congruence

Following on from figure 4 , I distinguish here between lower determinacy (where the main clause agent stands back from exerting direct pressure on the agent of the complement clause , as in 21) , and higher determinacy (where there is a clear implication of direct pressure , as in 22/23) . Expressions of lower determinacy (28) are generally more inflectable than expressions of higher determinacy (29/30), though the distinction is not clear cut :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. She | advised<br>reminded | me to | leave<br>**be leaving**<br>**have left** | by 4.00 |
| 29. She | ordered<br>permitted<br>commanded | me to | leave<br>**?? be leaving**<br>**? have left** | by 4.00 |

Though this congruence is by no means systematic : for example , some forms signal higher determinacy but can be inflected without difficulty , though they are generally forms which imply less agent authority than *order* or *command* :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30. She | told<br>urged | me to | **be leaving**<br>**have left** | by 4.00 |

The level of determinacy here reflects **the degree to which the main clause agent constrains the freedom of action of the agent of the complement clause** . When strongly determinate verbs are used - *order* , *command* etc. - this level of constraint is higher than with verbs such as *advise* or *recommend* . The incongruity of the forms in 29 can be explained , I think , in precisely these terms : *she ordered me to be leaving* (29) sounds 'odd' because the *be leaving* inflection (in particular) seems to imply that the *leaving* is something which is not constrained to occur at a precise time : that is , the agent of *leaving* has a degree of freedom which is not implied with the form *she ordered me to leave* .

In terms of *that* complementation , forms coding lower determinacy (31) are generally more likely to take complement structures which resemble independent clauses , and vica versa , so that with expressions of higher determinacy (as in 32) we are virtually committed to using opaque forms :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31. He | suggested<br>recommended<br>reminded (me)<br>advised (me)<br>hinted | that *[I should check the accounts]* |
| 32. He | ordered<br>?directed<br>?instructed<br>?urged<br>permitted | that *[I should check the accounts]* |

Again the congruence is not exact , but even in cases where high determinate verbs can take *that* complementation , there is a semantic distinction between the opaque form (34) and the *that* form (33) :

33. We told him that *[he should hurry up]*
34. We told him *to hurry up*

The more independent complement clause structure of 33 seems to imply less determinacy , less constraint imposed on the agent of the complement clause than the fully opaque VP in 34 . This point has been noted by Yule (1986) , from whom I have taken these examples . He comments :

> The conceptual distance between the 'telling' and the 'hurrying up' in [33] appears to involve a lessening of control exerted by the causing 'source' over the resulting ... action .
>
> (1986:280)

A similar point is made by Givon (1980:357) . Such a distinction is consistent with the continuum of contextual distance , and the increasing levels of grammaticization which it represents . That is , as language form becomes increasingly grammaticized (and contextually distant) , so it resembles less and less the form of independent clauses (Givon 1980:337) . 34 , which implies greater determinacy/contextual distance , also involves a (complement) clause structure which is less independent than 33 : in other words , the complement clause in 33 can stand alone - *[he should hurry up]* while the fully opaque clause in 34 clearly cannot .

#### 2.5.2.3 Self action : the form/meaning congruence

With self action , weaker determinacy involves the coding of intended actions for which no preparatory action is taken (*aim to* , *mean to*) . Stronger determinacy is coded in one of two ways . Firstly , by verbs which imply that action is taken in order to produce a result (*fight to* , *lobby to*) ; secondly , by verbs which imply that preparatory action is taken so that the desired outcome is actively argued for in the face of potential opposition from others (cf. 5.1 above) ; thus the causative action is, as it were , already underway - hence the stronger element of

determinacy .

Forms which code weaker determinacy (35) are again somewhat **more inflectable** than forms which code strong determinacy (36-38) :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35. Bill | means to<br>intends to<br>aims to | win<br>**be winning**<br>**have won** | the campaign before September<br>*(weak: mental image/no action taken)* | |
| 36. Bill | plotted to<br>struggled to<br>set out to<br>fought to | win<br>**?be winning**<br>**?have won** | the campaign before September<br>*(strong : action taken)* | |
| 37. Bill spent £1m on arms | | *in order to*<br>*rather than* | fight<br>**?be** fighting<br>**?have** fought | the campaign at once<br>*(strong: action taken)* |
| 38. Bill | argued for<br>insisted on<br>proposed<br>advocated | winning<br>**?having won** | the campaign before September<br>*(strong : preparatory action taken)* | |

As for ***that + independent clause* complementation** , forms coding weaker determinacy are split : some take *that* complementation , some do not (38) . Stronger determinacy is similarly split , but here the congruence is more systematic , so that virtually none of the 'action taken' category can be complemented in this way (40) , while virtually all the 'preparatory action ' category can be (39) :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 39. Bill | intends<br>plans<br>has decided<br>?aims<br>?means | that *[the campaign should be won before September]*<br>*(weak : mental image/no action taken)* |
| 40. Bill | argued<br>insisted<br>proposed<br>advocated | that *[the campaign should be won before September]*<br>*(stronger : action taken re. others)* |
| *41. Bill | plotted<br>struggled<br>set out<br>fought | that *[the campaign should be won before September]*<br>*(strong : action taken)* |

As with *other action* , strongly determinate forms which can be thus complemented tend to signal a semantic distinction between weaker determinacy (with 'that') and

stronger determinacy (without 'that') :

42. Jane lied in order to *save Bill's life*
43. Jane lied in order *that she could save Bill's life* (less control/less direct)

So , just as with *other action* , there is a general congruence between weaker determinacy (less contextually distanced and grammaticized) where the complement clause may take a more independent form , and stronger determinacy (more grammaticized) where it cannot . The apparent exception to this (40) can be explained because **there is a definite sense in which preliminary action taken with respect to others implies less control , less determinacy than action taken which in itself may realize the intended result** (as with 41) .

I have not yet mentioned **lexical restriction** within the category of intention . What we find is that , irrespective of the self/other distinction , most expressions of intention are , by and large , incongruous with most stative verbs :

?44. She ¦ argued for ¦ **hearing** the news / **recognizing** the problem
¦ proposed ¦

?45. She ¦ set out to ¦ **resemble** the president / **understand** their plans
¦ plotted to ¦

## 2.6. PREEMPTION : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 2.6.1 Overview

Verbs which signal preemption are invariably **presuppositional verbs** : that is , they presuppose that the state/event referred to in the complement clause takes place (as in *he forced her to leave* ) or , equally definitely , does not take place (as in *she failed to leave*) . With preemption we reach the point of highest determinacy within the category of participant determinacy ; it is impossible to conceive of a determinate cause stronger than one which is expressed as definitely bringing about a certain effect . Yet , as with *intention* and *wish/desire* , there are sub categories here , which I present in fig. 6 :

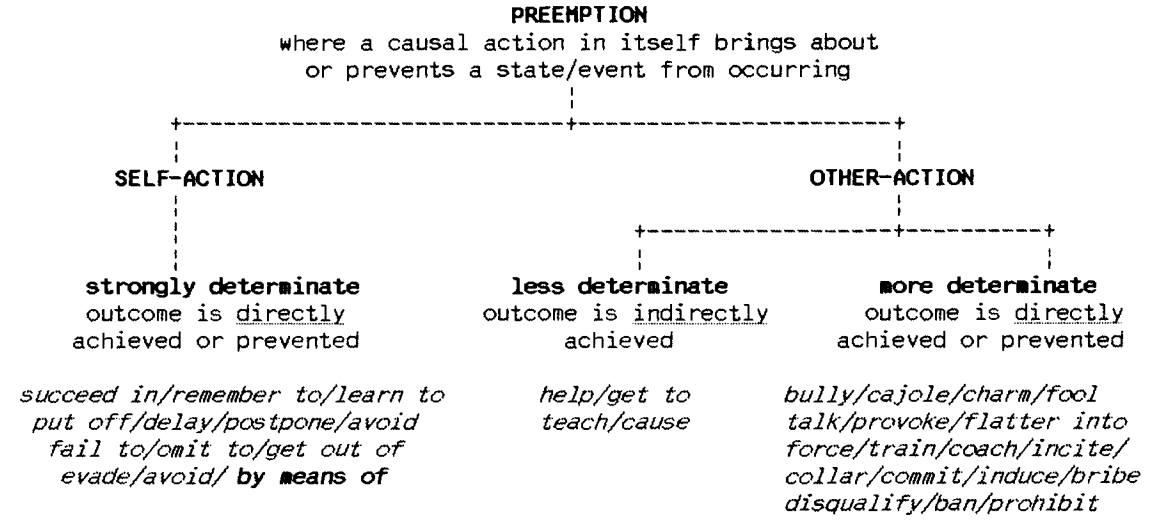



Fig. 6

The **less determinate/indirect category** in figure 5 involves verbs which imply that the success of the causative action may be **unintended** in a way which is more strongly implied than by any of the strongly determinate verbs , as in :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46. Prospero inadvertently | **caused** / **helped** | Caliban to | *understand* / *recognize* / *realize* | his potential |

The semantics of this kind of indirect causality has been extensively discussed (eg. by Givon 1975:62-64) .

As to the congruence with form , **all these forms (virtually without exception) are more or less uninflectable , a linguistic reflection of the very high degree of determinacy which they express** . In other words , with preemption the high degree of constraint exerted by the agent of the main clause over the occurrence of the state/event in the complement clause is reflected in the constraints on inflectability .

Furthermore , virtually all the resulting complement VP's are restricted to **opaque forms** (cf. *to curse* in 46) , so that we find very little independent clause structure with *that* complementation ; exceptions here are *persuade* and *teach* , which I discuss below .

The majority of such preemptive forms are **lexically restricted** , being largely

unacceptable with stative verbs in the complement clause . The reason for this is that direct preemptive action by one participant (the agent of the main clause) presupposes that the agent of the complement clause can act volitionally . The exceptions here are marked by those main clause verbs which may denote indirect causation (ie. less strong determinacy) , as with the acceptable stative complements in 46 above . So the congruence is as follows :

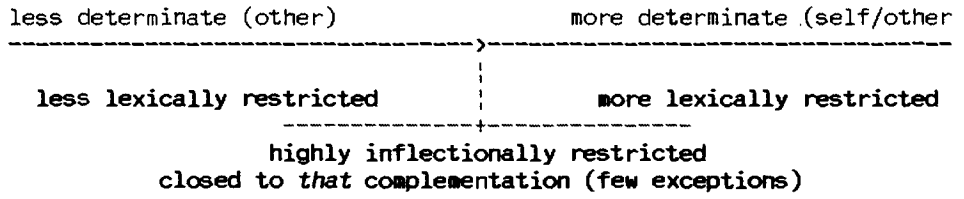



Fig. 7 *Participant determinacy : preemption*

### 2.6.2 Preemption : the form/meaning congruence

Being at the conceptual extreme of the continuum of contextual distance , these forms are by and large closed to inflectional variation in the complement clause , to a degree which is stronger - and generally less marginal - than with less conceptual categories (intention , wish/desire etc.) :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47. Jane | forced<br>bribed<br>caused | Bill to | leave<br>**?be leaving**<br>**?have left** | by 4.00 |
| 48. I was | flattered<br>blackmailed | into | leaving<br>**?having left** | by 4.00 |
| 49. She | delayed<br>put off<br>got out of | leaving<br>**?having left** | | |
| 50. John relaxed by means of | | | listening<br>**?having listened** | to the music |

In each case , the only acceptable complement clause verb phrase - the gerund form in 48-50 , the infinitive form in 47 - is **opaque** , because neither *to leave* in 47 nor *leaving* in 48/9 codes either tense or aspect . The inflectional variations -*be leaving* (progressive coding) and *having left* (coding of completed aspect) - are effectively ruled out .

In terms of **lexical restriction** , it is chiefly less determinate verbs of indirect

causation which are most open to collocation with statives , as with 46 above . Stative complementation is generally unacceptable with more determinate forms , where the implication is that the agent of the complement clause , although constrained , nevertheless acts consciously and volitionally :

?51. I ¦ **compelled** him to ¦ **realize** his potential
¦ **forced** him to ¦ **recognize** his faults

It is generally not possible to **passivize** the VP in preemptive complement clauses because , as with statives , this implies that the complement clause agent does not act consciously :

?52. I forced him to *be followed*
?53. She compelled me to *be understood*
?54. Jane laughed by (means of) *being tickled*

Very few preemptive forms can take *that* complementation ( *that* + clause which can stand alone) , a point which is consistent with the general hypothesis - that as language form becomes more grammaticized , so it resembles less and less an independent clause . Of those verbs which can take either that complementation or an opaque complementation , there is , as with 34/5 and 43/3 , a difference in terms of degree of determinacy between the two :

55. I ¦ persuaded ¦ him **that** *[he should forgive and forget]*
¦ taught ¦

56. I ¦ persuaded ¦ him *to forgive and forget*
¦ taught ¦

In 55 the implication is of only limited control between main and complement clause agent : *persuade* and *teach* are used in the sense of *convince* (Quirk et al. 1985:1213) , but it is not at all clear whether any action is determined . In 56 , where the more conceptual form is used , there is a much stronger implication , bordering on a presupposition , that he did actually *forgive and forget* as a result of the main clause agent's influence . It is also possible to use the form of 55 with a complement clause which is genuinely contextual and transparent (cf. chapter 3: 3.4.1) , in which case there is no conceptual paraphrase :

57. I persuaded him that ***{Bill had already left}***

## 2.7 SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In section 2 I have discussed the form/meaning congruence of **participant determinacy** , and I have focused in particular on lexico-grammatical forms which code high levels of participant determinacy , and thus on form/meaning congruences which are towards the conceptual extreme of the continuum of contextual distance represented in figure 2 .

But even here there are degrees , degrees of participant determinacy , and I have argued that congruent with this there are clearly observable degrees of conceptual lexico-grammar . I identified four criteria by which to measure the extent of conceptual form : lexical restriction , inflectional restriction , opacity and *that* complementation . Put together , what all these criteria measure is **degrees of grammaticization and degrees of lexicalization** . That is , the most restricted and opaque forms (preemption) are also those forms which are both most grammaticized (in Givon's terms) and most lexicalized (because , rather like formulaic language , they are subject to a limited kind of lexico-grammatical 'fixity') .

But this congruence is not mere coincidence . I have argued that inflectional constraint generally reflects a conceptual constraint : the more a certain effect is determined , the more inflectionally restricted is the VP which codes it . Similarly , the more determined is a certain effect in view of a specific cause , the more dependent is the VP which codes it on the tense and aspect markings of the VP in the main clause : so opacity is also a reflection of conceptual dependence . Finally , lexical restriction directly reflects participant determinacy , so that stative verbs , which code non volitional states , are incongruous where direct intention is implied .

Implicit within the whole concept of conceptual lexico-grammar is the **interdependence between grammar and lexis** . A change of lexical item (main verb) in the main clause) has significant grammatical repercussions : with a verb like *expect* we can use statives and a variety of inflections in the complement clause , wheras with a verb like *force* we cannot .

## 3. CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETERMINACY

### 3.1 Introduction

In section 3 I look in some depth at the form/meaning congruence as it pertains to circumstantial determinacy , which I have defined in general terms as :

> **where a state/event is implied to determine the occurrence of another state/event , irrespective of the volition of participants whose independence is constrained by force of circumstances** . For example :

3. Fred was **murdered** *(Fred is viewed as the undergoer , subject to force of circumstances beyond his control)*

4. Bill fell as a result of **slipping** on the ice *(irrespective of Bill's wishes)*

I am concerned here with the **coding of high circumstantial determinacy** , so that the forms which I look at are all located toward the conceptual extreme of the continuum of contextual distance , and are 'parallel' with those forms expressing participant determinacy :

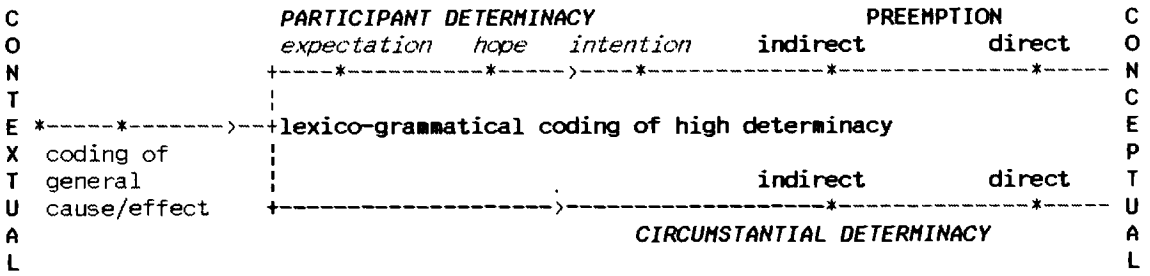



Fig. 8 *Continuum of contextual distance : the place of high circumstantial coding*

As with participant determinacy , I will argue that circumstantial determinacy can be divided between a less and a more determinate version ; the less determinate forms may be expressed through **lexico-grammar which is less conceptual** , and vice versa .

In terms of a correspondence between participant and circumstantial determinacy , the whole area of high circumstantial determinacy is parallel with the preemptive component of high participant determinacy : both , that is , deal with the actual realization of effects. The other categories of participant determinacy -

*expectation* , *hope/wish* , *intention* - are concerned with the anticipatory mental states , which by definition have no equivalent within the circumstantial category. The parallel between circumstantial determinacy and preemption is striking : both involve a distinction between more and less strong determinacy , and in both cases this distinction concerns **direct determinacy** (more determinate) and **indirect determinacy** (less determinate) (cf. figure 6) . In Appendix C I present an overview of the entire continuum of contextual distance , in which this kind of 'vertical' relation between one category and another can be appraised .

### 3.2 THE SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE : OVERVIEW

There are a great many forms which code circumstantial determinacy , and it is useful to group them along two parameters . The first has to do with **modes of conceptualization** ie. the various different ways in which circumstantial determinacy can be conceptualized and expressed . The second has to do with **degrees of circumstantial determinacy** (cf. figure 8) . I will take each in turn .

I identify 3 modes of conceptualization , as follows :

a) **CAUSE AS CONTROL (CAUSE BASED)** : where **one state/event is expressed as determining the occurrence of another state/event , irrespective of the intentions of any participants who may be involved** , as in 3 and 4 above . Sometimes the causal state/event is not fully coded , as with the subjectless passive form in 3 , but the sense of circumstantial determinacy is the same .

b) **EFFECT AS PARTICIPANT REACTION** : where the focus is on the (more or less) **non volitional reaction of a participant in the ideational context to circumstances which are external to him/her** :

58. Janet was **delighted to hear** that her application had been accepted

58 expresses Janet's immediate , unconsidered reaction to circumstances (hearing about her application) over which she has no direct control .

c) **EFFECT AS CONTRA-EXPECTATION** : where **a participant experiences an event which is unexpected , and thus undergoes the effect of circumstances which are beyond his or her control** :

59. Bill opened the door , **only to fall flat on his face**

Cutting across these different modes of conceptualization are different **degrees of circumstantial determinacy** (cf. fig. 8) . The most fundamental distinction here is between indirect determinacy , which is less determinate , and direct determinacy , which is more determinate :

| ***LESS STRONG DETERMINACY*** | ***STRONGER DETERMINACY*** |
|---|---|
| **INDIRECT** | **DIRECT** |

Fig. 9 *Increasing contextual distance : degrees of high circumstantial determinacy*

**Indirect determinacy is expressed when we imply that the cause does not lead unavoidably and conclusively to a particular result** , as in 60 :

60. Jane went to Tenerif e as a result of winning the pools *(cause as control)*

Here there is no sense in which winning the pools necessarily and in itself determined Jane's trip to Tenerif e . Given this element of indirectness , how is it that such forms nevertheless signal a relatively high level of determinacy (cf. fig. 8) ? The answer depends on the mode of conceptualization . In the case of cause as control (60) , the level of determinacy from cause to effect is still relatively high : compare 60 to 61 , which implies less determinacy and which sounds distinctly uncomfortable with the *as a result of* construction :

?61. Jane regularly went to Tenerif e as a result of liking the place

We can hardly say that liking somewhere in itself predisposes one to go there : there is no great level of determinacy here at all ; this level of low determinacy (cf. fig. 8) is better expressed using *because* together with contextual grammar , ie. the linking of two independent clauses which can stand alone :

62. [Jane regularly went to Teneriffe] *because* [she likes the place]

**Direct (and thus stronger) determinacy expresses the implication that the effect was virtually inevitable given the cause** , as in 63 :

63. Jane fell 20 feet as a result of letting go of the rope

Unlike with 60 , here the implication is indeed that the cause led directly to the determined effect (though context may , ofcourse , rule this out) .

There are a great many lexico-grammatical forms which express circumstantial determinacy , involving all three modes of conceptualization and divided between direct and indirect categories . In figure 10 I present an overview of this framework , and I will go on to examine some of the forms mentioned in subsequent sections :

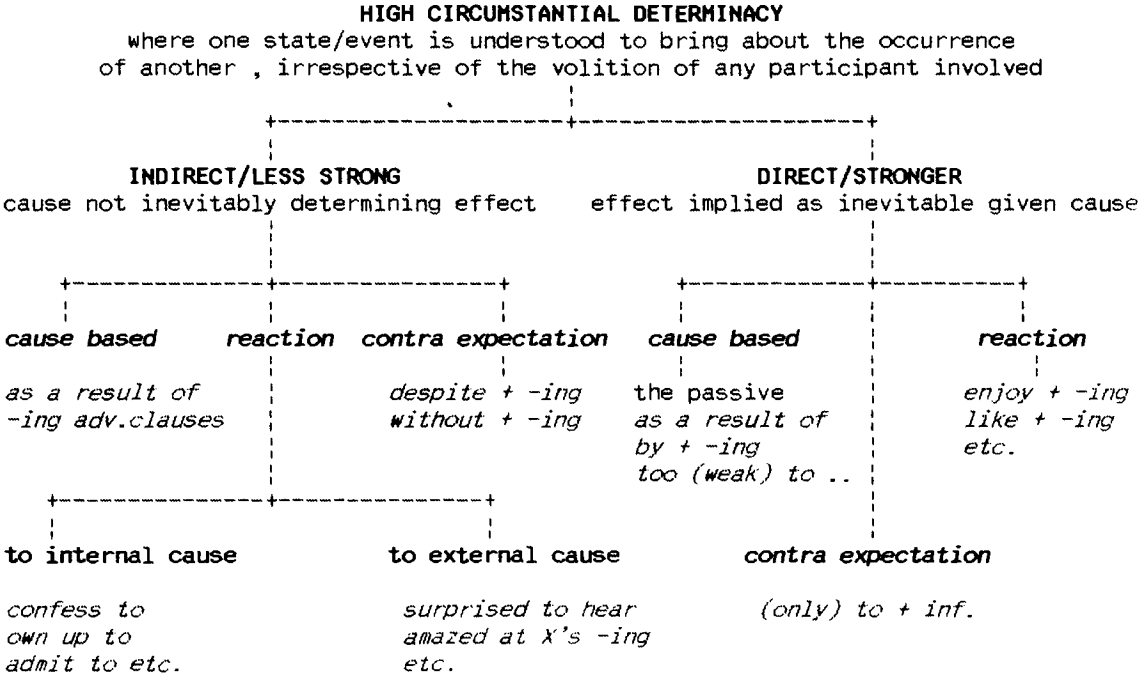



Fig. 10 *Semantic framework for high circumstantial determinacy : overview*

### 3.3 THE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE : OVERVIEW

The form/meaning congruence here is a reflection of the basic distinction between lower/indirect determinacy and higher/direct determinacy . In other words , indirect determinacy is , by definition , less determinate , and therefore less contextually distanced , with the consequence that it can be expressed through forms which are less conceptual . The linguistic responses to circumstantial determinacy are the same as those I looked at with participant determinacy , and their distribution is presented in figure 11 :

| ***INDIRECT DETERMINACY*** | ***DIRECT DETERMINACY*** |
|---|---|
| increasing contextual distance > | |
| **less inflectionally restricted** | **more inflectionally restricted** |
| **may take *that* + 'independent' clause** | **don't take *that* + independent clause** |

Fig. 11 *Increasing degrees of conceptual lexico-grammar*

With **lexical restriction** the pattern is somewhat different . While virtually all coding of high circumstantial determinacy (direct and indirect) is subject to a degree of lexical restriction , it is only where the mental state of a participant is crucially involved that we find clear restriction on stative verbs .

The reason for this is that , across all the components of conceptual meaning (with the exception of referential abstraction) , lexical restriction - restrictions on the acceptability of stative verbs - **reflects a participant perspective** . So it is with expressions of participant reaction , which is the most 'participant oriented' of the three modes of conceptualizing circumstantial determinacy . Thus , for example , expressions such as *confess to* strongly imply that the state/event which is being confessed to is something which the participant did volitionally - so that stative (non volitional) verbs in the complement clause are incongruous :

64. He confessed to ¦ killing Bill
¦ **?seeing** Bill
¦ **?recognizing** Bill

However , it needs to be emphasized that the distinction between less strong/indirect and stronger/direct determinacy , and its congruent linguistic

expression , is not hard and fast : the two are adjacent on the continuum of contextual distance (cf. figure 11) , so that the one gradually merges with the other . So the congruence outlined in figure 11 is something of an idealization . In the following sections I examine some of the forms from each of the categories outlined in figure 10 , beginning with expressions of indirect determinacy .

## 3.4 INDIRECT CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETERMINACY : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 3.4.1 Introduction and overview

In 3.4 I look at a selection of lexico-grammatical forms which code indirect (and hence weaker) circumstantial determinacy : adverbial clauses with *to* expressing **participant reaction** , clauses with *despite/without + -ing* expressing **contra - expectation** , and clauses with *as a result of + -ing* expressing **cause as control** . Because these forms express indirect (less strong) determinacy , they generally involve **conceptual forms which are less restricted than with expressions of direct determinacy** . The distribution of conceptual features is as follows :

| MODE OF CONCEPTUALIZATION | ***INFLECTIONAL RESTRICTION*** | *THAT* **+ INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** | ***LEXICALLY RESTRICTED*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| PARTICIPANT REACTION<br>eg. *admit to + -ing* | NO | YES (ie. not committed to opacity | CLEAR |
| CONTRA EXPECTATION<br>eg. *without + -ing* | NO | NO | UNCLEAR |
| CAUSE AS CONTROL<br>eg. *as a result of* | NO | NO | UNCLEAR |

### 3.4.2 INDIRECT PARTICIPANT REACTION

Here I look at *participant reaction* (cf. figure 10) . Participant reaction has to do with the **non volitional reaction of a participant to circumstances** :

65. Tom **confessed to** robbing the bank *(internal reaction)*
66. Tom was **appalled at** Bill's saying such things *(external reaction)*

By **internal reaction** , I mean a **participant reaction to forces/feelings which are internal to his/her own consciousness** . Thus in 65 it is not the external event of

bank robbing which determines the act of confessing , but some kind of internal pressure , which may or may not be influenced through the actions of others . All the verbs which signal this kind of internal reaction - *own up to/admit to/apologise for* etc. - imply this kind of determinacy . It is , however , indirect determinacy , because we cannot say that acts of confessing or apologising are directly and inevitably brought about through such forces . We can make this level of indirect , weaker determinacy explicit with expressions such as 67 :

67. He **decided to** confess to robbing the bank , after some careful thought

By **external reaction** I mean a **participant reaction to a state/event which in itself is external to the participant's consciousness** , as in 66 . Here , in contrast to 65 , the cause is directly coded in the language through the complement clause , so that *Bill's saying such things* is said to be the causal event . There is a clear element of determinacy here , because such lexico-grammatical forms **consistently implies a reaction which is to some extent unconsidered , emotive rather than arrived at intellectually , and thus to some extent determined by the causal event.** In other words , the determinacy here is an expression of a reaction which is largely brought about through force of circumstances , irrespective of the participant's considered volition . Expressions of a more considered state of mind, implying a less determined response - such as *critical* or *cynical* - sound somewhat less acceptable with the conceptual form of 66 :

?68. He was ¦ **critical** ¦ at Bill's saying such things
¦ **cynical** ¦

Yet expressions of participant external reaction are only indirectly determined . In 60 , for example , Tom remains **conceptually independent** of the cause which prompts his response ; in other words, this is indirect determinacy because Tom's reaction is not implied to inevitably follow on from its cause , or to be inseparable from it .

Because expressions of external and internal reaction code indirect determinacy , they are generally inflectable (69/70) , where the inflectional variability is a

reflection of the conceptual distance ie. the indirect link between cause and effect :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69. Bill | confessed to<br>owned up to<br>apologised for<br>pleaded guilty to | **robbing**<br>**having robbed** | the bank | *(internal reaction)* |
| 70. Tom was | appalled<br>amazed<br>perplexed | at Bill's | **saying**<br>**having said** | such things (external) |

Similarly , these indirect/less determinate forms can be expressed through *that + independent clause* complementation , so that the opaque VP's of 65-68 are not obligatory :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 71. Bill | confessed<br>owned up | that **[he had robbed the bank]** |
| 72. Tom was | appalled<br>amazed | that **[Bill had said such things]** |

As for **lexical restriction** , I have said that the most systematic lexical restriction occurs with expressions of participant mental states , and so it is with these forms :

| | |
|---|---|
| ?73. Bill apologised for | **seeing** his father<br>**resembling** his sister |
| ?74. Tom was appalled at Jane's | **feeling** sick<br>**resembling** her twin sister |

### 3.4.3 INDIRECT CONTRA EXPECTATION

By contra expectation I mean reference to **a state/event which is unexpected , and which therefore is brought about through circumstances which take us 'by surprise', and which are thus contrary to expectation** . I look in particular at subordinate clauses with the conjuncts *despite* and *without* , both of which generally imply that **it is the speaker's expectation which is confounded** :

75. Bill lost the match **despite** playing as well as he could
76. Jane walked 25 miles **without** once pausing for refreshment

Thus in 75 and 76 there is an event , such as Bill's *playing as well as he could* , which was expected to lead to another event , Bill's winning the match . But this element of cause/effect , although implied , remains unrealized , because other **circumstantial forces intervene and determine a quite different outcome** , Bill's defeat in 75 , for example . But there is no sense of inevitability about this outcome ; that is , 75 does not imply that Bill's defeat was inevitable , nor does 76 imply that Jane's uninterrupted walk was pre-determined . Thus the determinacy here is indirect : the implication with 76 , for example , is that although Jane did not pause for refreshment , she might well have , and indeed there were good grounds for expecting her to do so .

If we take away this implication of contra expectation , then what we are left with is a **general contrast relation** in which there is no longer any sense of determinacy :

77. Jane adores jazz , but she doesn't like classical music

There is no sense here of *Jane's adoring jazz* being something which is determined through circumstances contrary to expectation . But the conceptual *-ing* form used with *despite* and *without* **necessarily codes unexpected and indirect determinacy** , so that used with the propositions in 77 , the effect is one of an uncomfortable juxtaposition :

?78. Jane adores jazz without liking classical music
?79. Jane doesn't like classical music , despite adoring jazz

78 and 79 sound slightly incongruous . We use *without* and *despite* to imply contra expectation , but where is the contra-expectation here ? Certainly there is a contrast , between *jazz* and *classical music* , but there is no evident reason to suppose that a love of jazz would in itself predispose anyone to like classical music . We would need a very particular discourse context to substantiate 78/79 , one which provides a sense of **expected determinacy** :

80. a) It's perfectly obvious that everyone who loves jazz also likes classical music

b) What rubbish ! Jane adores jazz without liking classical music

Since *despite/without* clauses code indirect determinacy , they are **relatively inflectable** :

81. Bill lost the match despite ¦ **playing** ¦ well
¦ **having played** ¦

82. She walked 25 miles without once ¦ **pausing** ¦ for refreshment
¦ **having paused** ¦

Again , then , there is a correspondence between the acceptability of inflection *(having + -ed)* and weaker determinacy ie. less contextually distant form/meaning congruences .

There is no clear pattern of **lexical restriction** here , since this kind of determinacy is not strongly participant oriented . Nevertheless , it is clear from 78 and 79 above that particular lexical choices within each proposition may make the form as a whole more or less acceptable , depending on whether unrealized determinacy is or is not implied .

### 3.4.4 CAUSE AS CONTROL : *AS A RESULT OF*

As I suggested in 3.2 , the conjunct *as a result of* necessarily implies a relatively high degree of determinacy ; so the propositions in 61 , which imply a low level of determinacy , are better expressed using *because* (together with the contextual grammar of two independent clauses) as in 62 :

?61. Jane regularly went to Teneriffe as a result of liking the place
62. [Jane regularly went to Teneriffe] *because* [she liked the place]

But *as a result of* **may imply either indirect (60) or direct (63) determinacy , depending on the lexical content of the propositions involved** :

60. Jane went to Teneriffe as a result of winning the pools *(indirect)*
63. Jane fell 20 feet as a result of letting go of the rope *(direct)*

Thus in 60 there is no clear implication that winning the pools would in itself

lead directly to a trip to Teneriffe , but in 63 there is a strong implication of direct determinacy .

So *as a result of* , which implies a level of determinacy which is relatively high (hence the 'marked' quality to 61) , requires that **conceptual forms** are used in the dependent clause : the gerund form (*letting go*) is **opaque** and does not signal that a progressive sense is intended . This element of opacity is clear enough , since the *-ing* form can be used with punctual verbs :

83. The waiter made a real mess as a result of **dropping** the plate

But *as a result of* does not show quite the kind of **inflectional restriction** which I have argued is typical of direct determinacy . Rather , both the opaque *-ing* (which codes neither tense nor aspect) and the inflected *having + -ed* form are sometimes acceptable with propositions which clearly imply direct determinacy :

84. He has malaria as a result of ¦ **having lived** ¦ so long in the jungle
¦ **living** ¦

As with contra expectation , there is no clear pattern of **lexical restriction** here. However , it is clear from 61 above that particular lexical choices within each proposition may make the form as a whole more or less acceptable .

### 3.5. DIRECT CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETERMINACY : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

#### 3.5.1 Introduction and overview

In this section I look at some lexico-grammatical forms which specifically code direct (and thus stronger) determinacy : the passive form (**cause as control**) , lexico-grammatical forms expressing **participant reaction** (*like/enjoy* etc. *+ -ing*) , and *(only) to* - infinitive clauses expressing **contra expectation** . Following on from figure 11 , I argue that congruent with this higher level of direct determinacy , these forms are more **inflectionally restricted** . Complement clauses expressing direct determinacy do not take *that*-complementation , and so are necessarily opaque . The distribution of features of conceptual language is thus as follows :

| MODE OF CONCEPTUALIZATION | *INFLECTIONAL RESTRICTION* | *ONLY OPAQUE VP POSSIBLE?* | *THAT* + INDEPENDENT CLAUSE | *LEXICALLY RESTRICTED* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PARTICIPANT REACTION eg. *like + -ing* | YES | YES | NO | YES |
| CONTRA EXPECTATION eg. *(only) to + inf* | YES | YES | NO | YES |
| CAUSE AS CONTROL eg. passive form | YES | YES | NO | YES |

### 3.5.2 DIRECT CAUSE AS CONTROL : THE PASSIVE

#### 3.5.2.1 Conceptual independence : the semantic perspective

*Cause as control* is coded when **one state/event is expressed as determining the occurrence of another state/event , irrespective of the intentions of any participants who may be involved** , as I outlined in 3.2 above . It seems to me that the passive is a clear example of *cause as control* , coding in the vast majority of cases a **high degree of direct circumstantial determinacy** :

85. Bill was **murdered** (*by Tom*)

In 85 , for example , Bill is seen as a non volitional undergoer of a process over which he has no control . Ofcourse 85 presupposes the involvement of another participant , Tom , the agent of the whole process whose action is volitional and decisive , but the passive places the focus squarely on the patient , on the undergoer who is at the mercy of external circumstantial forces .

It might be objected that there is only one event referred to here , so that the definition of circumstantial determinacy as one state/event determining another state/event is disregarded . Yet what we have in 85 is an expression of circumstantial determinacy of the strongest possible kind , so strong that cause and effect are no longer entirely separable . Thus what the passive expresses is a **cause of such direct determinacy that in itself it determines an effect** . There is a direct parallel here with expressions of direct participant determinacy :

86. Tom **made** Bill **die**

Like in 85 , the expression of preemptive participant determinacy in 86 implies a causal force of such magnitude that cause and effect are difficult to separate out; but whereas in 85 the focus is on the undergoer's perspective , with 86 it is on the agent's perspective . I have referred to Givon's concept of the strength of influence of the main clause agent (1980:335) ; the stronger the expression of this influence , the more constrained is the patient/undergoer . In 85 and 86 the patient role is at its most constrained . This calls to mind Haiman's principle of conceptual and linguistic independence (cf. chapter 3:1.3.2) :

> The linguistic separateness of an expression corresponds to the conceptual independence of the object or event which it represents.
>
> (1983:783)

With the passive , we conceptualize the patient/undergoer as being so constrained that it is no longer conceptually independent ; congruent with this , there is very little in the way of linguistic separateness between cause/agent and effect/undergoer : agent and patient may be separately referred to (as in 85) , but they are linked through a single verb phrase . Haiman's principle is , ofcourse , equally relevant to expressions of direct participant determinacy , as in 86 .

However , I am not arguing that each and every passive form clearly denotes circumstantial determinacy :

87. It was thought that the meeting had ended

The anticipatory pronoun *it* in 87 cannot be said to represent any kind of object which is circumstantially constrained .

**3.5.2.2 The passive & conceptual lexico-grammar : the linguistic perspective**

In this section I argue that the vast majority of passive constructions code high circumstantial determinacy , and that this semantic perspective bears a direct congruence with features of the language which expresses it . For example , since the passive expresses a participant (or object) subject to external circumstantial forces , we cannot use this form to express events over which the participant has volitional control . Hence the unacceptability of coreference between subject and

noun phrase object in 89 (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:164) :

88 Jane shook her head
*89 Her head was shaken by Jane

The passive , like other expressions of determinacy , shows a degree of **lexical restriction** . For example , Quirk et al (1985:162) point out that there are "greater restrictions on verbs occurring in the passive than on verbs occurring in the active" , and they list a number of 'active only' verbs forms (ibid.) :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 90a | They **have** a nice house | 90b | *A nice house is had by them |
| 91a | John **resembles** his father | 91b | *His father is resembled by John |
| 92a | He **lacks** confidence | 92b | *Confidence is lacked by him |

Quirk et al. point out that "all these [verbs] belong to the stative class of verbs of 'being' or 'having'" (ibid.) . **This kind of lexical restriction can be explained in terms of circumstantial determinacy** . The stative verbs which are unacceptable with the passive are those verbs which already and intrinsically signify non volitional states which are innate , which are simply *experienced* or *undergone* by virtue of circumstances . There is , then , already a passive sense of *being subject to force of circumstances* with these verbs , so that to formally passivize them would be to give them a meaning which they already have . So passivization with such statives would be redundant ; hence its unacceptability .

But some statives are acceptable with the passive form :

93. Jane was | **desired** | by Bill
| **heard** |
| **seen** |

These statives signal emotive *(desire)* or sensory *(hear/see)* states which do involve some active involvement on the part of the experiencer (Bill in 93) ; hence the innate/passive sense implicit in the statives of 90-92 is absent , and the subject of the passive clause (Jane in 93) is thus conceived as undergoer of processes which are external to her .

More generally , passive forms cannot take **intransitive verbs** , because intransitives have no object which can be made the subject of a passive construction . There may well be a semantic explanation for this which keys in directly with the notion of circumstantial determinacy , though here I can only suggest a possible line of enquiry . We can divide (atleast a great many) intransitive verbs into two categories . The first group intrinsically imply a **reaction to force of external circumstance** :

***stumble fall collapse die expire itch sneeze ache***

These verbs have no direct object precisely because they already and in themselves imply a **re**-action determined through circumstances beyond the control of the patient . When used to express an intentional action , it is necessary to re-code them as expressions of participant determinacy , before they can be given 'transitive' status :

94. Bill **made himself** ¦ **sneeze**
¦ **collapse**

But with their standard intransitive use - *Bill collapsed/died* etc. - they **already imply circumstantial determinacy** , so that as with innate statives , **their further passivization is redundant** : hence the unacceptability of 95 :

*95. Bill was ¦ died
¦ collapsed

My second group of intransitive verbs express **volitional actions which** , as in 96 , **are performed by a single participant** who is implied to have **direct and independent control over his/her action** :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 96a | Jane | **resigned** | *96b | Jane was | resigned |
| | | **swore** | | | sworn |
| | | **stood up** | | | stood up |
| | | **departed** | | | departed |

The expressions in 96b are unacceptable not simply because their verbs have no direct object , but because they signal actions which are **implicitly volitional,** so

that Jane **cannot logically be perceived as the undergoer of an action which she has herself intentionally implemented .**

The passive has other features of conceptual language - it is **inflectionally restricted** , and **conceptually opaque** . However , in order to demonstrate this , I first need to qualify the definition of inflectional restriction which I gave in chapter three (3.1) . There I said that verb phrases which are opaque or inflectionally restricted are defined as consisting of main verb together with the primary auxiliaries *be/do/have* . With the passive , we need to separate out main verb , which is opaque and restricted , from the auxiliaries (which are not) in order to establish its conceptual orientation . Thus **whatever the temporal or aspectual context of the passive form , the main verb remains inflectionally fixed:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 97. Bill | was | **murdered** |
| | was being | *murdering |
| | will be | *murder |
| | had been | |

Furthermore , the 'past participle' verb form in 97 is **conceptually opaque** . That is , the 'past' form of *murdered* in 97 does not simply code a past meaning -it is the primary auxiliaries which perform this function . Instead , the sense of 'completed action' which is implicit in the past form is 'read into' the passive meaning , coding a sense of an event which is so definite and determinate as to be effectively seen as *'already done'* . In other words , **the sense of 'pastness' implicit in the past participle is carried over into the passive form , where the participle has a new , conceptual function as a device for coding strong circumstantial determinacy** . This is a feature of conceptual opacity which , as I have argued , finds expression in other areas of conceptual form/meaning congruence ; for example , the use of 'past' forms to signal 'hypothetical distance' with conditional forms (cf. chapter 3) . Similarly , and in just the same way as with the passive , the definiteness of the present progressive , which implies an event which is definitely occurring at the time of speaking , is carried over into expressions of future events which are circumstantially determined at the time of speaking (cf. chapter 3 : 5.2.1) :

98. We're apparently **meeting** Bill for lunch tomorrow

So in terms of meaning , the passive codes a high level of direct circumstantial determinacy . Congruent with this , the passive is inflectionally restricted , and its inflectional constraints reflect the conceptual (and circumstantial) constraints to which the undergoer is subject . Similarly , the lexical restrictions and full opacity of the passive form reflect its expression of direct circumstantial determinacy .

### 3.5.3 DIRECT PARTICIPANT REACTION : *LIKE/ENJOY + GERUND*

I have defined *participant reaction* as the *non volitional reaction of a participant to external circumstances* . In 3.4.2 I looked at examples of participant reaction , where the level of determinacy between cause and effect/reaction is high , but limited on account of being indirect . Thus in 66 , Tom's reaction is immediate and unconsidered , and to this extent it is strongly determined . Yet Tom remains **conceptually independent** of the cause which prompts his response ; in other words, this is indirect determinacy because Tom's reaction is not implied to inevitably follow on from its cause , or to be inseparable from it :

66. Tom was appalled at Bill's saying such things

As I argued in 3.4.2 , there are congruent linguistic features here : 66 is inflectable , for example , and this lack of tight inflectional restriction reflects the relative independence which effect/reaction has from its indirectly determining cause .

But there is another class of lexico-grammatical form which codes stronger , direct determinacy , where **the conceptual independence between cause and participant reaction is further reduced** :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 99. Bill | **liked** | talking | to Jane |
| | **hated** | to talk | |
| | **loved** | | |

In 99 Bill's reaction - his liking/hating etc. - is expressed as something which is

not entirely separate from its cause (talking to Jane) , so that cause and reaction are perceived *almost as a single state* .

This perception is reflected through the language . For example , unlike 66 (indirect determinacy) , 99 does not require the infinitive *to* which in 66 functions as a marker of the conceptual independence of the complement clause from the main clause (cf. Givon 1980:357) . Similarly expressions of direct participant reaction are **inflectionally restricted** , where the linguistic constraints on inflection reflect, as with the passive , conceptual constraints on the participant's independence from the determining cause :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 100a Bill | liked | talking | to Jane |
| | hated | ?having talked | |
| | enjoyed | | |
| 100b Bill | liked | to talk | to Jane |
| | hated | ?to **be** talk**ing** | |
| | loved | ?to **have** talk**ed** | |

To maintain a direct and systematic form/meaning congruence here , it is necessary to demonstrate that , as with other expressions of direct determinacy , the complement VP in 99/100 is **fully opaque** (cf. figure 11) . In other words , the *-ing* form in 90 should code neither tense nor aspect . Infact it does seem possible to use the *-ing* form here with verbs which denote punctual (ie. non durative/progressive) actions , suggesting that the *-ing* form is not intrinsically a marker of progressive aspect , though the acceptability of punctual verbs may be held to vary somewhat depending on the choice of main verb :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 101. Bill | enjoyed | **breaking** Mrs. Smith's front window |
| | hated | **letting go** of the rope |
| | liked | **shooting** his injured dog |

As with inflectional restriction , this kind of temporal opacity , where the dependent VP has no clear coding function independent of the main VP , is an example of the **high degree of linguistic dependence between main and complement clause which reflects the conceptual bonding between them** .

As for **lexical restriction** , expressions of direct participant reaction are more or less unacceptable with stative verbs which code innate and unaffecting intellectual states (cf. Appendix A ) :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ? 102. Bill | enjoyed | **believing** in God |
| | loved | **understanding** Shakespeare's sonnets |
| | disliked | **realizing** where he'd gone wrong |
| | hated | |

### 3.5.4 DIRECT CONTRA EXPECTATION : *ONLY TO*

Finally , I will very briefly look at one example of contra expectation expressing direct determinacy . Contra expectation , I have said , involves reference to **a state/event which is unexpected , and which therefore is brought about through circumstances which take us 'by surprise'**. In 3.4.3 I looked at examples of indirect contra expectation :

75. Bill lost the match despite playing as well as he could

The determinacy here is indirect because , as I argued in 3.4.1 , Bill's losing the match is not implied to be inevitable ; rather , the use of *despite* in itself implies that there were grounds for expecting a quite different outcome . However , some forms code **direct contra expectation** . Here , the implication is that **circumstances conspire to confound the expectations of a participant in the ideational context , who is thus taken by surprise and is directly at the mercy of circumstantial forces external to him/her** :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 103. Bill opened the door , only to | fall flat on his face | |
| | find his front garden had been removed | |
| | slip and hit his head | |

Whereas with 75 (indirect) , the outcome is conceived as unexpected but not inevitably determined , with 103 the outcome is conceived as being virtually unavoidable . Congruent with this higher level of determinacy , 103 is **inflectionally restricted** :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 104. Bill opened the door , only to | fall | flat on his face |
| | **?be falling** | |
| | **?have fallen** | |

The subordinate VP is **temporally opaque** , so that the infinitive *to fall* in 104 in itself codes neither tense nor aspect . Both this opacity , and the inflectional restriction , function as markers of direct determinacy . In other words , the participant is not conceived as being conceptually independent of the outcome which takes him by surprise - he is unable to act independently of it - and this conceptual constraint is matched by inflectional constraints , and by the dependence of the subordinate VP on the main VP in terms of opacity .

Such forms are also **lexically restricted** . Because the participant is seen as an undergoer of forces beyond his control , the subordinate VP generally takes only verbs which code non volitional states (*see* , *hear* , *discover etc.*) or intransitive verbs which code reaction (*fall* , *die* etc.) ; this latter class was discussed in 3.5.2.2 in reference to the passive . Hence strongly **dynamic verbs** are generally unacceptable :

105. Jane arrived home , only to ¦ **?chat** to her neighbour
¦ **?watch** T.V.

### 3.6 SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In this chapter I have discussed the form/meaning congruence of **participant and circumstantial determinacy** . Through reference to the continuum of contextual distance , I have argued that cause/effect , rather than being a black and white , present or absent concept , is a complex conceptual framework which can be notionally sub-divided in terms of degrees of causal determinacy . At the contextual extreme of the continuum , there are juxtaposed propositions which involve no clear grammatical coding of cause/effect (*Bill arrived . Jane left*) ; but as we proceed along the continuum , cause/effect gradually becomes more clearly coded in the language , so that finally we reach the area of lexico-grammatical coding of high causal determinacy :

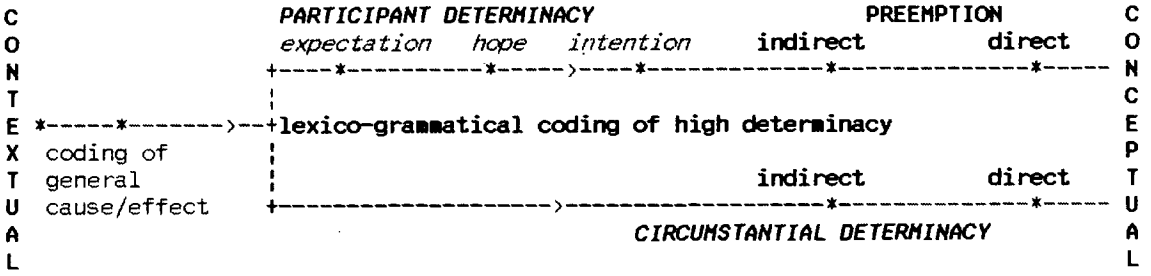



Fig. 12

As language becomes more contextually distant , so the conceptualization of cause/effect becomes increasingly marked for specific and high levels of causal determinacy . At the same time , the lexico-grammatical forms which code such determinacy become increasingly conceptual . I identified four criteria by which to measure the extent of conceptual form : lexical restriction , inflectional restriction , opacity and *that* complementation . Put together , what all these criteria measure is **degrees of grammaticization and degrees of lexicalization** . That is , the most restricted and opaque forms (expressing preemption with participant determinacy , and direct circumstantial determinacy) are also those forms which are both most grammaticized (in Givon's terms) and most lexicalized (because , rather like formulaic language , they are subject to a limited kind of lexico-grammatical 'fixity') .

I have argued that inflectional constraint generally reflects a conceptual constraint : the more a certain effect is determined , the more inflectionally restricted is the VP which codes it . Similarly , the more determined is a certain effect in view of a specific cause , the more dependent is the VP which codes it on the tense and aspect markings of the VP in the main clause : so opacity is also a reflection of conceptual dependence . Finally , most categories of participant determinacy and some of circumstantial determinacy are lexically restricted . This lexical restriction reflects an outcome/effect viewed as either non volitional , in which case it is only statives which are clearly acceptable (as with direct contra expectation) , or as necessarily volitional (in which case statives are generally unacceptable) .

Implicit within the whole concept of conceptual lexico-grammar is the **interdependence between grammar and lexis** . A change of lexical item (main verb) in the main clause) has significant grammatical repercussions : with a verb like *expect* we can use statives and a variety of inflections in the complement clause , wheras with a verb like force we cannot .

In section 8 of chapter 3 I discussed the mental storage of linguistic knowledge and Bialystok's notion of **analysability** (1978/81/82) . It seems clear to me that the complex grammar/lexis interdependencies which I have outlined here are simply too complex , too sensitive to subtle form/meaning variation to be open to clear grammatical rule . It is most unlikely that native speakers , let alone language learners , are able to hold this kind of knowledge in analysed form . What we have here , I believe , is a fundamental area of form/meaning congruence which is essentially unanalysed or at best partially analysed . That is , we can say *'yes , this form sounds rather less acceptable than that form , this inflection works better than that one'* , but in most cases we cannot say why .

# CHAPTER FIVE

## *INTERPERSONAL MEANING : A FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE*

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 *WORLD TO WORDS* : CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE & INTERPERSONAL MEANING

In chapter three (section 7) I argued that through reference to the continuum of contextual distance we can observe how interpersonal meaning gets coded in the language . At the contextual end , language codes only ideational meanings , expressing what Halliday refers to as "the *observer* function of language , language as a means of talking about the real world" (1970:143) . At the conceptual end , language specifically codes elements of the interpersonal context , thereby giving clear expression to what Halliday calls "the *intruder* function of language" (1975:17) . So in terms of the functional coding of language , the continuum of contextual distance effectively represents a development from simply *observing/reporting/describing* at the contextual end , through to the coding of interpersonal engagement (which by definition is conceptually abstracted) at the conceptual end .

Searle (1979) provides a very clear way of distinguishing between these two orientations :

> Some illocutions have as part of their illocutionary point to get the words ..to match the world , others to get the world to match the words. Assertions are in the former category , promises and requests are in the latter .
>
> (1979:3)

Searle's *words to world* corresponds to Halliday's *observer function* , while *world to words* matches his *intruder function* . These concepts relate to the continuum of contextual distance in the following way :

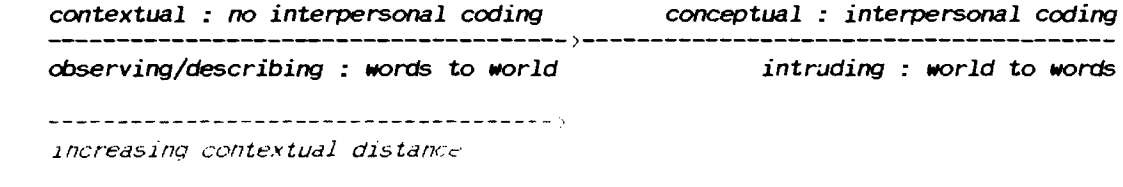



Fig. 1

## 1.2 CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE & THE CODING OF SUASION

But how exactly does interpersonal meaning get coded into the lexico-grammar of the language ? In chapter three I identified three distinct components of interpersonal meaning (suasion) which are relevant to linguistic coding :

a) **Interlocutor dependence** : Signalling that a future action , desired by one interlocutor , is subject to the willingness of another :

1. Could you do the shopping ?
2. Shall I give you a hand ?

b) **Speaker determinacy** : The more clearly speaker expresses an authoritative personal commitment to the bringing about of an action , the more determinate is his or her meaning :

3. I order you to do the shopping !

c) **Circumstantial justification** : Where speaker clearly implies that there are grounds within the ideational context to justify the hearer's performing a specified action , but holds back from signalling any personal commitment:

4. Perhaps you ought to do the shopping

Language which lexico-grammatically codes one or more of these meanings is language which 'codes interpersonal (suasive) meaning' . But there are a great many forms which - though they do not clearly code interpersonal meaning , and though they may have the form of 'words to world' observation - may nevertheless perform an variety of interpersonal functions on certain occasions of use :

5. The fridge is empty !

5 has the form of a straight description - through its lexico-grammar it codes components of the ideational context (an object , a state) but not elements of interpersonal meaning : there is , for example , no coding of speaker determinacy here , nor of interlocutor dependence . As such 5 is an example of language which , in Givon's terms , is pragmatic , relatively ungrammaticized : it is , then , at the contextual end of the continuum in figure 1 . Examples 1 to 4 , however ,

clearly code interpersonal meaning and are thus located toward the conceptual end .

But they are not all alike in this respect . **Circumstantial justification is more contextual , speaker determinacy and interlocutor dependence are more conceptual .** Infact the continuum of contextual distance , presented in greater detail than in figure 1 , looks like this :

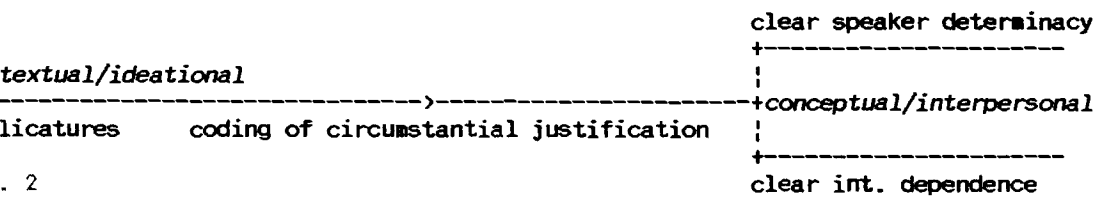



Fig. 2

The reason for this distribution is that in coding circumstantial justification (eg. 4 above) , there is no clear coding of the two crucial interpersonal roles which I mentioned in chapter three (7.2.1) : **WANT (the desire to be unimpeded)** and **WILLING (the desire to save face)** . In other words , the speaker appears to 'hang back' from explicitly **intruding** into the interpersonal context . Yet with speaker determinacy the WANT role is clearly coded , while with interlocutor dependence both WANT and WILLING are coded . So how do we distinguish between implicatures and coding of circumstantial justification , since with neither do we find clear coding of either WANT or WILLING ? What distinguishes the latter is **the relatively clear coding of suasion** ; in other words , the use of modal expressions such as *you ought to* or *you should* signals that an action is predicated of the hearer , wheras with implicatures like 5 above , this kind of coding is completely absent . So interpersonal coding can be broken down in the following way :

| Types of interpersonal coding | SUASION CODED | *WANT* CODED | *WILLING* CODED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **IMPLICATURES** | NO | NO | NO |
| **CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION** | YES | NO | NO |
| **SPEAKER DETERMINACY** | YES | YES | NO |
| **INTERLOCUTOR DEPENDENCE** | YES | YES | YES |

Fig. 3

### 1.3 CODING SUASION : THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

I have suggested that language which codes interpersonal meaning is language which is more conceptual than language , such as implicatures , which codes only ideational meaning .

> **If the form/meaning congruence is to hold here , it needs to be demonstrated that *'the more conceptual , the more inflectionally and lexically restricted'*.**

Figure 4 summarizes this form/meaning congruence :

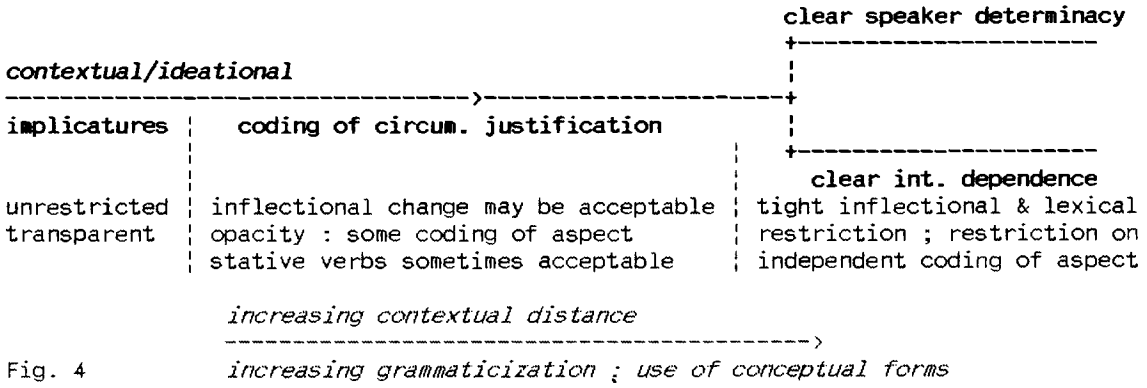



Fig. 4

#### 1.3.1 Lexical and inflectional restriction

Following on from figure 4 , then , I shall briefly illustrate the way in which coded expressions of speaker determinacy/interlocutor dependence are generally more conceptual and hence more restricted than coded expressions of circumstantial justification : In the table below , 6a codes interlocutor dependence , 7a codes speaker determinacy , and 8 codes circumstantial justification :

| BASE FORM | INFLECTIONAL CHANGE | LEXICAL CHANGE TO STATIVE |
|---|---|---|
| 6a Could you leave ? | ?6b Could you **be leaving** ? | ?6c Could you **hear** him ? |
| 7a You must leave ! | ?7b You must **be leaving** ! | ?7c You must **hear** him ! |
| 8a You should leave | 8b You should **be leaving** | 8c you should **hear** him ! |

So , while 6a is suasive , coding interlocutor dependence , 6b and 6c are probably

not . Similarly , 7a is suasive , coding speaker determinacy , while 7b and 7c are not . In contrast , 8 (which codes circumstantial justification) is less conceptual , and the inflectional and lexical changes of 8b and 8c are acceptable and consistent with a suasive meaning . This form/meaning congruence is not accidental :

**The expression of interlocutor dependence (6a) implies that the action of one interlocutor is constrained by its dependence on the sanction of another: it codes the *desire to save face* . This conceptual constraint is congruent with the linguistic constraint on inflectional choice and lexical choice .**

**Similarly , the conceptual constraints which speaker determinacy (7a) places on the hearer emphasizes the *desire to be unimpeded* , and is congruent with the linguistic constraints on inflectional and lexical choice .**

**However , in coding circumstantial justification (8) speaker holds back from explicitly constraining the hearer's freedom of action . Congruent with this , there is less lexical and inflectional constraint/restriction.**

But I am not arguing here that the restricted forms in , for example , 6b and 6c above are 'ungrammatical' or in any way unacceptable . What happens in the shift from 6a to 6b/c is that there is a change of illocutionary force , from coding of interlocutor dependence - the *request for action* in 6a - to the coding of a *request for information* in 6b and 6c . So when I say that interpersonal/conceptual forms are lexically and inflectionally restricted , I do not mean that in every case they become unacceptable under lexical or inflectional change . Nor do I wish to suggest that a request for information does not itself perform an interpersonal function ; my focus of attention , though , is on the coding of suasive meaning .

### 1.3.2 Opacity

What , then , of **opacity** ? . Of the forms which code interpersonal meaning a great many involve the use of opaque verb phrases , including examples 1-4 and 6-8 above.

Significantly , the most conceptual expressions - those which clearly code interlocutor dependence or speaker determinacy - involve opaque VP's which **do not independently code aspect in any clear way** . The opaque VP *[leave]* in 6a and 7a is an example of this ; but once the VP is inflected to code progressive aspect (as in 6b and 7b) , the suasive meaning is (in all probability) neutralized . However , with the less conceptual expression of circumstantial justification (8) , the progressive inflection is acceptable . Thus , as with expressions of participant and circumstantial determinacy (chapter four) , **there is a congruence between inflectional restriction , opacity and contextual distance : the more inflectionally restricted , the more contextually distanced and the less independent coding of aspect** .

Furthermore , when interlocutor dependence is grammatically signalled through modal stems , these stems code a kind of **conceptual opacity** . But wheras in other cases of opacity the opaque VP consists of a main verb , with interpersonal meaning it is the modal form itself which is conceptually opaque . I have defined conceptual opacity as the way in which verbs or verb phrases code a conceptual meaning through co-reference to cotext or to context :

9. **Could you** ¦ do the shopping ?
   **Can you** ¦
   **Would you** ¦

If we understand 9 to signal request forms , the stem *could you* does not signal a question about the hearer's ability to do something in the past (as it would do in *could you see him ?)* , nor does *can you* signal merely a question about the hearer's present ability . Similarly , the *would you* stem does not code simply a hypothetical question about what the hearer might or might not do (as in *would you leave if you had the chance ?)* . But these meanings are not entirely lost when an interpersonal meaning is coded : rather they are 'carried over' and given a 'new' , conceptual/interpersonal meaning . Thus appeals to ability are used to convey a sense of interpersonal deference , so that 'questioning ability' is 'reconceptualized' as 'appealing to willingness' , and the 'hypothetical distance'

of the *would you* stem is reconceptualized as 'social distance' , again indicating deference to the hearer's willingness . At the same time the **temporal distance** of the 'past' forms *would* and *could* is given a new meaning , further emphasizing the **social distance** between interlocutors and thus , again , signalling dependence on the hearer's willingness. As with all opaque forms , the coding of these stems are not in any way independent , since these interpersonal meanings are dependent on co-reference both to cotext (the inflection and lexical content of the predicate) and context . Thus with *could you have done the shopping ?* (inflectional change) or *would you hear Tom ?* (change to stative verb) , interpersonal coding is neutralized .

Searle refers to this distinction , between the coding of ability and the coding of a request , as a distinction between the 'literal meaning' (ability) and the 'idiomatic meaning' (request) . According to Searle , both meanings are simultaneously present when an interpersonal meaning is intended : the 'literal' meaning is the primary illocutionary act and the 'idiomatic' meaning is the secondary act (1979:33/34) .

What figure 4 represents , then , is **increasing grammaticization as meaning becomes more conceptual** . Thus while implicatures may be expressed through independent clauses , coding interpersonal meaning generally involves dependent and grammaticized forms which are restricted and opaque .

### 1.4 THE ON/OFF RECORD CONTINUUM : INFLECTIONAL & LEXICAL CHANGE

In chapter three (7.3) I outlined Brown and Levinson's **on/off record continuum** , which has to do with the degree to which expressions of interpersonal meaning make clear the speaker's communicative intent (1978:73/4) . In short , when a speaker **goes off record** his communicative intention is relatively ambiguous , and when a speaker **goes on record** it is relatively unambiguous . I outlined this continuum in terms of the linguistic coding of interpersonal meaning : the more off record , the more language expression is open to **mutual modification between cotext and context**:

**Where the lexico-grammatical coding of interpersonal meaning is unclear or absent , such meaning is highly sensitive to particular configurations of cotextual and contextual features , so that a change in any one of these may substantially alter our interpretation of the whole :**

| | IMPLICATURES | CODING OF DETERMINACY AND INTERLOCUTOR DEPENDENCE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | **no clear coding** | **grammatical coding** | **lexico-grammatical coding** | O |
| F | | | | N |
| | wide open to lexical | lexical (statives) & | lexical (statives) or | |
| R | and inflectional | inflectional change | inflectional changes | R |
| E | change of | may create change in | largely unacceptable | E |
| C | illocutionary force | illocutionary force | | C |
| O | | | | O |
| R | | ----------> | | R |
| D | | **DECREASING ACCESSIBILITY TO MUTUAL MODIFICATION** | | D |

Fig. 5

**What we find is that when expressions of interpersonal meaning (suasion) are lexico-grammatically coded , they are less open to mutual modification than when they are grammatically coded , so that in Givon's terms they are , in effect , more *grammaticized* . Thus they code meanings which are more 'on record' , less 'context sensitive' : in such cases , lexical changes (switching to a stative verb) or inflectional changes do not change the illocutionary force of an expression in any clear way . Rather, such changes lead to *form/meaning incongruences* , where there is a clash between the lexicalized stem (which implies a suasive meaning) and the inflectional and/or lexical content of the predicate (which implies a non suasive meaning) .**

Notice , then , how in 10 (which is **grammatically coded**) both inflectional change and lexical change (switching to a stative) lead not to incongruity but to a change in illocutionary force :

10. Could you ¦ **have left** ? *(questioning hearer ability , not suasive)*
¦ **understand** ?

In contrast 11 , which is **lexico-grammatically coded** , using a specific lexical and **'performative'** verb , has more 'independent meaning' than the modal stem . Consequently changes in the cotext do not shift the likely illocutionary force as they did in 10 . Instead , what we find is that lexical and inflectional changes are in many cases **semantically incongruous** with a performative stem :

11. I request you ¦ ?to **have left** *(inflectional change)*
¦ ?to **understand** *(lexical change : stative verb)*

Alternatively , lexico-grammatical coding may be achieved through **lexical insertion** , whereby a lexical item is 'inserted' into a modal stem which otherwise remains unchanged . Here again , as with performative prefixes , a suasive meaning is placed more 'on record' and inflectional and lexical changes in the predicate may become **incongruous** :

12. Would you *please* ¦ **?have left**
¦ **?understand**

I refer to the modal form in 10 as 'grammatical coding' because modal stems do not in themselves and on their own have a clear or relatively specific range of reference . I suggested in chapter three (1.5) that specificity of reference helps us to distinguish between 'more grammatical' (less specific reference) and 'more lexical' (more specific reference) (cf. Widdowson 1983:93/4) . In other words , the modal stem *{could you}* does not in itself code any specific kind of meaning : rather , it may signal a variety of meanings depending on context and cotext .

The kind of grammatical (modal) coding which occurs in 10 is often referred to as **conventional indirectness** (Searle 1979:chapter 2) . That is , forms are used which in particular contexts have conventionally unambiguous and suasive meanings , but which do not explicitly code suasion , so that the modal stem *could you ... ?* may signal a request for information or a request for action . It is sometimes said that there is a functional motivation for this indirectness . According to Brown and Levinson , being conventionally indirect is itself an interpersonal strategy for face saving . They argue that with this strategy :

> .... a speaker is faced with opposing tensions : the desire to give [hearer] an 'out' by being indirect , and the desire to go on record. In this case it is solved by the compromise of conventional indirectness ..
>
> (1978:137)

**It is on account of this indirectness that such forms are more open to mutual modification than their 'on record' , lexicalized counterparts .**

With implicatures , which involve no clear grammatical coding of interpersonal meaning , it should be quite clear that both lexical and inflectional changes can very easily change illocutionary force , and that the illocutionary force of a single implicative expression is wide open to variation as we shift from one context to another .

As with the other components of contextual distance , what I am after here is a **general semantic congruence between form and meaning** , but I am not suggesting that the interpersonal meanings which I have defined (speaker determinacy and so on) are necessarily implied each time a congruent conceptual form is used .

## 2. THE CODING OF INTERLOCUTOR DEPENDENCE & THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 2.1 Overview

In section two I will argue that the more clearly interlocutor dependence is coded through the language , the more conceptual lexico-grammar is used ; that is , clear coding of interlocutor dependence is expressed through forms which are inflectionally and lexically restricted , and which involve temporally opaque VP's which are unmarked for distinctions of aspect . These linguistic restrictions and constraints are congruent with the conceptual constraint implicit within the very notion of interlocutor dependence : that the action of one interlocutor is constrained by its dependence on the willingness of another . I will present this argument in the wider context of the on/off record continuum (figure 5) , arguing that it is only where interlocutor dependence is coded lexico-grammatically that its suasive meaning is clearly 'on record' .

## 2.2 Interlocutor dependent speech acts and the *want/willing* distribution

I do not suggest here that different speech acts - request , promise etc. - are categorically distinct one from another : indeed , the on/off record continuum demonstrates that in a great many cases , **the form/speech act congruence is only approximate** , so that (depending on coding and context) one 'act' may be virtually indistinguishable from another . Nevertheless , in cases where the speech act expression is clearly 'on record' , the following speech acts are implicitly interlocutor dependent :

| SPEECH ACT | SPEAKER ROLE | HEARER ROLE |
|---|---|---|
| REQUEST ACTION | want | willing |
| REQUEST PERMISSION | want | willing |
| GIVE PERMISSION | willing | want |
| OFFER | willing | want |
| PROMISE | willing | want |

Fig. 6

The first two speech act categories here are **directives** , the second three are **commissives** (Austin 1962) : hence the difference in distribution between the *want* and *willing* roles . The *want* role keys in to Brown and Levinson's **desire to be unimpeded** , while the *willing* role relates to the **desire to save face** (1978:63) . With expressions of interlocutor dependence , there is what Brown and Levinson refer to as a **multiple motivation** (1978:150) : the motivation to get something done (want) combined with the motivation to save face or be approved of (willing) . By deferring to the hearer's perspective , the speaker - particularly with directives -provides the hearer with 'a line of escape' , a 'way out' from having his freedom of action directly constrained .

I argue that both with the grammatical coding of indirect forms , and with the lexico-grammatical coding of performatives , **interlocutor dependence is clearly implied** . So if either the *want* or the *willing* component is explicitly cancelled out through additional cotext , the effect is often an incongruous juxtaposition of

senses :

?13. Could you give me a hand , even though I don't want you to ?
*(request stem : S want cancelled through cotext)*

?14. Would you like me to give you a hand ? I'm not really prepared to , though
*(offer stem : S willing cancelled through cotext)*

**With interlocutor dependent directives , only the *hearer willing* role need be explicitly coded , since this in itself generally implies *speaker want* :**

15. Are you prepared to ¦ do the shopping ? *(coding request)*
Are you willing to ¦

**With interlocutor dependent commissives , only the *speaker willing* role need be explicitly coded , since this in itself is likely to imply *hearer want* :**

16. I'm happy to ¦ do the shopping *(coding offer)*
I'm willing to ¦

And similarly , if the *hearer want* role is questioned , then *speaker willing* is implied without the need for further coding :

17. Do you want me to do the shopping ? *(coding offer)*

### 2.3 INTERLOCUTOR DEPENDENT SPEECH ACTS & THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

In this section I will go through each of the speech acts outlined in figure 6 , arguing that in each case there is a form/meaning congruence consistent both with the continuum of contextual distance (figure 4) , and with its mode of expression in terms of on/off record (figure 5) .

#### 2.3.1 Requests for hearer action

Requests for hearer action are subject to lexical and inflectional restriction , involving opaque verb phrases which do not code aspect , as in 18/19 below :

18. Could you ¦ do the shopping ? *(inflectional restriction)*
Would you ¦ **?be doing** the shopping ?
Can you ¦ **?have done** the shopping ?

19. Could you ¦ **hear** me ? *(lexical restriction)*
Would you ¦ **recognize** Tom ?
Can you ¦ **understand** what he's saying ?

These restrictions reflect the place of interlocutor dependence on the continuum of contextual distance : being conceptual , expressions of this kind of dependence are expressed through conceptual forms , and the linguistic restrictions - lexical and inflectional - reflect the conceptual constraint of the action being dependent on the hearer's sanction . In terms of the on/off record continuum , 18 and 19 are indirect , grammatically coded through the modal stem . Hence they are open to mutual modification , so that the *have done* inflection in 18 codes not a directive but a hypothetical question about past ability : *could/would you have done the shopping ?*

Similarly it is a question about the hearer's ability/capacity which is coded when statives are used : *could you hear me* ? meaning something like *were you able to hear me ?* . Interlocutor dependent forms are (more or less) unacceptable with statives because **it is a logical contradiction to imply the desire or willingness of someone to do something which they cannot do as a matter of conscious volition** .

Another familiar way in which requests may get grammatically coded is through a conditional clause structure :

20. I'll be very **grateful** if you ¦ do the shopping
¦ **?are doing** the shopping/ **?understand** Tom

Here again , there are inflectional and lexical restrictions , as 20 illustrates . I refer to 20 as grammatical coding because it is clearly not the condition/consequence form which codes interlocutor dependence , but its use with the lexical item *grateful* and its 'first conditional' form . Thus a change of inflection can lead to a very substantial shift in meaning :

21. I'd have been very grateful if you'd done the shopping *(not suasive)*

When interlocutor dependence is coded lexico-grammatically it is more 'on record' and , consequently , less open to this kind of mutual modification . Lexico-grammatical coding may be achieved through the use of performative stems (22) , or through the lexical insertion of *please* (23) :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 22. I request you to | | **?be doing/?have done** the shopping | *(?inflections)* |
| | | **?hear/ ?recognize/ ?understand** him | *(?statives)* |
| 23. Could / Would / Can | you **please** | **?be doing/ ?have done** the shopping | *(?inflections)* |
| | | **?hear/ ?recognize/ ?understand** him | *(?statives)* |

The inflectional and lexical changes in 22/23 cannot shift the illocutionary force in the way they did with 18/19/21 , because the coding of interlocutor dependence is too 'strong' for this to happen . On actual occasions of use , the hearer might work very hard to 'read in' a suasive meaning with these forms , following the cooperative principle (Grice 1975) . In many cases , though , the juxtaposition of suasive and interlocutor dependent stem with a 'non suasive' predicate is likely to lead to a semantic 'clash' sufficient to render the utterance incalculable (as in 22/23) .

### 2.3.2 Requests for permission

Requests for permission work in very much the same way as requests for hearer action . Thus they too are lexically and inflectionally restricted :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24. Could I / Can / May | leave / **?be leaving** / **?have left** | by 4.00 | *(inflectional restriction)* |
| 25. Could I / Can / May | **believe** in God<br>**understand** what he's saying | | |

As with requests for hearer action , most of the lexical and inflectional changes in 24 and 25 express a change to a non suasive illocutionary force . In other words , interlocutor dependence is only clearly coded where there is an opaque VP unmarked for aspect , or where the main verb is dynamic . With stative and with VP's which are both inflected and marked for aspect , it is hypothetical meaning which is most probably coded .

When coded lexico-grammatically , requests for permission are more 'on record' and less open to mutual modification , as with the performative stem in 26 :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26. Do you permit me to | **?be leaving/have left** by 4.00 | *(?inflection)* |
| | **?understand** what he's saying | *(?stative verb)* |

Again , these linguistic restrictions are congruent with the conceptual constraints implicit within the concept of interlocutor dependence .

### 2.3.3 Giving permission

The pattern here is similar to that with request forms . Grammatically coded forms are restricted (27) , so that statives and inflected/opaque VP's coding aspect tend to signal a shift to hypothetical meaning :

27. You may ¦ leave at any time
can ¦ **?be leaving/have left** at any time *(inflectional restriction)*
¦ **?believe** in God/ **?understand** Tom *(lexical restriction)*

When coded lexico-grammatically , as with the performative stem in 28 , the interlocutor dependence of permission is more strongly coded , more 'on record' : in such cases the result is an odd juxtaposition :

28. I permit you to ¦ leave at any time
¦ **?be leaving/have left** at any time *(inflectional restriction)*
¦ **?believe** in God/ **?understand** Tom *(lexical restriction)*

### 2.3.4 Offers of action

The general pattern here is identical to that I have already argued for with respect to requests and giving permission . Again grammatical coding is inflectionally and lexically restricted (29) :

29. May I ¦ give you a hand ?
Shall I ¦ **?be giving/have given** you a hand ?
¦ **?recognize** her/ **?understand** him ?

Being indirect and 'hedged' between on and off record , the expressions in 29 are open to mutual modification , so that *shall I recognize her ?* may on occasion be understood to mean *will I be able to recognize her ?* . Alternatively , other types of lexical choice in the predicate (aside from statives) may lead to ambiguity between one speech act orientation and another . In 30 , for example , the predicate itself does not clearly indicate where the **direction of interest** lies . If it is understood to be in the speaker's interests , then a 'request for permission' interpretation is most likely . If it is understood to be in the

hearer's interest , then an 'offer' interpretation will be favoured :

30. Can I open the window ?

Such mutual modification is almost ruled out where performatives are used :

31. **I'm offering to** open the window *(clearly coded as offer)*

This distinction , between the mutual modification of grammatical coding and the more 'on record' stance of lexico-grammatical coding , is consistent with the on/off record continuum (figure 5) .

### 2.3.5 Promising

In the case of *promising* the situation is a little different . Here we cannot say that the *-ing* or the *have + -ed* inflections are inconsistent with a suasive meaning . Instead , there seems to be a gradient of inflection . The *-ing* inflection used with *will* or *going to* codes **circumstantial modality** (cf. chapter three : 5.2) , implying that a future action is the product of a current arrangement which may be external to the speaker as participant :

32. I'll be leaving around 4.00

32 is a rather 'weak' form of promise , because the coding of circumstantial modality suggests that the speaker may be promising something which s/he is not personally in control of , so that the speaker's personal commitment to performing the action may be in some doubt . If 32 is lexicalized through the use of a performative stem , there is a slight 'mismatch' between stem (coding a promise) and predicate (coding circumstantial modality) :

33. I promise that I'll be leaving around 4.00

34 is more on record and so more clearly a promise , because the inflections here do not imply any absence of speaker control over the action being promised :

34. I will ¦ **leave** ¦ by 4.00 , (I promise)
¦ **have left** ¦

There are clear **lexical restrictions** here . Stative verbs , like the *-ing* inflection but more strongly , imply that the speaker not directly in control of the action predicated :

35. I'll ¦ **?hear** from her ¦ , (I promise)
¦ **?recognize** him ¦
¦ **?feel** much better soon ¦

The main distinguishing feature between promises and **threats** is that with the former the predicated action is in the hearer's interests , while with the latter it is not . This potential ambiguity is highly context sensitive , so that even an utterance such as the performative 34 could , in certain circumstances , be construed as a threat .

## 3. THE CODING OF SPEAKER DETERMINACY & THE FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 3.1 Introduction

I have argued that with expressions of interlocutor dependence , linguistic constraints on inflectional and lexical choice are congruent with a conceptual constraint whereby the action of one interlocutor is constrained by its dependence on the sanction of another . A very similar congruence exists with expressions of speaker determinacy . Speaker determinacy , I have said , has to do with the degree of **authoritative personal commitment** which the speaker expresses to the bringing about of an action :

3. I **order** you to do the shopping

The **conceptual constraint** which the speaker's determinacy (potentially) places on the hearer is congruent with **linguistic constraints** on inflectional and lexical choice :

35. I order you to ¦ **?be doing/?have done** the shopping by 4.00
¦ **?recognize** Bill/ **?understand** the problem

When a speaker is clearly determinate in this way , s/he **gives primacy to the *want to be unimpeded* over the *desire to be approved of*** (Brown & Levinson 1978:63) . Thus

while expressions of interlocutor dependence imply an allocation of both *want* and *willing* roles between interlocutors , **with speaker determinacy it is the want (to be unimpeded) which is paramount .**

### 3.2 SPEAKER DETERMINACY & CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE : A FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

In chapter four (2.5.2) I discussed the form/meaning congruence of participant determinacy within the category of intention , suggesting that the strength of determinacy depends on the authority and commitment attributed to the participant agent . **With speaker determinacy we have the interpersonal counterpart of participant determinacy** , so that it is **the degree of the speaker's implied authority and commitment** which helps to distinguish between 'less' and 'more determinate' meanings :

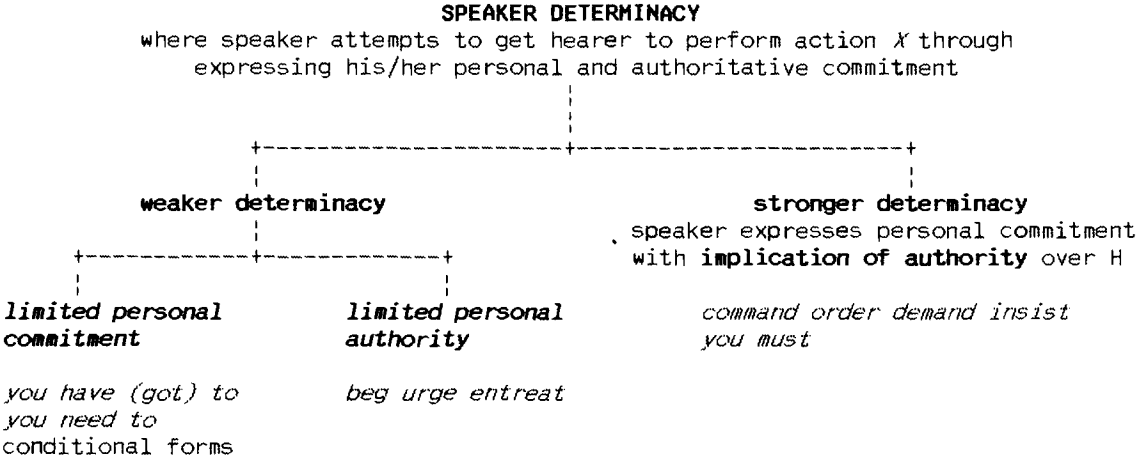



Fig. 7

What we find here is that **the degree of linguistic restriction is congruent with the degree of implied speaker authority** , so that the form/meaning congruence is distributed in the following way :

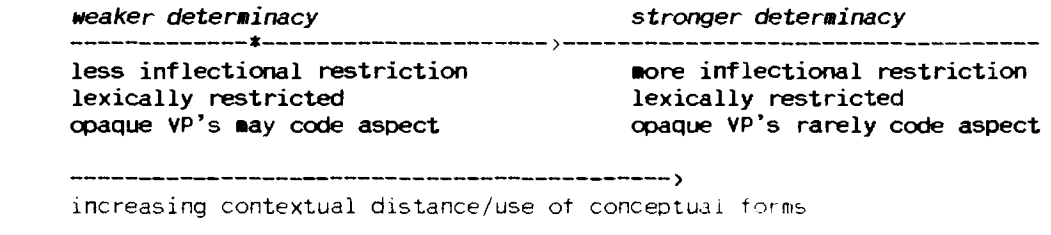



Fig. 8

### 3.2.1 Weak speaker determinacy

So expressions of weaker speaker determinacy are generally coded through forms which are less conceptual than expressions of stronger speaker determinacy . Thus the expressions of weaker determinacy in 36 are accessible to inflectional change in the complement clause , and hence to the coding of aspect within the opaque VP :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36. I | beg | you to | leave | by 4.00 |
| | urge | | **be leaving** | |
| | entreat | | **have left** | |

Weaker speaker determinacy may also be expressed through conditional forms . In such cases , the speaker explicitly considers the possibility that the hearer will not comply with his wishes , through the condition clause . Such forms consequently code weaker determinacy by implying a reduced level of speaker authority :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. If you | **don't leave** | by 4.00 , I'll | punish you |
| | **haven't left** | | reward you |
| | **aren't leaving** | | |

Note that in 37 **the element of weak speaker determinacy may cut across a number of 'different' speech acts** , so that 37 may function in certain contexts as a promise (*I'll reward you*) or as a threat (*I'll punish you*) .

In 36 and 37 the element of weak speaker determinacy is carried through the implication that **the speaker knows that his/her authority is limited** . But weak determinacy may also be expressed where **the speaker's personal commitment is implied to be limited** , as in 38 :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 38. You've got to | leave | by 4.00 |
| | **be leaving** | |
| | **have left** | |

With 38 the implication is that the element of authority comes from a source which may well be external to the speaker (cf. Leech 1971:75) , so that the speaker's own personal authority is limited . What we have here is the interpersonal counterpart to the expression of circumstantial modality , which I discussed in chapter three (section 5.2.2) . Again , this weaker determinacy can be expressed through forms which are less inflectionally restricted , as in 38 .

### 3.2.2 Strong speaker determinacy

Strong speaker determinacy is coded through such verbs as *order* and *command* . These verbs clearly imply that the speaker has (or wishes to create the impression that s/he has) considerable personal authority . Congruent with this , such expressions are inflectionally restricted to opaque VP's which do not code aspect , although some forms may be considered less unacceptable than others :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39. I | order you to | leave | by 4.00 |
| | command you to | **?be leaving** | |
| | insist that you | **?have left** | |
| | demand that you | | |

As with many such complement taking verbs , what is demonstrated here is a high and **direct level of interdependency between grammar** (the inflectional form of complement VP) **and lexis** (the main clause verb which signals the level of determinacy) .

All such expressions of speaker determinacy are **lexically restricted** - whether they code weak or strong determinacy - because one cannot directly 'tell' someone to do something which they cannot do volitionally . Hence the unacceptability of many statives in the complement clause :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40. I | beg | you to | **?hear** me |
| | urge | | **?resemble** Tom |
| | order | | |

### 3.3 SPEAKER DETERMINACY AND THE ON/OFF RECORD CONTINUUM

I have argued that with the on/off record continuum , grammatical coding is less 'on record' than lexico-grammatical coding (figure 5) . Speaker determinacy can be **grammatically** coded through modal operators (41) , where there is considerable potential for mutual modification :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 41. You must | **have left** by 4.00 |
| | **resemble** Tom |

In 41 the inflectional and lexical change leads to semantic ambiguity : does 41 code speaker determinacy , or a kind of logical necessity ? (*you must have left by 4.00 because I 'phoned then and nobody answered*) . Grammatical coding through conditional forms is similarly open to mutual modification (cf. example 37 above) .

Another example of the grammatical coding of speaker determinacy is the imperative form :

42. Get here by six o'clock

The imperative form is open to considerable modification through context , so that in appropriate circumstances 42 might function simply as a request for information (as in *do you reckon you'll get here by 6.00 ?*) rather than as an expression of speaker determinacy .

However , when weak speaker determinacy is grammatically coded through modal operators , lexical and inflectional changes do not lead to a clear change of illocutionary force , because weak determinacy can be expressed across a wider range of inflectional and lexical choice (cf. 38 above) .

When speaker determinacy is **lexico-grammatically coded** through 'performative' verbs such as *beg/urge/order* , such mutual modification is rarely possible , so that inflectional or lexical change leads to incongruity rather than a change in illocutionary force , as in 39 and 40 above . I am using the term 'performative' here in a somewhat looser sense than that intended by Austin (1962) , since strictly speaking terms such as 'urge' or 'beg' do not actually 'name' distinct speech acts . What these terms do do , however , is explicitly code an 'act' of speaker determinacy , in a way which is a great deal less context-sensitive than in the case of grammatical coding .

## 4. THE CODING OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION : DEFINING CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION

In coding circumstantial justification the speaker implies that **there are grounds within the ideational context to justify the hearer's performing an action, while the speaker holds back from explicitly signalling personal commitment to the performing of the action** , as in 4 :

4. Perhaps you ought to do the shopping

In 4 the speaker's implied justification is not directly interpersonal , in that there is no clear coding here of *willing* or of *want* : speaker is not , that is , implying 'do this because I want you to' (as would be the case with speaker determinacy) . Rather , the implication is that there is some good reason for doing the shopping which may have nothing to do with whether the speaker personally wants the action performed .

When *want* or *willing* are coded in speaker determinacy or interlocutor dependence , it is one or both of these roles which furnishes part of the **interpersonal justification** for the predicated action . Thus with requests , the implication is '*do this (if you are willing) because I want you to*' ; with offers , the implication is '*I am willing to do this on the assumption that you want me to*' , and so on . But with 4 above , this pattern of interpersonal justification is not repeated . It may well be that on particular occasions of use the speaker of 4 is held to be personally committed to the action predicated , but such a commitment is not coded within the language form . **Instead of an interpersonal justification , 4 codes a circumstantial justification** , a justification which appears to be 'external' to the wishes or desires of the interlocutors involved : the speaker appears to 'hold back' from clearly indicating any personal or interpersonal involvement .

The notion that expressions of circumstantial justification do not commit the speaker to going 'on record' as personally wanting the action performed is not

entirely uncontroversial . According to Searle (1979) , for example , it is a defining feature of all directives that the speaker has this kind of commitment :

> The illocutionary point of [directives] consists in the fact that they are attempts .... by the speaker to get the hearer to do something ... The direction of fit is world-to-words and ***the sincerity condition is want (or wish or desire)*** .
>
> (1979:13/14 My italics)

I think that this kind of blanket equation between directive and the *want* role is misleading . We can , as I have already suggested , highlight the *want* and *willing* elements of speaker determinacy and interlocutor dependence by observing the incongruity of expressions which both code *want* or *willing* and -through additional cotext -appear to cancel them out :

?13. Could you give me a hand , even though I don't want you to ?
*(request stem : S want cancelled through cotext)*

?14. Would you like me to give you a hand ? I'm not really prepared to , though
*(offer stem : S willing cancelled through cotext)*

But with expressions of circumstantial determinacy , this kind of cotextual modification is quite in order :

43. You ought to do the shopping , whether or not you want to ; and it doesn't matter to me personally whether you do or not , but you know how ratty Jane gets if there's no food when she comes home from work

There is no uncomfortable juxtaposition in 43 because **the explicit denial of *speaker want* and *hearer willing* is perfectly consistent with the circumstantial justification implicit in the modal stem** .

### 4.2 CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION AND SPEECH ACTS

There are a number of 'speech acts' or 'functions' which typically express circumstantial justification , including **giving advice** , **asserting hearer obligation** , **warnings** and **threats** .

In the case of **advice** there is no presumption that the speaker is personally committed in any obvious way , and this somewhat 'impersonal' element is consistent with our everyday understanding of the term . As the Concise Oxford Dictionary puts

it , advice has to do simply with an "opinion given or offered as to action" (1964:20) . In addition , though , advice implies that an action is predicated **in the interests of the hearer** .

Example 4 might well function as a piece of advice . But in a slightly different context it could as easily be an expression of **obligation** , meaning something like *it is your duty in these circumstances to do the shopping* . But here , too , there is an implication of a justification which may well be **external to the interpersonal relationship between interlocutors** : the justification for this obligation may , for example , have to do with the hearer's relationship to a third party , as might be the implication in 44 :

44. You should do what your father tells you

Here again , there is no clear implication that the speaker personally wants the hearer to do this . What is relatively clear is that a certain course of action is deemed appropriate in the light of circumstances which have to do with a relationship involving the hearer .

Similarly , if the speaker gives a **warning** to the hearer , the justification has its source in a particular configuration of circumstances , rather than in the wants or desires of the speaker , so that again there is no clear implication that the speaker is personally commited to the performance of the action :

45. Unless you get home by 12.00 , Tom will be very angry with you !

So in 45 the speaker is not saying *do this because I want you to* , but *do this because there are circumstances which in themselves justify it* - circumstances which have to do with Tom's precipitate anger .

With **threats** the situation is slightly different . In making a threat the speaker is invariably understood to personally want the hearer to undertake a particular action , or to refrain from doing so . So a threat may be expressed through a form which codes speaker determinacy , as in 46 :

46. Don't under any circumstances contact the police , OK ?

But a threat presupposes that if the hearer does (or does not) perform action *X* , an action which speaker wants hearer (not) to perform , then the speaker will respond with a reprisal action which is contrary to the hearer's interests . **So while speaker determinacy need only imply that the speaker wants an action undertaken , a threat necessarily implies both *speaker want* and (from the hearer's perspective) a *circumstantial justification*** : *do action X to avoid Y happening* . The kind of circumstantial justification of 45 , then , might well express a threat :

47. Unless you get home by 12.00 , I'll get very angry !

## 4.3 CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION & CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE : A FORM/MEANING CONGRUENCE

### 4.3.1 Introduction and overview

In section one of this chapter I outlined the continuum of contextual distance in so far as it pertains to interpersonal meaning :

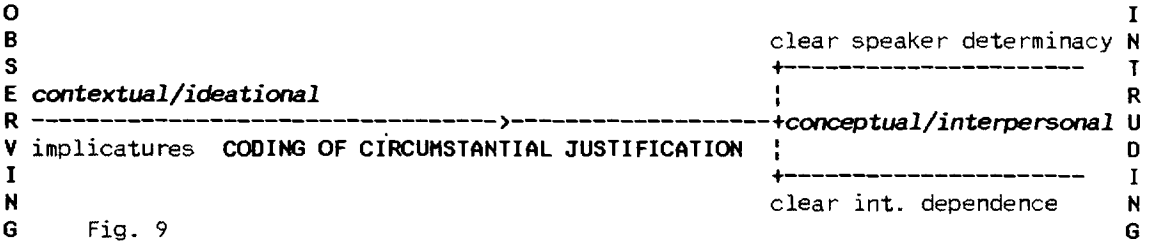



Fig. 9

On this continuum **circumstantial justification is marked as being less contextually distanced , less conceptual and less interpersonal than speaker determinacy or interlocutor dependence** . This is because with circumstantial justification the speaker does not code either of the two interpersonal roles , *want* or *willing* . In 'holding back' from clearly coding such an interpersonal involvement with the predicated action , **the speaker does not intrude into the interpersonal context of the speaker/hearer relationship as clearly or as explicitly as s/he does with determinacy or interlocutor dependence** . Rather than imply *want* or *willing* , the speaker implies a justification within the ideational context ie. in the context

which is external to the immediate , interpersonal relationship between addressor and addressee . There is an element of Halliday's ideational **observer function** here . The speaker , as it were , observes the ideational context and draws out implications from it which have relevance to the hearer .

If the form/meaning congruence of contextual distance is to hold here , it needs to be shown that **expressions of circumstantial justification are coded through forms which are less conceptual** : that is , forms which are less restricted . What I argue for here is that forms which code circumstantial justification have the following features :

a) **Inflectional and lexical restriction** - forms coding circumstantial justification are less restricted than forms coding determinacy or interlocutor dependence .

b) **Opacity** - forms which code circumstantial justification are therefore not restricted to opaque VP's which do not code aspect

The form/meaning congruence of circumstantial determinacy fits into the wider framework in the following way :

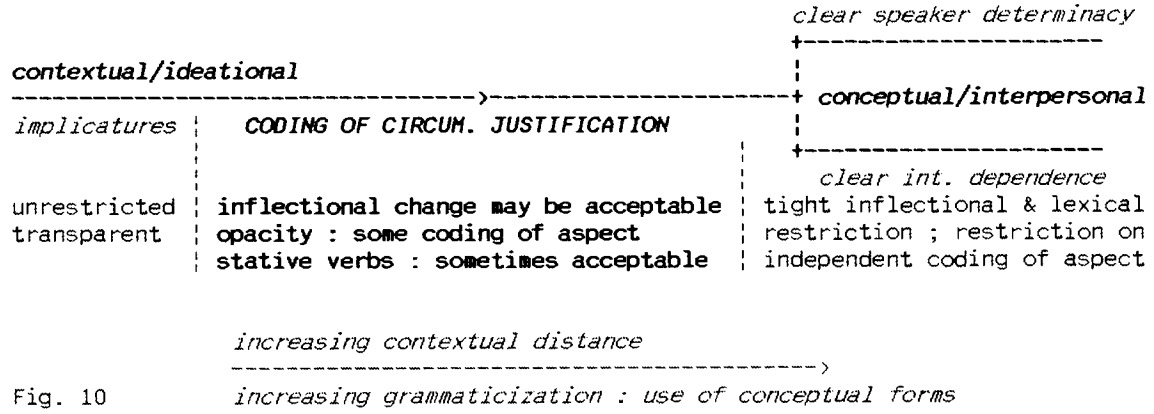



Fig. 10

As I suggested earlier , **this relative lack of lexical and inflectional constraints is a linguistic reflection of the relative lack of conceptual constraint which the speaker imposes on the hearer .**

As for the **on/off record continuum** , the distinction between grammatical coding (less on record) and lexico-grammatical coding (more on record) does not clearly apply here. The reason for this is that circumstantial justification , precisely because it may be expressed through inflectional and lexical change , does not undergo the same kind of illocutionary changes which such changes produce with determinacy or with interlocutor dependence . Even with 'performative' stems , this kind of variability is sometimes acceptable :

48. I'm **warning** you that you should ¦ **be leaving** ¦ by 4.00
I **advise** you to ¦ **have left** ¦

Instead of being open to this relatively systematic distinction between grammatical and lexico-grammatical coding , **expressions of circumstantial justification are more intrinsically ambiguous , and this ambiguity - which has something in common with the contextual dependence of implicatures - is a reflection of their place on the continuum of contextual distance** . In other words , being located between implicatures (more contextual) and determinacy/interlocutor dependence (more conceptual) , expressions of circumstantial justification have features in common with both . It is certainly true that on some occasions expressions of circumstantial justification appear open to relatively systematic mutual modification , in common with more conceptual forms . So a lexical change may , with grammatical coding , shift the illocutionary force from 'suasion' through to logical necessity , as in 49 :

49. You ought to **recognize** him when you see him *(use of stative verb)*

And it is also true that this kind of illocutionary change may create incongruity when colligated with a performative stem , as in 50 :

?50. I advise you to recognize him when you see him

49 and 50 , then , show that expressions of circumstantial determinacy may , on occasion , be open to mutual modification in a way which is consistent with the on/off record continuum (fig. 5) . But they also have much in common with their

more contextual neighbours , implicatures . Thus 4 is in itself ambiguous , and only through knowledge of a particular context could we begin to decide whether it is functioning as a warning , or a threat , or an admonition of obligation , or simply a piece of advice :

4. Perhaps you ought to do the shopping

In 4.3.2 I will enlarge on the point that expressions of circumstantial justification are open to considerable inflectional and lexical variation . Then , in 4.3.3 , I will develop the point about mutual modification .

### 4.3.2 Circumstantial determinacy and conceptual form

I have said that expressions of circumstantial justification are less restricted than expressions of speaker determinacy or interlocutor dependence . In terms of **lexical restriction** , there are some stative verbs which are (more or less) incongruous with a suasive meaning . These include those statives which signal *unaffecting intellectual states* (cf. Appendix A) , for example the verb *recognize* in example 49 above .

But there are other statives which are acceptable with expressions of circumstantial justification :

51. You really ought to ¦ **hear** Jane talk about Bill
¦ **see** Bill when he's playing tennis
¦ **feel** better within a few days
¦ **experience** living overseas

In 51 there is a suasive meaning which is consistent with the notion of circumstantial justification : the implication is not *I want you to hear Jane* , for example , but *there is some quality attaching to Jane's talking about Bill which in itself justifies hearing her* .

As for **inflectional restriction** , almost all forms expressing circumstantial justification are accessible to inflectional variation , whether or not they involve lexico-grammatical coding :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52. You | should<br>ought to<br>would be well advised to | | **leave**<br>**have left**<br>**be leaving** | by 4.00 |
| 53. (I warn you that) If you | | | **don't leave**<br>**aren't leaving**<br>**haven't left** | by 4.00 , there'll be trouble |
| 54. I | advise<br>warn<br>recommend | you to | **leave**<br>**have left**<br>**be leaving** | by 4.00 |

In contrast to expressions of interlocutor dependence and (strong) speaker determinacy , all these opaque VP's can be inflected to code aspectual distinctions , through coding perfective aspect (as with the *have + ed* form) or progressive aspect (as with the *be + -ing* form) .

### 4.3.3 Circumstantial justification and ambiguity : advise , warnings & threats

Expressions of circumstantial justification are more ambiguous (between one suasive speech act and another) than coded expressions of speaker determinacy or interlocutor dependence . This is because they are less conceptual/interpersonal, lacking any clear coding of *want/willing* and bearing a more direct , justifying relationship with the ideational context .

As I argued above , there are many cases where it is quite unclear from the cotext whether advice , a warning or a threat is intended , as with example 4 :

4. You ought to do the shopping

4 is particularly ambiguous because **there is no explicit statement of <u>why</u> the speaker considers such an action to be justifiable** : whenever the justification is left implicit in this way , ambiguity will be particularly strong . But when the justification <u>is</u> made explicit , then we begin to get a clearer idea of the speaker's illocutionary intent :

55. You ought to do the shopping . You'll feel much better if you do

In 55 the speaker 'spells out' a justification in terms of a consequence which is perceived as being <u>positive</u> : *you'll feel better* . We might therefore conclude (in

the absence of further contextual information) that 55 is intended as advice , but not as a warning or a threat . But notice how this perception shifts somewhat if the consequence is expressed differently :

56. You ought to do the shopping , unless you want your father to punish you

In 56 the consequence (of not performing the action) is expressed as negative to the hearer , and as coming from a source which is external to speaker , from a 'third party' . In this case we are likely to think that 56 is intended as some kind of warning . But if the consequence were phrased slightly differently , this perception shifts once again :

57. You ought to do the shopping , unless you want me to punish you

Here the source of the 'consequent action' is the speaker rather than a third party , and in such cases we are likely to read 57 not as a warning , but as a threat .

I do not suggest that these distinctions are concrete or in any way independent of context . Indeed , my main point here is that expressions of circumstantial justification tend to be particularly ambiguous . Nevertheless they do illustrate , once again , how context and cotext are open to all kinds of mutual modification .

By way of summary :

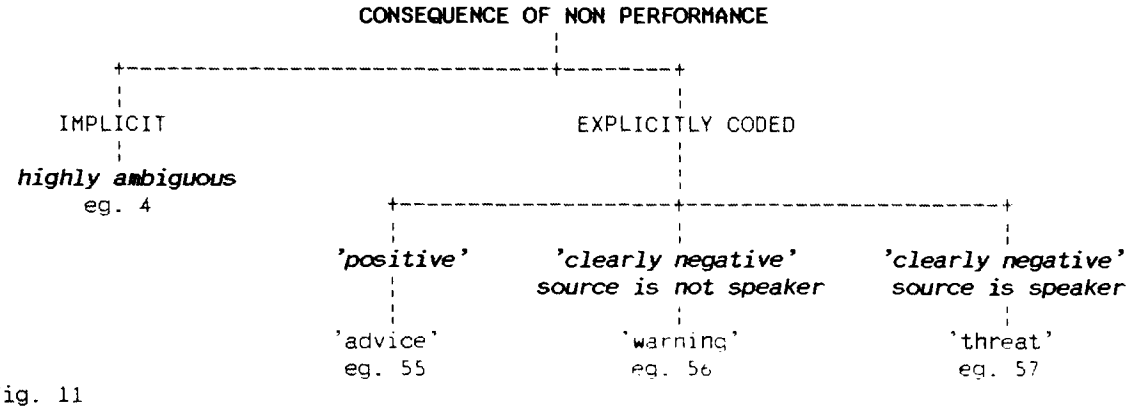



Fig. 11

## 5. IMPLICATURES

Implicatures provide perhaps the best example of what Givon calls 'language in the pragmatic mode'. Although implicatures such as 58 are grammaticized in terms of the ideational context (so that the relationship between agents , patients and so forth are grammatically clarified) , they ungrammaticized in that there is no coding of interpersonal meaning . 58 , in short , observes but does not intrude , its direction of fit (in Searle's terms) is categorically words to world :

58. The policeman's crossing the road

In terms of the continuum of contextual distance , implicatures are thus at the contextual extreme : they make direct reference only to features of the ideational context , and there is , in principle , no restriction on inflection or on lexical content .

In terms of the on/off record continuum , implicatures are 'off record' . What this means is that an utterance such as 58 may express any number of 'different' speech acts depending on the context in which it is spoken . It may function as a threat , or a warning , or even a request . In a particular context , ofcourse , an implicative expression may well be 'on record' , so that if 59 is uttered by a customer in a chemists's there will be virtually no difficulty whatsoever in interpreting it as a directive :

59. I need something for my cold

I have already suggested that expressions of circumstantial justification are more ideational , less contextually distanced than expressions of , say , interlocutor dependence . With implicatures we reach the logical end-point of this process . Like circumstantial justification , implicatures imply that there are grounds within the ideational context to justify the performing of a predicated action . But wheras the coding of circumstantial justification involves going 'on record' and making clear that a suasive meaning is intended , with implicatures there is no such coding of suasion . Thus implicatures are all the more accessible to mutual

modification between cotext and context .

So implicatures may implicate an interpersonal meaning through referring to and coding components of the ideational context . There is , presumably , an enormously wide range of ways in which this can be done , and it would be a fruitless task to attempt a detailed categorization of how these ideational references may be expressed . In very broad terms , though , Brown and Levinson (1978:220) refer to the way in which implicatures (or *viable hints* , as they put it) often involve reference to **the motives for performing an action** (as in 60) :

60. It's cold in here *(=> so shut the window)*

Brown and Levinson's reference to motives can , I think , be expanded . What implicatures often do is refer to features of the ideational context which (by implication) function as **motivations for action** . Thus although implicatures do not code interpersonal meaning , they can be (very loosely) grouped according to which 'motivating' components of the ideational context they refer to . Thus they may refer to the **setting** (as in 60) , or to **objects and processes** in the ideational context , as in 61 :

61. Kettle's boiling !

Alternatively they may refer to participants in the ideational context . They may be **speaker-oriented** (62) or **hearer-oriented** (63) or **oriented to a third party** (64):

62. I want that window closed *(=> shut the window)*
63. Do you want to eat something ? *(=> I'm offering you some food?)*
64. Bill needs a hand *(=> give Bill a hand)*

What makes these participant references ideational is the fact that **there is no explicit expression of how the state of one individual participant bears on the desired action of another** : that is to say , these are references to the individual state of participants conceived as independent entities - but there is no clear indication of **inter**-personal relevance of these states . With 62-64 , this inter-personal relevance may be 'read in' to the language through context , so that

through context the illocutionary force may become 'further focussed'. But the more this kind of relevance is directly expressed , the more on record and the less implicative the expression becomes . Note how 62-64 can be altered so as to include this kind of inter-personal perspective :

65. I want you to close that window *(coding of speaker determinacy)*
66. Do you want me to get you something to eat ? *(coding of int. dependence)*
67. You ought to give Bill a hand *(coding of circumstantial justification)*

## 6. EXPRESSION AND MEANING : SPEECH ACT CONDITIONS

### 6.1 Overview

In chapter one I referred to Searle's work on speech act conditions (1969/1979) . Searle defines those conditions (preparatory , sincerity etc.) which , he claims, need to be 'in place' if a particular language expression is to validly constitute a request , or an offer , or whatever . I argue that such conditions are not designed to take much account of the kinds of form/meaning congruences I have been investigating , and particularly the distinction between on record and off record . Consequently there is a tendency to assign a specific speech act label -such as 'request' - to language expressions which do not always merit it . I suggest that a more illuminative approach might be to work towards 'expression conditions' , in which such factors as the coding of *want* or *willing* in language form is used as a means of distinguishing - however imprecisely - between one category of speech act expression and another .

### 6.2 *Want* , *willing* and speech act expression/meaning congruences

I have argued that with implicatures , there is no interpersonal coding : no clear indication of how the state of ideational objects or the ideational setting have a bearing on the potential action of either interlocutor ; no clear expression of how the state of participants bears on the wish or willingness for an action to be performed . With implicatures , it is perfectly possible for such ideational coding to implicate , through Gricean maxims , that a suasive meaning is intended , but it requires a further and additional process to work out not only that a directive is intended , but also that a 'request' or an 'offer' is being implicated .

In short , **there is a conceptual distinction between , for example , 'directive' and 'request' , and between 'commissive' and 'offer/promise'** . 68 , for example , might easily be taken as a directive (to answer the 'phone) , but it would require a particularly supportive context to justify its interpretation as a request ie. as an implicit appeal to the hearer's willingness :

68. I'm in the bath

I have argued that a request , being interlocutor dependent , is only clearly signalled where *want* and *willing* are clearly implied :

69. Could you answer the 'phone ?

So there are two categories here : implicated directives (no interpersonal coding) and requests (coding of interlocutor dependence) . The interpretation of 69 as not simply a directive but also a request is (atleast in principle) less dependent on a supportive context than is 68 . The relationship between cotext and context has shifted somewhat from 68 to 69 : while with 68 a request will only be understood **given a highly supportive context** , 69 is likely to be regarded as a request **in the absence of contextual information which would rule out such an interpretation** .

The same distinction applies to commissives . 70 may well be interpreted as a commissive , in that the speaker clearly indicates his intention of performing an action for the hearer :

70. I intend to give you a hand

But only in rather particular contexts will 70 be seen as a clear offer . Offers , I have argued , are only clearly indicated when want and willing are clearly implied :

71. Would you like me to ¦ give you a hand ?
    Do you want me to ¦
    Could I ¦

What I would like to suggest is a **framework of speech act expression/meaning congruence** . This is not a framework of speech act conditions , but a set of statements designed to emphasize the congruence between expression and meaning :

***CATEGORY ONE : IMPLICATED DIRECTIVES AND IMPLICATED COMMISSIVES***

1) No clear expression of how components of the ideational context (setting/objects/participants) bear on the possible action of an interlocutor.

2) No interpersonal coding of suasion : no coding of interlocutor dependence , speaker determinacy or circumstantial justification .

3) May be read not only as directive/commissive but also as 'request' or 'offer' **but only where context is highly supportive to such interpretations** .

***CATEGORY TWO : CODED INTERLOCUTOR DEPENDENCE***

1) Clear expression of how the mental state (want/willing) of one participant bears on the possible action of another . Coding of *willing* generally implies *want* .

2) Coding of interlocutor dependence through clear reference to the willingness of one participant to perform or sanction a predicated action .

3) More likely to be read not only as directive/commissive but also as 'request', 'offer' etc. , especially when coded lexico-grammatically , **except in cases where context cancels out such an interpretation** .

***CATEGORY THREE : CODED SPEAKER DETERMINACY***

1) Clear expression of how the state of the speaker bears on the action of the hearer .

2) Coding of speaker determinacy through clear reference to the (more or less authoritative) wish of the speaker that the hearer should perform the action . No coding of the willingness of either participant to perform the action .

3) More likely to be read not only as 'directive' but as an action to which the speaker has a personal commitment , particularly when coded lexico-grammatically . Where speaker authority is clearly coded , may be taken as 'order' , except in cases where context cancels out such interpretations .

***CATEGORY FOUR : CODED CIRCUMSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION***

1) Clear implication of how circumstances in the ideational context bear on the potential action of the hearer .

2) Coding of circumstantial justification through clear indication that hearer action is in some way considered 'advisable' by the speaker ; no coding of either *want* or *willing* .

3) More likely than implicatures to be read not just as directives but as 'advise' or 'threat' or 'warning' , but which or these is intended depends on context .

### 6.3 Speech act conditions

The kind of distinctions I have been arguing for in 5.2 are not at all clearly in evidence with the speech act conditions devised by Searle (1969/1979) , or by Labov and Fanshel (1977) or by Gordon and Lakoff (1975) . This is not a direct criticism of such conditions , but simply a reflection of a difference in perspective . Speech act conditions are oriented to providing a highly generalized framework through which a wide range of language expressions can be assigned an illocutionary force . The kind of 'expression conditions' I suggested above involve a different approach , working out from lexico-grammatical form and using this as the basis for making generalizations about interpersonal meaning . With speech act conditions , the 'direction of flow' seems to be the other way round from this : it becomes a matter of determining that expressions have the force of a request or an offer by virtue of postulates or conditions which are held to be all embracing .
For example , Searle's preparatory and sincerity conditions for 'request/directive' are :

**Preparatory condition** : H is able to do A
**Sincerity condition** : S wants H to do A (1979:44)

Using these conditions we cannot distinguish in any way between a 'directive' (eg 68) and a request (eg. 69) , or between an expression of interlocutor dependence and an expression of speaker determinacy . One reason for this is that **there is no mention of the *willing* role here** . Without this crucial distinction , the abstraction of Searle's conditions is such that an enormously wide range of expressions tend to fall under the label 'request' , including :

72. Aren't you going to eat your cereal ?
73. I intend to do it for you

72 is clearly not coded as , or on record as being a request , though it is easily interpreted as a directive . Similarly 73 is more easily recognized as a commissive than as an offer or a promise . **Yet 72 is provided by Searle as an example of a 'request'**(1979:36) **, and 73 as an 'offer'** (1979:55) .

Similarly , Labov and Fanshel argue that 74 is an 'indirect request' , because it involves an 'appeal to the need for action' (1977:83) :

74. Are you planning to dust the room ?

There is no clear coding here either of *speaker want* or *hearer willing* . Again , 74 may on occasion be taken as a request ; but why , in the absence of such interpersonal coding , should 74 be referred to as a 'request' at all ? It seems to me that 74 is more accurately described as an **implicative directive** .

Gordon and Lakoff (1975) have a slightly different perspective , since they talk of both *want* and *willing* as being crucial elements of their 'conversational postulates' . They refer to a sincerity condition whereby if speaker (a) requests an action (r) of the hearer (b) , then :

> a ***wants*** b to do r , a assumes b can do r , a assumes that b would be ***willing*** to do r ....
>
> (1975:85 my italics)

Here we have two central elements in interpersonal meaning - want and willing - clearly stated . Yet Gordon and Lakoff go on to separate them out , saying that requests can be made by stating a 'speaker based sincerity condition' which focuses only on the want role . Thus 75 is said to be a request :

75. I want you to take out the garbage (ibid.)

75 , it seems to me , is much more likely to be taken at face value , as a statement of speaker determinacy , given that the willing role is uncoded . Ofcourse Gordon and Lakoff assume that 75 can only be a request if we understand that speaker is assuming hearer willingness . But there is no evidence for this in the language of 75 .

In other words , there is no obvious reason why directive expressions should necessarily be given the more specific label of 'request' , or why commissive expressions should always be further categorized as 'promise' or 'offer'.
I think that there is something to be said for distinguishing between language which clearly codes interlocutor dependence , and language which does not ; between language which clearly codes speaker determinacy , and language which does not , and so on . It is perfectly plausible for an expression such as 75 to be taken as a directive , as an expression of speaker determinacy which (lacking clear indication of speaker authority) is not explicitly an order , and to leave it at that . To regard it not only as a directive but also as a request for action is to go a step further , and to 'assume' an intention to be interlocutor dependent for which there is no formal justification .

So , where interlocutor dependence is not coded , language expression is less 'on record' and increasingly open to contextual modification . The more off record , the less clear it is that interlocutor dependence (or speaker determinacy or circumstantial justification) is actually intended - ofcourse it may be intended , but such an intention is less clear , less on record .

## 7. SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

I have argued in this chapter that the coding of interpersonal meaning , and specifically of suasives , involves a deep congruence between form and meaning . Thus I have suggested that when suasion is clearly coded , either grammatically or lexico-grammatically , there are predictable and quite systematic congruences in the language which expresses it . Thus it is that with interlocutor dependence and speaker determinacy , there are constraints on inflectional and lexical choice which are congruent with the conceptual constraints which these meanings involve . Circumstantial justification , which is less contextually distant , is coded through forms which are less linguistically constrained , and again this relative lack of linguistic constraint reflects a congruent absence of conceptual constraint . Almost invariably , the clear coding of suasion involves the use of opaque VP's , and the grammatical coding of interlocutor dependence further involves the use of conceptually opaque forms .

All these congruences are consistent with the continuum of contextual distance : just as with other components of conceptual meaning , there is a predictable and pervasive association between the clear coding of conceptual meaning on the one hand , and the use of conceptual , highly grammaticized forms on the other . In all these congruences , the tight interdependence between grammar , lexis and context is undeniable . This is particularly clear from the perspective of the on/off record continuum , through which we can observe how inflectional and lexical change effect a shift of illocutionary force , though less and less easily as interpersonal coding is placed more 'on record' and coded not just 'grammatically' but 'lexico-grammatically' .

These congruences are sufficiently strong to cast doubt on those who argue that the expression of interpersonal meaning is so unsystematic , so completely dependent on context that it has no place in an organized pedagogic syllabus (eg. Crombie 1985b:13/14) . Indeed , **It may well prove the case that the on/off record continuum has almost as much validity with the expression of ideational meaning as it does**

**with the expression of interpersonal meaning** . Thus in 68 the ideational relationship between the propositions is uncoded , so that the interpropositional value of 76 is as off record as the illocutionary force of implicatures :

76. Jane arrived . Bill left

Finally , I would like to suggest that Wilkins' (1976) distinction between notions and functions , between semantico-grammatical categories and categories of communicative function , is not merely superficial but misleading . As soon as we start looking for relationships between form and meaning which are not restricted to surface correspondences , we find that notional categories - and particularly cause/effect - create deep form/meaning congruences which are as pervasive within expressions of communicative function as they are in expressions of ideational/notional meaning . This is particularly true of causal determinacy which , I have argued , is clearly at work where speaker determinacy and interlocutor dependence are coded , and which accounts in large part for the lexical and inflectional restrictions which are typical of so many such expressions .

There is a strong case for dispensing with many of the idealized polarities which have for some time characterized views of language form and the form/meaning relationship . There is no black and white distinction between notion and function, nor between grammar and lexis . Similarly , the distinction between 'system' and 'non system' , between 'analysed' and 'unanalysed' is not a distinction between one extreme and another : there are degrees of systematicity , and degrees of analysability , and one suspects that the concept of 'fully analysed' or 'completely systematic' is a fiction . It is with this perspective in mind that I have tried to represent language/meaning relationships in terms of **continua** .

# CHAPTER SIX

## *APPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY: TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY*

### 1. THE CASE FOR A REVISED METHODOLOGY : OUTLINE

#### 1.1 Grammar , lexis and context : a pedagogic framework

I suggested in chapter two that the concept of a balanced , mutually informing relationship between grammar and lexis has not been taken on board by language pedagogy . The majority of coursebooks present grammar and lexis in the form of 'lexis-in-grammar' . That is , lexis is effectively subsumed by grammar , so that its primary function is to illustrate or exemplify grammatical forms . Even the most recent approaches to the pedagogical description of language , such as Crombie's 'relational' approach (1985b) , or Sinclair and Renouf's 'lexical' approach (1988) are not founded on any clear conception of a grammar/lexis relationship ; the emphasis is thus either on grammar , with limited attention to lexis (as with the relational approach) , or on lexis , with next to no attention to grammar (as with the 'lexical syllabus') .

In this chapter I suggest an alternative approach to methodology based on the concept of grammaticization , and on the notion that grammar and lexis interact in the creation of meanings . This involves stepping back from the detailed analysis of chapters 3 to 5 , and re-formulating a basic relationship between grammar, lexis and context which is sufficiently accessible to stand as a framework for pedagogic exploitation , and sufficiently broad-based to facilitate exploitation of the form/meaning congruences which I have been arguing for in the last three chapters . This relationship , proposed by Widdowson (1990) and referred to in chapters 1 and 3 , is one in which grammar and lexis are separated out . At the lexical level , says Widdowson , associations between lexical items are often sufficient to imply a kind of 'unfocussed proposition' :

1. duckling - farmer - kill

In 1 , the basic components of the ideational context - a process (kill) , and two participants , one acting as agent (farmer) and the other as patient (duckling) -

are already clear enough . In order to give this AGENT/PROCESS/PATIENT association greater specificity in relation to the ideational context , we call on grammar - through word order , the addition of articles and the temporal markings of tense and aspect - so that the final grammaticized version might be as in 2 :

2. The farmer killed the duckling

Even a simple example such as this , says Widdowson , serves to demonstrate how :

> ... the arrangements and alterations of grammar provide additional specification to lexical associations so that the words can relate more precisely to features of context ....
>
> (1990:86)

Widdowson , then , is arguing for a reciprocal relationship between grammar and lexis which is congruent with the whole notion of grammaticization . The ungrammaticized lexical association in 1 is an example of Givon's 'pragmatic mode' (1979b) , in which lexical items suggest a basic , unfocussed meaning which is more context dependent and less 'on record' than its grammaticized counterpart in 2 . In terms of pedagogic exploitation , Widdowson has this to say :

> .... one might consider presenting language as lexical units , both as single words and as complex packages , and then creating contexts which constrain the gradual elaboration of the first , the gradual analysis of the second . In this way grammar would not be presented as primary but as a consequence of the achievement of meaning through the modification of lexical items . ... Such an approach ... means that contexts have to be contrived to motivate this lexical modification and to guide the learner in the discriminating and differential use of grammatical analysis . A pedagogy which aimed at teaching the functional potential of grammar .... would have to get learners to engage in problem solving tasks which required a gradual elaboration of grammar to service an increasing precision in the identification of features of context.
>
> (1990:96)

It is precisely this approach which I take as the starting point in this and the following chapter . What I propose is a methodology in which learners work with lexical associations selected and loosely related by the materials writer so that **it is the learner's own lexical choice which is guided towards the specification of particular meanings** . With any particular activity , the learner starts out with a context which is deliberately only partial , out of focus , open to modification ;

it is this context which the learner then fashions and refines in her own way , through the combination and recombination of lexical items , and through the selection of specific forms of grammaticization . Crucial here is the initial selection and juxtaposition of lexical items by the materials writer , for it is at this stage that the grammatical consequences of the learner's lexical choice may be predicted , with more or less covert 'direction' depending on the activity in question . By making grammar and grammaticization a function of the learner's lexical choice , the communicative function of grammar - as the means whereby meanings are given greater focus - is made central , to the extent that **learners perceive the functional role of grammar in the very act of creating meanings** .

With this approach , then , the notion that grammar is functionally motivated through its origins in discourse (Givon) , and the form/meaning congruences I have argued for in chapters 3-5 , can be directly exploited . I will suggest , for example , that through careful lexical selection we can guide the learner towards the framing of conceptual meanings , so that the semantic parameters of determinacy , interpersonal meaning and so on can be perceived and expressed by the learner through the processes of lexical choice and grammaticization .

In the rest of this chapter I describe and illustrate in greater detail methodological approach I have outlined above , and then in chapter 7 I will look at the kind of syllabus design which might most effectively support and facilitate it .

### 1.2 Theoretical justifications for a revised pedagogy

One of the most favoured types of analysis for specifying a product arising out of language teaching is what Brumfit calls "the linguist-formal analyses of syntax and morphology ..." (1984b:77) . Brumfit argues that a grammatical basis to language programmes has the great advantage that "... the syntactic system is generative , and therefore economical" (1984b:78) . Brumfit's appeal to the generativity of grammar is based on the belief that approaches to syllabus design and language teaching should be **answerable to a view of language learning** , so that

> ... a syllabus presupposes a design which specifically facilitates learning .... whatever else we may not know about learning , we do know that what can be made systematic by the learner is more likely to be learned than random elements , so .... we should not discard , without strong reasons , what can be made systematic for what cannot . At the present state of our understanding , ... there is little possibility of systematizing situational or functional categories.
>
> (1984b:98)

However , it is clearly not just grammar which is required if we are to draw on the relevance of language generativity for language learning . Generativity has to do with the perception of regularities of all kinds in the way language is put together . As Breen puts it , "in mastering one rule , we can see that rule operating in other instances" (1987:86) . In other words , when a student 'learns' the generative potential of the 'present simple' form , she is able to put it to use 'in a variety of instances' by manipulating its **lexical** content according to the requirements of particular **contexts** . This ability is at the heart of what we mean by generativity . So , underlying the notion of generativity is a web of interrelations , including interrelations between grammar, lexis and context , together with the meaning modifications which are a product of such interrelations.

Narrowly conceived , a grammar based pedagogy does not exploit generativity in this sense . On the contrary , it is the formal properties of grammar which are displayed most prominently . But as I suggested in chapter 3 (section 8) , we can only go so far in talking of the systematicity of grammatical rule per se , because there are limits to the 'analysability' of language form conceived in these abstracted terms (cf. Bialystok 1978/81/83) . We should not , perhaps , encourage learners to think in terms of a grammar/rule correspondence , on the basis of a rather crude equation between analysability and generativity ; rather , we should demonstrate that grammar is embedded in lexical and contextual constraints . A methodology which takes as its principled basis the kind of alliance between grammar , lexis and context outlined in section 1 above is likely to be more keyed in to the processes of language learning than one which is based simply on a grammatical organization , and to reflect more precisely the communicative function of grammar .

Widdowson's (1990) conception of a relationship between grammar , lexis and context is consistent with Givon's notion of grammaticization . Lexical associations (pragmatic mode) are grammaticized (syntactic mode) , and in this process of grammaticization contextual meanings - both ideational and interpersonal - are developed and given further focus . As Givon (1979a) notes , and as I mentioned in chapter three (section 1.1), grammaticization has an **ontogenetic basis** . In other words , the idea that we start out with words and gradually learn how to fashion them grammatically keys in directly with concepts of language acquisition . Although mush research on language acquisition has concentrated on the learning of the syntactic system (cf. Ellis 1985) , there is little doubt that children learning a first or second language proceed in precisely this 'lexis first , grammar later' way (cf. , for example , Brown 1972/Peters 1983) . Furthermore , both Givon (1979b) and Hatch (1978) have argued that there is a crucial discourse element here , as I outlined in chapter three (section 1) . That is , language learners 'play around' with lexical items and lexicalized holophrases not in introspective monologue , but in the context of verbal interaction with interlocutors , and it is argued that "out of this interaction , syntactic structures are developed" (Hatch 1978:404) . Following this same line of argument , Devitt (1989) suggests that the kind of early 'lexical competence' exhibited by language learners is an illustration of the fact that

> "meaning (in all senses) can be transmitted without having all the linguistic means of the target language at one's disposal ; that both first and subsequent languages are effectively learned only within a framework of meaningful use ; in other words , that we are actually blocking the language learning mechanism if learners are not encouraged to use language from the very beginning to transmit meaning"
>
> (1989:2)

**The methodology proposed in this chapter has as its basis precisely this notion , that the genesis of discourse and the onset of grammaticization lie partly in the manipulation of lexical items in relation to context . This relationship , between grammar , lexis and context , represents a view of the process of language learning and underpins a proposal for the methodological exploitation of language generativity .**

**1.3 Framework for a revised methodology : towards a process approach**

Since it is precisely these factors (grammar/lexis/context) whose variable combinations define the systematicity and generativity of language , **this process of combination and recombination gives learners simultaneous access to language both as a system and as a means of self expression** . In this way , grammar is used from the outset as a communicative device ; we are not dealing here with grammar conceived essentially as product , but as a process of grammaticization (Givon) . As Rutherford puts it :

> .... the nature of grammatical consciousness raising within a grammatical- process model can derive only from the nature of the processes themselves .
>
> (Rutherford 1987:58)

The basis of the methodology is that since grammar 'firms up' the unfocussed meanings of lexical associations , we should give learners certain contextual parameters together with certain lexical items , and allow them to relate the two , expressing meanings which require more or less reference to grammar as a means of clarification . Thus , wheras the 'traditional' approach deals with grammatical rule and lexical exemplification , I am suggesting an approach in which lexis is actually prior to grammar . Grammar , that is , constitutes the end product of a process of association between lexis and contexts in which the learners themselves are directly engaged , as in figure 1 :

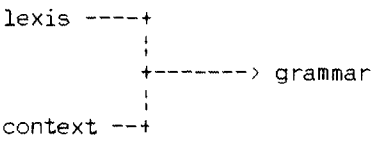



Fig. 1

I argue that such a methodology incorporates the requisite generativity of communicative competence . From the start learners work with language as a tool for the creation of meaning in discourse :

> .... communicative competence is not a compilation of items in memory , but a set of strategies or creative procedures for realizing the value of linguistic elements in contexts of use , an ability to *make* sense ...
>
> (Widdowson 1979:248)

Let me now give an illustration of the kind of approach I have in mind . If , for example , we wanted to guide learners towards the perception and formulation of cause/effect relationships , with the ultimate aim of expressing such relationships through a variety of clarifying grammatical forms , then we might begin by presenting them with lexical associations such as those in 1-8 below

**Example activity 1 : skeletal teaching unit on cause/effect relationships**

*Look at these words . Choose an order to put them in :*

1 [Bill - open - door]
2 [Bill - feel - sick]
3 [Bill - hear - doorbell]
4 [Jane - look - hungry]
5 [Jane - decide - leave]
6 [Bill - see - Jane]
7 [Bill - make - snack]
8 [Bill - take - aspirin]

The skeletal propositions in 1 to 8 are selected by the materials writer so that certain cause/effect pairings are likely to be perceived in the course of sequencing and grammaticizing . But the important point is that there is no tightly prescribed 'target language' here ; rather , a number of possible arrangement are possible . Below I list two possible orders , with cause/effect relations marked by '->' :

sequence A : [2->8] - [3->1] - [6] - [4->7] - [5]

sequence B : [3->1] - [6] - [4->7] - [2->8->5]

Carefully chosen lexical associations such as this enable learners to fashion their own meanings ; the degree of available linguistic choice means that there is also a degree of contextual variability . In choosing particular lexical configurations and proposition orders , learners are also selecting their own contextual configurations . What of grammar ? We could , for example , provide further cues which indicate that the whole sequence of events occurred in the past , leading to subsequent more 'focussed' tasks where learners select appropriate inflections in order to establish a clear temporal context .

The main point is that in such a methodology , learners use language to develop

their own meanings ; separating out lexis , grammar and context in this way encourages learners to invest in the meaning potential of language from the very outset . Widdowson (1984) has argued that in mainstream pedagogy , learners are presented with **'language dependent' contexts** , in which form , function and context are already correlated one with another by the materials designer . This kind of contextualization is commonplace , and occurs whenever units of target language are prespecified , and 'given' to the learner through , say , an introductory dialogue. As a result , says Widdowson :

> the language is represented as having self contained meaning and language learning as being a matter of putting expressions in store ready to be issued when situations arise which will correlate with them .
>
> (1984:99)

A more natural approach , says Widdowson , would involve the devising of situations "which need to be resolved in some way by the use of language ... by exploiting language to clarify and change the situation" (ibid.) . With the methodology suggested in this chapter , we can go some considerable way towards achieving this kind of exploitation .

**Ideally , what should be achieved is a kind of synthesis of the so-called 'polarity' between accuracy and fluency** (cf. Brumfit 1984b:37) . The kind of activity I outlined above (example activity 1) - within which the element of implicit learner guidance may be more or less directive depending on the type and extent of lexical 'cueing' - is neither purely accuracy nor purely fluency . Rather , it has elements of both . According to Brumfit , accuracy :

> simply refers to a focus by the user , because of the pedagogical context created or allowed by the teacher , on formal factors or issues of appropriacy .
>
> (1984b:52)

There is certainly an element of accuracy here . The learner is called upon to develop meanings using lexical items whose ultimate combination and potential for grammaticization has been pre-planned by the teacher/materials writer , and ofcourse the learner may be more or less conscious of this element of contrivance . But there are also clear elements of fluency here . As I argued above , it is on

the basis of learner choice that particular meanings and forms of grammaticization are finally decided upon , so that the learners' own procedures for making sense are directly utilized . This process keys in to Brumfit's concept of fluency as "language .. processed by the speaker .. without being received verbatim from an intermediary" (1984b:56) .

## 2. EXPLOITING THE MEANING POTENTIAL OF LEXIS AND CONTEXT

### 2.1 Introduction

In this section I aim to demonstrate how it is that lexical associations contain their own meaning potential . I argue that through careful selection of lexical associations and additional contextual information , the materials writer can guide the learner towards the formulation of a wide range of intra and inter propositional meanings , both ideationally and interpersonally . Depending on the initial lexical selection , the learner can be implicitly directed more or less strongly . In order to present the arguments here as tidily as possible , I am delaying full discussion of grammar , and of ways in which learners can be encouraged to grammaticize lexical associations , until section 3 . It is important to note , though , that much of the discussion in section two is directly relevant to the pedagogic exploitation of grammaticization . It is through the perception and expression of basic intra and inter-propositional relationships that learners can be guided to a realization of the usefulness of grammar as a device for further clarifying meanings .

### 2.2 LEXIS , CONTEXT AND SCHEMA : VARYING THE DEGREE OF GUIDANCE

#### 2.2.1 Schematic lexical associations and knowledge of the world

There are atleast two kinds of lexical association which can be exploited in order to give the learner a degree of controlled guidance in the formulation of meaning . The first are **lexical associations which key in to the learner's schematic knowledge of the world** - 'schematic associations' for short . These are lexical items whose possible combination should be intuitively evident : Widdowson's (1990) association between FARMER , DUCKLING and KILL is one such example . Given these

lexical items , the learner is able to recognize that the farmer (in all probability) plays the role of agent in relation to the duckling as patient . Thus the **intra-propositional meaning** is to some extent transparent without the need for explicit grammatical cues . Similarly , schematic lexical associations may exist across propositional boundaries , so that the **inter-propositional meaning** (cause/effect) in 3 is also likely to be intuitively evident:

3. [Fred - feel - tired] *(cause)*
   [Fred - go - bed] *(effect)*

What we have here is a lexically indicated schema of a cause/effect relationship ; that is , it is through cultural convention and experience that we are able to recognize the association in 3 as constituting - in all probability - a **schematic frame** of cause/effect . This kind of frame , according to Van Dijk :

> is an ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLE relating a number of concepts which by CONVENTION and EXPERIENCE somehow form a 'unit' which can be actualized in various cognitive tasks , such as language production and comprehension ..... a frame organizes knowledge about certain properties of objects , courses of event and action , which TYPICALLY belong together .
>
> (1977:159)

The pedagogic value of such schematic associations is that it is possible to directly GUIDE learners towards the recognition and expression of particular schematic frames , realized as intra and inter-propositional relations . Instead of providing them with additional linguistic (eg. grammatical) and extra-linguistic (contextual) resources , they can call upon these resources for themselves , working out from the recognition of lexical schemas towards the final expression of fully grammaticized and contextualized expression . Thus , although it is clear that contextual information is invariably distributed between lexis and grammar , there are occasions when it is not necessary to provide learners with contextual information other than that which is already implicit within the lexis . In the example exercise on cause/effect which I gave in section 1.3 , it is this kind of lexical schema , calling on the learner's existing knowledge of the world , which is exploited .

### 2.2.2 Situational associations

My second kind of lexical association is one in which there is no such intuitively self evident schema . Rather , there is an element of ambiguity ; the relationship between propositions in 4 , for example , may or may not be cause/effect :

4. [Bill - arrive] [Jane - leave]

Presented with this kind of lexical association , the learner would be required to to formulate a context of her own in order to determine a cause/effect relationship . Alternatively , the materials writer could provide additional contextual information , for example by making it clear in relation to 4 that Jane has a strong dislike for Bill , so that learners then **share a contingent knowledge of a particular situation** which might lead them to the perception that Jane's leaving was prompted by Bill's arrival (cause/effect) .

In terms of pedagogy , then , what we have here is a way in which the learner can be guided more or less directly toward the perception of intra and inter propositional relationships . Presented with schematic lexical associations , or with situational associations supplemented by additional contextual information , the learner's subsequent choices can be **clearly directed** . Presented only with ambiguous lexical associations , the learner is given greater freedom to exercise his/her own capacity to make sense :

| **MORE *GUIDANCE* (GUIDED ACTIVITIES)** | **LESS *GUIDANCE* (SEMI-GUIDED ACTIVITIES)** |
|---|---|
| SCHEMATIC LEXICAL ASSOCIATIONS | SITUATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITHOUT FURTHER CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION |
| SITUATIONAL LEXICAL ASSOCIATIONS TOGETHER WITH CLARIFYING CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION | |

Fig. 2

In the next two sections I will look at this distinction - between schematic and situationally contingent lexical associations - in greater detail , in order to illustrate how a large variety of intra and inter-propositional relationships can thereby be 'lexically cued' with more or less implicit direction . In section 2.2.3

I focus on the ideational context , and in section 2.2.4 on the interpersonal context .

### 2.2.3 THE LEXICAL SIGNALLING OF IDEATIONAL MEANINGS AND PEDAGOGIC EXPLOITATION

As I suggested above , intra propositional relations such as agent/process/patient can be readily inferred from schematic lexical associations ; that is , from lexical associations which key in to the learner's existing knowledge of the world. Thus in 4-7 , the various role relations contracted between one component part of the ideational context and another are relatively transparent :

4. Bill - window - open
5. letter - post - Jane
6. collapse - building
7. man - garden - look

But in 8 and 9 , these semantic roles remain ambiguous , so that unless 'cued' by further contextual information , a learner would have to work that much harder in order to create contextual parameters of his/her own :

8. Paul - Jane - see
9. bite - man - dog

A wide diversity of case roles can be included in this way , and there is a similarly wide range of interpropositional relations . For example , **temporal relations** may be strongly suggested through schematic associations such as 10 (for sequence) or 11 (for simultaneity) :

10. Bill - wake up *(waking up logically precedes eating breakfast)*
    Bill - eat - breakfast

11. Bill - lie - bed *(both states are likely to occur simultaneously)*
    Bill - sleep

Alternatively , we could devise situational associations which do not in themselves signal either a clear sequence or a relationship of simultaneity :

12. Jane - post - letter
    Jane - listen - radio

**Contrast relationships** can be similarly exploited . In 14 the lexical antonym between jazz and classical music suggests a general contrast relation , while in 15 the more specific relationship of contra expectation is implied :

14. Freda - love - jazz
    Freda - hate - classical music

15. Jim - live - New York
    Jim - hate - city life

Similarly with **cause/effect relationships** , schematic lexical associations can be devised which suggest a determinate reason/result relationship (as in 13) :

13. sun - rise
    flower - open

Particular types of **participant determinacy** can be cued through schematic associations such as those in 14-17 , which exploit the lexical coding of dual proposition verbs and which lead naturally to further work on the grammaticization of complement structures :

14. Bill - **want** - leave
15. Anne - **expect** - book - arrive
16. Fred - **plan** - leave - early
17. Janet - **force** - open - door

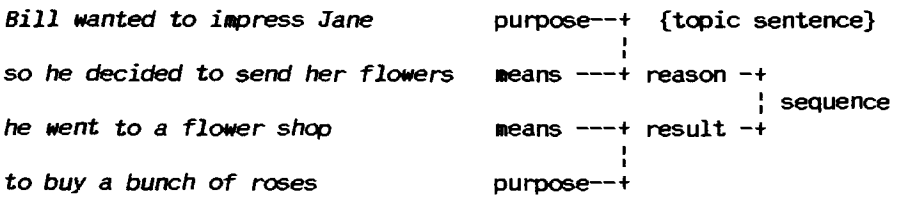
By using combinations of different kinds of interpropositional relationship , quite complex patterns of connected discourse can be suggested through schematic associations . One objective here , ofcourse , is that through identifying and expressing such relationships for themselves , learners will be guided towards appropriate clarifying forms of grammaticization . This process , whereby grammar is used as a communicative tool whose value and purpose is perceived through the development of discourse patterns , is consistent with the kind of language development out-of-discourse observed by Hatch (1978) and Givon (1979b) which I referred to in section 1.2 . In the following example , learners are encouraged to develop coherent discourse through lexical association :

***Example exercise 2 : skeletal teaching unit on discourse relations (sequence & causation)*** :

*Look at these words . Choose an order to put them in .*

[go - flower shop]
[Bill - want - Jane - impress]
[buy - bunch - roses]
[Jane - decide - flowers - send - Bill]

The kind of output we might expect would look something like :




It is sometimes suggested that the absence of overt linkers (such as 'so' and 'to' above) may lead to ambiguities , and therefore we should start by focussing on explicit conjuncts (Crombie 1985b:17/Nation 1984:65) . However , such an approach denies learners access to the kind of procedural activity which we should be encouraging , namely using lexical items to infer and create all kinds of inter-propositional relationships by exploiting the variability of the lexis/context relationship .

This kind of approach does not depend on the materials writer developing each activity 'from scratch' . It is perfectly possible to **adapt existing tasks** so that in cases where grammar , lexis and context are effectively fused , the materials writer can separate them out and guide the learner towards his/her own synthesis . For example , in the task reproduced below (J. and L. Soars 1986) , the target language focus is the distinction between past simple (used to describe sequences of past events) , and past progressive (used to describe events which occurred simultaneously in the past) . The problem is that the learner should be quite capable of matching up text to pictorial cue without necessarily understanding these distinctions , simply by matching up pictures with the appropriate lexical items . For example , provided the learner knows the meaning of the verb KILL , then picture 8 is self evidently the 'right' picture to select at this point , and

thus 'killed' comes last in the sequence . Because grammar and lexis have already been appropriately interrelated by the materials writer , learners do not need to recognize either the appropriate temporal/interpropositional relations , nor the significance of the coding inflections . This task , then , has clear elements of Widdowson's **language dependence** :

## Past Simple and Past Continuous

### Narrating past events

#### PRESENTATION

Unfortunately this is a *true* story. In January 1978 the firemen were on strike, and the army took over the job of answering emergency calls.

1 Here is a list of verbs in the *Past Simple* which tell the events of the story.
Look at the pictures and put the verbs in the right order.
Number them 1–10.

- ☐ rescued
- ☐ arrived
- ☐ climbed
- ☐ killed
- ☐ called
- ☐ invited
- ☐ couldn't get down
- ☐ ran over
- ☐ put up (the ladder)
- ☐ offered

2 Here is a list of verbs in the *Past Continuous* which describe the scene of the narrative.
Look at the pictures and put the verbs in the right order.
Letter them a–d.

- ☐ was waiting
- ☐ were leaving
- ☐ was working
- ☐ was playing

3 Now complete the story about Mrs Brewin by putting a number or a letter into each gap.

On 14 January 1978 Mrs Brewin ____ in her garden. Her cat, Henry, ____ around her. It ____ a tree in the garden and ____, so she ____ the Fire Brigade. While she ____ for them to arrive, she ____ him some fish to try to get him down.

The army finally ____ their ladder and ____ the cat. Mrs Brewin was delighted and ____ them in for some tea. But as they ____ ten minutes later, they ____ the cat and ____ it.

In what follows , I outline two alternative approaches . The first (exercise 4) involves the use of schematic lexical associations with no additional contextual cueing : this approach is thus an example of a 'guided activity' . In the second adaptation (exercise 5) , lexical associations are more dependent on a particular context ; thus situational associations are used , together with some further contextual cueing (through pictures) in order to develop a 'semi-guided activity' in which the learner develops meanings which are arrived at independently .

***Adaptation A/Exercise 4*** ***GUIDED ACTIVITY***
***learners work largely with clear schematic lexical associations : no additional contextual information***

1) Learners sort out lexical categories :

*Choose an action word from column B for each of the word groups in column A :*

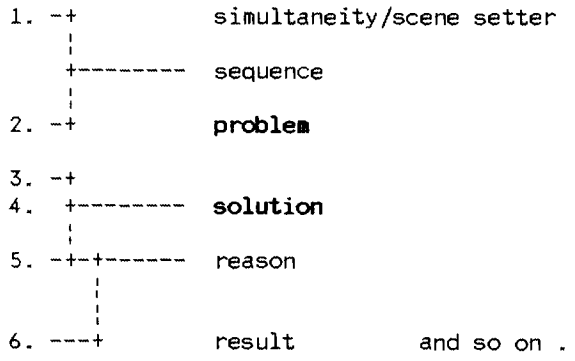
| **A: people/objects** | **B: action words** |
|---|---|
| [Mrs. Brewin - garden] | work kill climb |
| [the firemen - cat] | |
| [cat - tree and couldn't get down] | leave put up lie |
| [the firemen - cat] | |
| [the firemen - house] | run over telephone |
| [Mrs. Brewin - fire brigade] | |
| [cat - on the grass] | be rescue |
| [the firemen - ladder] | |
| [Mrs. Brewin - very happy] | |
| [the firemen - cat] | |

2) Learners sort out relationships of sequence and simultaneity

*Using these words , make full sentences and decide in which order the events took place . When you think two things happened at the same time , put one in column A and the other in column B:* (grid is completed for clarification)

| | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mrs. Brewin was working in her garden | Her cat lay on the grass |
| 2 | The cat climbed a tree & couldn't get down | |
| 3 | Mrs. Brewin telephoned the fire brigade | |
| 4 | The firemen put up the ladder | |
| 5 | They rescued the cat | |
| 6 | Mrs. Brewin was very happy | |
| 7 | The firemen left the house | They ran over the cat |
| 8 | They killed the cat | |

The above task illustrates how learners can be encouraged to develop and express the notions of sequence/simultaneity/cause-effect by exploiting their knowledge of the world . In this case , the lexis has been chosen to maximize this capacity , so that various discourse relationships can be 'discovered' through contextual knowledge implicit in relatively transparent lexical relations :




In the next section I will look at how to create conditions in which particular grammatical devices are called upon ; it should be clear , though , that the grid above in itself provides a framework for exploiting grammar in order to make certain meanings clear . For example , the simultaneity relationship in 1. can only be made clear by using a past progressive inflection *(mrs. Brewin* **was working** or *her cat* **was lying** *on the grass)* .

**Adaptation *B/exercise 5* : *SEMI-GUIDED ACTIVITY***
**learners use *ambiguous lexical associations***
***(ie. situational rather than schematic) together with***
**optional additional contextual cues (the first 4 pictures in the sequence)**

*Use all the words in column A and atleast 8 of the words in column B to make a story . Use the grid below for your final version :*

| **Column A** | **Column B** |
|---|---|
| Mrs. Brewin<br>She | die bite save run over arrive |
| Her cat<br>It | leave put up thank work lie |
| The firemen<br>They | telephone climb garden tree |
| | ladder grass |

These lexical items can associate in a much wider variety of ways than those in version A , both in terms of intra propositional relations and inter propositional relations :

a) choice of intra propositional relations :

[the cat died] - [Mrs. Brewin died]
[the cat bit Mrs. Brewin] - [the cat bit the fireman]
[Mrs. Brewin saved the fireman] - [the fireman saved the cat]

b) choice of inter propositional relations :

[the cat bit Mrs. Brewin **while** she was working in the garden]
[the fireman died **because** the cat had bitten him]
[the fireman climbed the tree **to save** the cat]
[the fireman climbed the tree **and so** the cat bit him]

Using the first 4 pictures provides the learner with some security , and ensures a degree of coherence between one account and another : picture one , for example , cues in the simultaneity relationship [Mrs. Brewin work garden]-[cat lie grass], ensuring that there is some potential for developing simultaneity relations and associated grammatical forms .

This kind of task encourages the development of the learner's capacity to perceive and express meanings which are to some extent her own , rather than reacting to a prefabricated context . Wheras the original task is language dependent , these adaptations are oriented more to activity dependence (Widdowson 1984) .

### 2.2.4 THE LEXICAL SGNALLING OF INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS AND PEDAGOGIC EXPLOITATION

I have suggested that through the careful selection of words , the materials designer can give the learner variable degrees of guidance in the formulation of particular meanings , through providing lexical associations which converge with the learner's existing knowledge of the world . A similar procedure can be adopted with interpersonal language , though here it is not ideational schema which constitute the core of the system , but **interpersonal routines** . Routines , according to Widdowson , are :

> ... predictable patterns of language use . They vary in their predictability ofcourse : some routines , like those followed in church services , allow very little room for tactical manoeuvre , while others , of which academic argument might be an example , allow a great deal .
>
> (1984:225)

Like ideational schema , then , routines constitute common points of reference , predictable patterns of association which are culturally more or less familiar to the language user . Both schemata and routines are stereotypic patterns which are "derived from instances of past experience which organize language in preparation for use" (Widdowson 1983:37) . Just as a schema may be self evident on the basis of lexical associations , so routines - precisely by virtue of their familiarity - may be recognized partly through the repeated use of lexical items and lexicalized holophrases , as in the following conventionalized exchange :

a: (Could I have) a salami sandwich (please) ?
b: 85 pence (please)
a: thanks

This kind of exchange is , ofcourse , very common in elementary level coursebooks , where it crops up again and again through introductory dialogues . But as I argued earlier , this dialogue presentation effectively conceals from the learner the dynamic relationships between cotext and context on which it is based . Rather than present these as a *fait accompli* , the teacher could allow learners to build up this kind of routinized vertical discourse for themselves . This could be done through providing learners with a selection of lexical items whose potential for combination in discourse is predictable given their relatively transparent association with a familiar routine . This lexical network might look as follows :

*50 - 60 - 70 - 80 - pence*

*salami - cheese - tomato*

*sandwich*

*thanks*

*please*

As with schematic lexical associations , this kind of lexical grouping might be sufficient on its own to facilitate the development of a basic 'discourse chain' through knowledge of the world . Implicit within this very simple lexical set is a whole range of implicit knowledge about the participants and processes in a buying/selling situation . In other words , merely by presenting these lexical items as a coherent grouping we can trigger in the learner a quite sophisticated awareness of its associated routine ie. the learner should be able to make sense of the lexical items presented above even if no further contextual information (pictures etc.) is made available . Once presented as a coherent lexical grouping , it becomes clear that *salami* relates to *sandwich* , and that *salami sandwich* is not merely a description of foodstuff but a reference to goods for sale , and so on .

Alternatively , this kind of lexical grouping could be supplemented through further contextual information , or the teacher could simply present learners with relevant features of context - by showing them pictures of shops/customers/goods etc. - and then using this as the basis for elicitation of appropriate lexical items .

What we have here , then , is a 'way in' to the pedagogic exploitation of the Givonian notion that grammar grows out of work with lexis - with ungrammaticized language which is in the pragmatic mode :

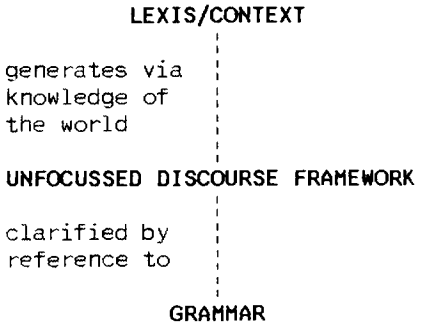



Fig. 3

### 2.2.5 LEXIS , CONTEXT AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE : VARYING THE COGNITIVE LOAD

So far I have suggested that both with ideational and with interpersonal meanings , careful selection of lexical associations and other contextual information can be used as the basis for a methodology in which learners 'create their own meanings', with more or less guidance depending on the initial lexical selection . In this way learners are given direct access to language both as a system and as the means of self expression . The framework I have suggested is summarized below :

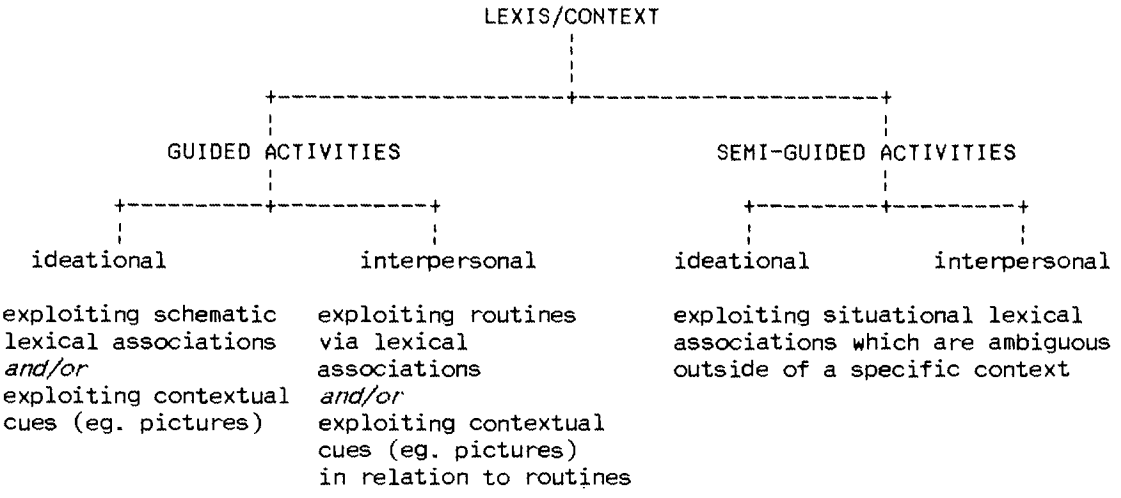



Fig. 4

This distinction between guided and semi-guided activities depends for its validity on an intuitive appeal to the learner's knowledge of the world . In order to provide the learner with guidance of this kind , the materials writer has to make certain assumptions about the type and extent of the learner's cultural background knowledge . But clearly , there will be cases in which these assumptions may be called into question . If , for example , the kind of buying/selling routine which I referred to above is not familiar to the learner , then what is conceived as a guided activity may turn out to be a completely unguided one .

Wherever possible , the materials designer establishes in advance what kind of material will be familiar to the learner , and what is likely to be new . To do otherwise , to select the cultural content of materials haphazardly , would

effectively encourage 'culture clashes' . The problems implicit in such mismatches have received considerable discussion (cf. Wallace 1986/Valdes 1986/Byram 1989) . As Valdes puts it , "the reaction [to such a mismatch] may be all the stronger because [the learner] is faced by two unknowns simultaneously" (1986:vii) .

But this is not to say that all activities should be based on contexts with which the learner is culturally familiar . Indeed , the great advantage of semi-guided activities is that the more unfamiliar the context , the more the learner will have to use her own capacity for making sense , for working towards a synthesis between language and context which has not already be worked out on her behalf . One way of exploiting this would be to work to a scheme whereby **learners progressed from relatively familiar contexts through to relatively unfamiliar ones** . In this way , they would move from the security of working with the familiar to the greater challenge of developing the less familiar . I am not suggesting that all activities at elementary level should take on a guided focus on ideational schemata and interpersonal routines . Rather , each unit could involve a development from the familiar through to the less familiar .

This sort of development needs to be adopted with due care and attention to the background knowledge of learners ; but through programming a principled transition from the known to the unknown the materials writer can directly exploit culture gaps of this kind . As Valdes puts it :

> It is the responsibility of first and second language teachers to recognize the trauma their students experience , and to assist in bringing them through to the point that culture becomes an aid to language learning rather than a hindrance .
>
> (1986:vii)

## 3. BRINGING GRAMMAR INTO FOCUS : LEARNER CHOICE AND GRAMMATICIZATION

### 3.1 Introduction and overview

The basic premise of this methodology is that working with words and contextual information will lead learners to an appreciation of the communicative function of grammar ie. they will use grammar as a means of conveying their meanings more precisely (cf. Widdowson 1990) . What I have so far suggested is that by starting out with lexical associations , learners can be encouraged to formulate a wide variety of meanings . In this process there is no need to present them with prespecified grammaticized forms ; rather , the objective is that such forms should be drawn on , wherever possible , as the need arises , and in the course of working with lexical items in relation to contextual information .

But this does not mean that working with lexis and context will inevitably lead learners , almost unconsciously , into grammatical conformity . The relationships between lexis/context and grammatical forms are more complex and variable than this . In this section I argue that we can divide grammar up , very crudely , into two categories : grammar which is likely be called upon again and again in the course of working with lexis , and grammar which may well be left out of this process .

In the former category I include activities in which the use of lexis to convey meanings necessarily involves learners in sorting out particular aspects of the grammatical system . For example , using **word order** to clearly express role relationships : 'duckling kill farmer' and 'farmer kill duckling' , for example , are transparently different in this respect . Similarly , the choice of particular verbs in itself has repercussions for the grammar : KILL (valency of 2) generates a basic SVO construction (farmer-kill-duckling) , while OFFER (valency of 3) generates constructions with indirect object (Bill offered Fred some tea) (Fillmore:1968/Rutherford 1987:48) . So from the very beginning , learners will need to use certain aspects of syntax in the process of further focussing the meaning of lexical associations . I have already looked at other forms of

grammaticization which grow - albeit slightly less directly - out of work with lexis and context : the use of **conjuncts** and **inflections** , for example , to clarify certain **inter propositional relationships** (as with example exercises 4 and 5 in the previous section) .

But there are a great many features of the syntactic system which are less likely to emerge 'naturally' in this way , and this is my second category : grammatical forms which may require further , more explicitly focused tasks . In this context it is worth noting that **grammar can frequently be circumvented by lexical paraphrase** . There are , that is , a great many notions , regularly associated with particular grammatical forms , which can be adequately expressed through lexis . In the absence of further pedagogic contrivance , there is no guarantee that these forms will ever become clearly defined . The temporal coding of inflection through tense , for example , can be circumvented through using lexical items such as 'tomorrow/yesterday/next week' and so on . A number of researchers have demonstrated how learners are able to use lexis as the basis for communication strategies , avoiding the need for grammaticizing which is unnecessary in particular contexts (eg. Dittmar:1981) .

A further problem is that of **shared context** ie. a context which is knowingly shared between all learners in a classroom . If all learners know that the story about Mrs. Brewin and her cat is set in the past , then there is no great communicative need to use past tense inflections (cf. exercises 4/5) .

Thus there are a number of factors - some to do with pedagogically contrived context , some to do with lexis and lexical paraphrase - which may reduce the perceived need to use grammar as a device for clarification . However , this does not mean that we need to fall back on a methodology which is entirely language rather than activity dependent . In language dependent tasks the materials designer asks the question 'what constitutes the grammatical target language here , and how am I going to develop/focus on it?'. In the methodology suggested here , the question is rather 'what kind of lexical and contextual components are most

likely to lead the learner towards certain useful features of the target language ?'. In other words , **it is possible to devise tasks which are specifically concerned with targeting particular forms of grammaticization , but which involve focussing on the grammatical consequences of the learner's (carefully directed) lexical choice , rather than 'presenting' learners with pre-formulated lexico-grammatical units as devices for exemplification .**

As with section 2 , I will divide discussion here into two parts . The first concerns **semi-focusing activities ,** and the second **focusing activities** . These are distinguished from guided and semi-guided activities in that the learner's lexical choice is guided more specifically to areas of 'semantico-grammatical' meaning . So , whereas a guided or semi-guided task may be directed towards general notional areas such as sequence/simultaneity or cause/effect (cf. exercises 4/5) , a focusing activity might lead the learner to distinguish between past and present simultaneity , or between circumstantial and participant causes , thereby focusing in on specific conjuncts and inflectional markers . With focusing activities , this element of controlled direction is stronger than with semi-focusing activities .

What we have , then , is a network consisting of four types of activity :

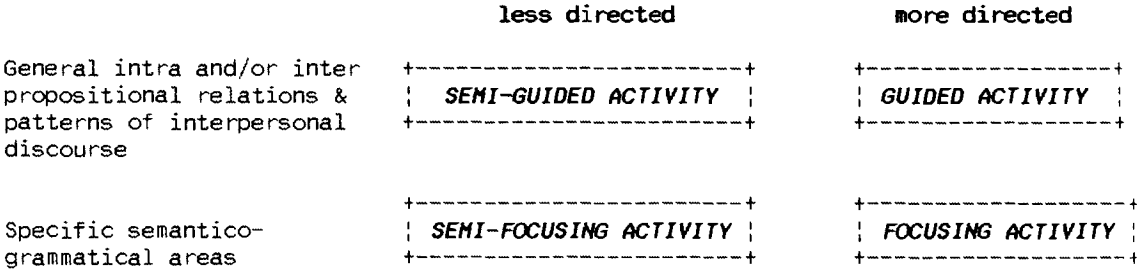



Fig. 5

It is important to note that there is no prescribed order to this model . In one sense , ofcourse , there is a clear gradient in terms of increasing specificity of focus/direction , which follows the pattern : semi-guided -> guided -> semi-focussing -> focusing activity . But this is not a prescribed order for actual

teaching . The whole purpose of the less directional tasks is to give the learner every opportunity to 'call upon grammar' as the need for it is perceived , so that the teacher may only wish to utilize focusing activities where it is clear that certain important or required areas of grammar are being consistently neglected .

In other words , the teacher might consider it prudent to begin wherever possible with tasks which maximize the learner's freedom of choice , thereby emphasizing the kind of activity dependence which is most congruent with real life communication . This approach roughly parallels that suggested by Brumfit (1980) :

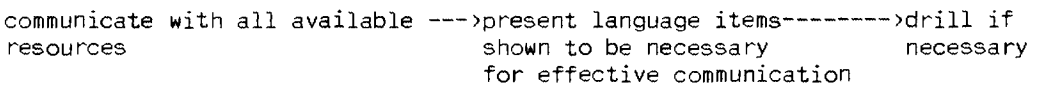



Fig. 6 (1980:121)

However , there are features of Brumfit's model which are questionable . Firstly , we do not need simply to 'present' items which do not arise in the course of 'communicating with all available resources' : as I have argued above , it is only where the learner retains some degree of choice that the communicative value of grammaticization is retained . Secondly , if we restrict ourselves to items 'shown to be necessary for effective communication' , we run the risk of ignoring items which can be circumvented without necessarily impairing communication , but which may nevertheless be necessary in terms of achieving social conformity in the world outside the classroom .

In section 3.2 I will illustrate , through example , what I mean by semi-focusing activity , and in 3.3 I will go on to discuss the role and purpose of focusing activities . In both cases I will include some of the form/meaning congruences which I argued for in chapters 3 , 4 and 5 .

## 3.2 GRAMMATICIZATION AND SEMI-FOCUSING ACTIVITIES

### 3.2.1 New vs. old information

On virtually every occasion that learners work with lexis to develop narrative or descriptive texts , they necessarily make some kind of choice as to how new information should be introduced , and how old information should be referred to . Such choices are not governed by syntax , but by lexis-in-discourse ie. this kind of grammatical choice is discourse motivated (Hatch 1978/Rutherford 1987:59) . For example , in the 'Mrs. Brewin' text cited above (examples 4 and 5) , learners are constantly faced with the task of reintroducing participants in the narrative : Mrs. Brewin/she , the firemen/they , the cat/her cat/it etc.

There are atleast two options open to the materials designer here . Firstly , she could explicitly 'cue' the learner towards an awareness of this aspect of discourse by building pro-forms into the lexicalized text , so that the learner has to use such signals as signposting towards developing a cohesive text :

***Example exercise 6 : sorting out new vs. old information***

*Look at these words : order them to make a narrative*
*It is about Fred , and his trip to the cinema*

[he - walk through - door]

[Fred - arrive - ticket counter]

[ * - sit - back row]

[it - be - very crowded]

[ * - buy - £3 ticket]

Here the lexis is carefully chosen so that the learner cannot deduce a self evident sequence purely on the basis of knowledge of the world : for example , *he walked through the door* is ambiguous - it could be the main entrance of the cinema (in which case it precedes arriving at the ticket counter) , or it could be the door leading to the actual screen (in which case it is subsequent to arriving at the ticket counter) . Thus the learner is forced to examine closely the various pro forms in order to complete the task successfully .

Alternatively , we could reverse this procedure , allowing the learners to decide their own sequence and to create their own forms of coherent reference , as in version B/exercise 5 of the Mrs. Brewin narrative .

### 3.2.2 Tense , time and context gap

I argued in 3.1 that grammatically signalled time references will not necessarily grow out of lexical choice : both lexical paraphrase and shared context are likely to reduce the learner's perceived need to use inflection as a necessary device for clarifying meaning . What can materials designers do to reduce these problems? One option would be to build in a **context gap constraint** . By this I mean building in sufficient variety of choice so that final outcome is likely to vary (to some extent) between one learner and another . Thus when learners communicate their own particular 'product' , they need to explicitly signal temporal distinctions because the temporal context is not shared ie. these distinctions are not redundant . I would argue that this approach exploits the **information gap principle** in a way which is congruent with the level of information gap typical of everyday interaction . It is arguable that the standard approach to information gap tasks effectively reduces the scale and scope of the 'gap' to a minimum , so that it is only small scale information which remains outside the body of knowledge common to both interlocutors .

***Example exercise 7 : distinguishing regular from 'one off' activities***

**Comment** : The aim here is to get learners working with the concepts implicit in the use of the present tense (for regular/habitual activities) in contrast to the past simple tense (for events which occurred on a particular past occasion) without simply giving learners the appropriate grammar :

> *Normally , Bill Palmer has a very routine Saturday : he always does the same things . Last Saturday , though , was quite different .*
>
> *Look at these words. Decide which activities are routine ,and which activities happened last Saturday . Order them using the table :*

**activities**

drive - city centre
watch - TV
eat - breakfast
telephone - police - ask - help
read - newspaper
go - pub
lose - keys - car
have - lunch - friends
walk - park
meet - friends
watch - football match

**Table (with possible completion)**

| **Bill's Saturday routine** | **Last Saturday** |
|---|---|
| He eats breakfast | He drove to the city centre |
| He reads the newspaper | and watched a football match |
| He meets some friends | but he lost his car keys |
| and goes to the pub with them | so he telephoned the police |
| to have lunch | and asked for help |
| later he watches TV | |

We can vary the degree to which this temporal distinction is a product of learner choice : in the above case , knowledge of the world is likely to discriminate in a number of cases . But it is crucial that some of the decision making is left to the learner , so that the final product is likely to vary between learners . **Thus when learners communicate their results one to another there is not , or not just a gap of discrete propositional information , but a deeper context gap -in this case , having to do with the temporal setting of the ideational context** . The subsequent task , then , might require a learner to communicate individual propositions ('he watches TV') which the rest of the class identifies as being either 'routine' or 'one off' .

### 3.2.3 Participant vs. circumstantial determinacy

In the above task , the lexis and context are fashioned so as to focus on features of the ideational context . But what of notions which are more **conceptual** ? I argued in chapter 3 that the distinction between circumstantial and participant

modality is often coded through different inflectional forms :

*I'm going to* ***visit*** *the Louvre* - participant modality (ie. source is the agent's own personal volition .

*I'm going to* ***be attending*** *a seminar* - circumstantial modality (ie. source is likely to be external to participant)

Since , as has been argued , this notional distinction operates across quite a wide range of language with reflexes in the grammar and the lexis , it is clearly worth exploiting pedagogically .

Once again , it is a matter of devising appropriately facilitating lexis/contexts from which the learner can begin to work with these concepts , moving towards the associated grammar :

***Example exercise 8 : future events - participant volition vs. circumstance***

*Allison Steadman is going to Paris on a business trip . There are a number of things her boss has asked her to do . There are other things she wants to do in her spare time .*

*Here are her notes on 'things to do in Paris', but they've been mixed up : sort them out for her*

**BUSINESS** **SPARE TIME**

<---------- buy teaching books

visit Louvre ---------->

<---------- attend language seminar

see Eiffel Tower ---------->

Again , knowledge of the world - exploited via careful contextualization and selection of lexis - enables learners to discriminate conceptually between notions of circumstantial modality (business) and participant modality (spare time) . In subsequent tasks this distinction can be made more linguistically explicit :

*Give/write a brief description of Allison's planned trip .*
*Choose some of the following words to help you :*

going to - hope to - will (be) - want to

But ofcourse there is no guarantee that the target language will ever fully emerge from this kind of task ; the more we encourage learner choice , the more difficult it becomes to ensure that learners will come to grips with specific grammatical consequences of those choices . So we need something more , another approach to the grammar/lexis/context relationship which can act as a kind of filter - a way of reducing the variables of learner choice so that the grammar emerges clearly and unequivocally . This is where **focusing activities** come in .

### 3.3 GRAMMATICIZATION & FOCUSING ACTIVITIES : AN 'ORGANIC' APPROACH

#### 3.3.1 Consciousness raising , propositional clusters and lexical choice

As I outlined in 3.1 , the purpose of focusing activities is to direct the learner's choice more specifically to particular forms of grammaticization through setting up carefully directed lexico-contextual parameters . These , then , are areas of grammaticization which may not be sufficiently developed on the basis of 'learner choice' activities discussed in section 3.2 above .

The more flexibility is given to the learner through the choice of which lexical items to select and combine , and the looser the contextual parameters within which this decision making takes place , the less likely it is that certain grammatical forms will be adequately highlighted . There are , for example , some areas of speech act expression which **resist easy interpersonal contextualization** - eg. threat/warn/advise , which do not occur in predictable discourse contexts (cf. , for example , Crombie 1985b:13) , and which therefore are difficult to exploit via knowledge of the world . We can certainly devise tasks which call upon the learner to discriminate between degrees of interpersonal appeal (eg. in X situation do you request or advise ?) , but we cannot invisibly draw her attention to the inflectional and lexical features attendant on these distinctions . There are other grammatical forms which **resist easy ideational contextualization** -particularly notions which are inherently more conceptual , such as forms of hypothetical meaning which by their very nature are difficult to bring out without very specific tasks .

But 'controlling learner choice' does not mean simply presenting learners with lexico-grammar which is fully contextualized ; I argued strongly against this in section 2 . Rather , the objective is to bring together three interrelated objectives :

a) a clear focus on particular features of the target language

b) facilitation of grammaticization in a lexically marked discourse context

c) retention of learner choice , albeit maximally restricted

This approach has come to be known as **consciousness raising** (CR) . CR has to do with the (pedagogically controlled) degree to which learners are guided toward the recognition and formulation of target language forms . Sharwood Smith puts it this way :

> Strictly speaking , the discovery of regularities in the target language , whether blindly intuitive or conscious , or coming in between these two extremes , will always be *self*-discovery . The question is to what extent that discovery is guided by the teacher . The guidance , where consciousness raising is involved ..... can be more or less direct . It is one thing .... to set up an illustrative pair of examples and draw the learners attention to the relevant distinctions using .. "hints" and quite another to give a formal rule .....
>
> (1988:53)

Illustrating a CR procedure , Rutherford (1987) offers the following task , designed to focus on the passive . Learners are presented with a fixed context (describing the layout of a room) , together with a fixed word order - but grammaticization is left up to the learner :

*Use grammar to link up these words in the order given :*

i) **sofa** - take up - room — leading to *the sofa takes up the room* ie. forcing the **active form**

ii) **room** - take up - sofa — leading to *the room is taken up by the sofa* ie. forcing the **passive form**

(Rutherford 1987:59)

Here , the fact that lexis/word order and context are presented prescriptively forces the choice of the passive . Rutherford calls this kind of constraining

lexical association a **propositional cluster** , and he argues that by leaving the final grammaticization up to the learner , we are still remaining faithful to the 'organic' (ie. what I have called communicative) relationship between words and grammar , or between language and discourse :

> .... just as grammaticization is a visible manifestation of the organic side of language , so must the attendant C-R [consciousness raising] procedures be likewise organically conceived . The nature of grammatical consciousness raising within a grammatical process model can derive only from the nature of the processes themselves.
>
> (1987:58)

The value of retaining a discourse context , says Rutherford , is that while the learner works through the grammatical consequences of lexical choice , "he is also becoming cognizant of the *extra* - grammatical factors that motivate these choices" (1987:59/60) . The shifting of ROOM to subject position in the above illustration , says Rutherford , is discourse motivated , and forces the passive ; thus grammatical choices are determined through discourse (1987:59) . Now clearly , when Rutherford talks about retaining a (discourse) context , he has in mind a much more controlling pedagogy than anything I have so far looked at . The kind of discourse development that would lead learners to the point of choosing between ROOM and SOFA as subject is given , for Rutherford nowhere suggests how learners might be guided less prescriptively towards reaching this point in the wider development of the discourse . This , however , is precisely the value of Rutherford's ideas : indeed , it is difficult to see how learners could be 'led' to a point where the passive is required without this kind of pre-selection .

So , and by way of summary , we can constrain learner choice to the point of forcing a focus on specific target language forms through grammatical consciousness raising activities . Unlike the procedures discussed in section 4 , such activities involve making more choices on behalf of the learner : fixing the lexis , establishing a particular word order , making the discourse context non negotiable , perhaps providing certain explicit grammatical cues , and so on . But the crucial point is that **while the materials designer makes a certain number of choices of this kind , she does not make them all** : hence the learner still makes

choices (even though they are highly constrained) . Thus grammar is developed as a means rather than as an end , it is seen as a facilitator rather than an obstacle , the target forms are worked out by the learner rather than merely accumulated , and the whole procedure retains an element of 'process' within it (Rutherford 1987:154/5) .

### 3.3.2 FOCUSING ACTIVITIES AND THE IDEATIONAL CONTEXT

***Example exercise 9 : Focussing on participant determinacy together with hypothetical meaning through the means/purpose relationship (she did X in order to achieve Y) Opacity of conceptual forms***

*There are 6 groups of words here . Together they form a short story about Bill last Saturday - what he did , and what he didn't do !*

1) *Read them carefully , then put them in order*
2) *Underline which verbs represent things which Bill intended to do , but which he may not actually have done :*

(ordered and underlined version:)

* Bill - wake up

* be - beautiful day : decide - **go** - picnic

* he - plan - **walk** - shops : **buy** - food
  **go** - bank - **get** - money

* he - want - **telephone** - girlfriend : **invite** - her - **come**

* BUT : he - remember - she - holiday - France

* suddenly - Bill - hear - thunder - outside : decide - **stay** home !

There is a strong element of guidance here . Propositions are arranged so that the learner necessarily infers means/purpose relations at certain points . For example, since it is evident that Bill finally decided to stay at home , we can deduce that he didn't actually go to the bank , or telephone his girlfriend , or buy food . The concept of a hypothetical purpose (as opposed to an actual event) is lexically cued via *plan* and *want* . All this , though , is still presented in a discourse context . The learner's awareness of these meanings is thus raised without resorting to the contrivance of simply presenting them in grammaticized form .

The next stage involves the learner in grammaticizing , and could be undertaken after explicit demonstration of the grammatical rules . Alternatively , the teacher could simply go ahead with the next stage without prior and explicit 'presentation' of the grammar , subsequently using learners' own output for diagnostic purposes - or perhaps showing them a grammaticized version to compare with their own without engaging in explicit analysis . The advantages of this very useful technique are discussed in Devitt 1989:20) .

3) Now re-write/tell the story , putting in the grammar . Try to include linkers such as *because , so , in order to* :

(possible final version:)

Bill woke up . He decided to go for a picnic , because it was a beautiful day . He planned to walk to the shops in order to buy some food , and to get some money . He wanted to telephone his girlfriend to invite her to come , but then he remembered that she was in France on holiday . But suddenly he heard thunder outside , so he decided to stay at home !

***Example exercise 10: degrees of participant determinacy , from low (hope to) to high (decide to) together with grammatical coding ie. low degrees of intention are more inflectable than high degrees***

**Comment:** the target points here are more conceptually complex than in the previous task . The aim is to establish three related points :

a) that lexical markers of participant determinacy vary in the degree to which they infer that participant intention will be realized , from low to high : *hope/want* -> *plan* -> *intend* -> *agree/decide* .

b) that congruent with this continuum there are **inflectional restrictions:** the stronger the implication of an intended result actually occurring . the more inflectionally restricted , so that *agree/decide to* are more inflectionally restricted than the others)

c) that congruent with this continuum there are **lexical restrictions** : *hope/want* take statives (I hope to recognize him) . the 'stronger' forms do not (?I plan/intend to recognize him) .

Task 1) and task 2) sensitize the learner to a) and c) above ; task 3) focuses on b) (the grammar) .

1) *Look at these words . We can use them to talk about things we intend to do . But there are some things we intend to do very definitely ; and there are others which we know may not actually happen . Try to put 2 words into each of the 3 groups using the table below :*

**agree to  want to  intend to  decide to  plan to  hope to**

| |
|---|
| GROUP 1: WE'RE CLEARLY NOT SURE WE WILL DO IT<br><br>hope to  want to |
| GROUP 2: WE'LL PROBABLY DO IT<br><br>plan to  intend to |
| GROUP 3: WE EXPECT WE WILL DO IT<br>agree to  decide to |

2) *Using this table to help you , decide which word to put in each of the spaces :*

***hope  plan  agree  want  intend  decide***

Gerry _____ to win the pools . [HOPE/WANT]

I just _____ to see my children again . [HOPE/WANT] (CUED BY STATIVE)

Jim finally _____ to lend me the money I asked her for . [AGREE/DECIDE]

I _____ to hear from you very soon . [HOPE/WANT] (CUED BY STATIVE)

Mike has _____ to go to Italy . He's leaving tomorrow . [AGREE/DECIDE]

This task exploits knowledge of the world using cotextual cues to help learners come up with appropriate collocations . In normal circumstances , for example , one doesn't consciously expect to bring about a pools win , so that *hope* or *want* are much the most logical choices at this point . The aim is to firm up learners familiarity with the concepts involved , and in so doing to allow the teacher to demonstrate the related lexical restrictions (cf. point c) above) .

3) *Choose one of the 6 words to fill in each of the spaces below :*

1. Bill _____ to be playing football this afternoon

2. She _____ to have left by 4.00

This kind of task alerts the learner to the point that only want/hope/intend/plan can easily take inflections of this kind . However , we can require the learner to do more than this . When we use inflections like those in 1. and 2. above , we usually do so only when we have a fairly specific time reference in mind : we can say *she hopes to be playing tennis tomorrow* rather more easily than we can say *she hopes to be playing tennis when she grows up* . We can exploit this in the following way :

*Put the grammar into the following word groups* :

1. [Liz - hope - play - tennis - next year]
2. [Bill - want - leave ]
3. [Janet - agree - marry - Nick - next year]

***Example exercise 11: Condition/consequence relations . The focus here is on the type of inflection - transparent or opaque - as a device for coding grounds and degrees of probability/possibility (cf. chapter 4/section 5) .***

**Comment:** Once again , specific discussion of the concepts which underlie the grammar can either precede the task , or be dealt with as the need arises .

1) *Read the following text carefully* :

Frederick Frump , aged 33 , escaped from Ludlow prison four days ago . The escape was simple : all he did was jump over a wall . Police are not sure where he is , but they suspect that he has made his way to Oranga , an independent state in the Pacific . It is probable that he has taken up to $2 million of stolen money with him . According to the police , getting Frump back to Britain will not be easy .

2) *Now look at the following statements . Decide which category to put them in :*

1. Frump is living in Oranga
2. Frump took $2 million with him
3. Frump killed a prison guard in order to escape
4. Frump will return to Britain
5. Frump took $2,000 million with him

| | |
|---|---|
| PROBABLY TRUE : | 1 , 2 |
| POSSIBLY TRUE : | 4 |
| NOT TRUE : | 3 , 5 |

3) *Now look at these word groups . Some represent conditions , some represent consequences . First , match them up together . Then put in the grammar - use the table above to help you :*

| CONDITIONS | CONSEQUENCES |
|---|---|
| If - he - live - Oranga | he - go back - prison |
| If - he - take - $2m | he - live - like a king |
| If - he - kill - guard | be - difficult - get him back |
| If - he - take - $2,000m | he - spend - lot of money |
| If - he - return - Britain | he - be - wanted for murder |

**Comment:** Thus learners are guided through the conceptual framework before having to account for it through grammaticization . The true/not true distinctions are established through the discourse context of the text , and logically generate a variety of open/closed conditional forms :

* If he's living in Oranga , it will be difficult to get him back
* If he returned to Britain , he'd go back to prison
* If he had killed a guard , he'd be wanted for murder

***Example exercise 12 : simple contrast vs. contra expectation***

This task is designed to make sure learners are aware of the conceptual distinction between contrast (but) and contra expectation (despite/although) , firstly out of context (using knowledge of the world/inference) , then in a particular context . The aim is to demonstrate how the perception of contra-expectation is highly context dependent , so that with the introduction of contextual variables in part 3 , learners are likely to alter their interpretation.

*1) We can talk about the differences between things in 2 ways .*
*a) where the difference surprises us (John is clever : he failed the exam)*
*b) where it doesn't (this car is blue ; that one is red)*

*Look at these groups of words ; can you decide which group each go in ?*

| a | b |
|---|---|
| | 1. Bill left . He didn't say goodbye |
| | 2. Fred played superbly . He lost the match |
| | 3. Gina loves jazz . She hates classical musi |
| | 4. Ali lives in Xandar . He works in Tull |
| | 5. Jane is bright . Scott is stupid |

*2) Grammaticize : put in the linkers*

Despite leaving , Bill didn't say goodbye  etc.

3) *Now read these sentences . In each case decided again whether 1 to 5 are surprising or not :*

| | surprising | not surprising |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Bill never says goodbye when he leaves : *Bill left . He didn't say goooodbye* | | |
| 2. Xandar and Tuli are 400 miles apart : *Ali lives in Xandar . He works in Tuli* | | |
| 3. Xandar and Tuli are next to each other : *Ali lives in Xandar . He works in Tuli* | | |
| 4. Jane and Scott are twins : *Jane is bright . Scott is stupid* | | |

### 3.3.3 FOCUSING ACTIVITIES AND THE INTERPERSONAL CONTEXT

***Example exercise 13 : Request forms .***

***Learners are sensitized to lexical change of meaning : ie. using a stative verb in the predicate neutralizes the illocutionary force of suasion , and instead gives the expression a 'literal' meaning (cf. chapter 5:1.4) .***

*Look at these questions and answers : decide which answer goes with which question :*

| Question | a | b | c | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Could you help me ? | | | | a) No , I can't |
| Could you recognize him again ? | | | | b) I'd be delighted |
| Can you see anything ? | | | | c) No , I couldn't |
| Can you pass the salt ? | | | | |
| Can you understand me ? | | | | |
| Could you give him a hand ? | | | | |

***Example exercise 14:*** **Circumstantial justification vs. interlocutor dependence .** ***Recognising the distinction between interlocutor dependent stems and stems which code a circumstantial justification : learners are required to link up speech act expressions with expressions of justification (which refer either to circumstances or to speaker WANT) cf. chapter 5:sections 3/4***

*Link the expressions in column A with the correct continuation in column B :*

| Column A | Column B |
|---|---|
| 1. You should help me | a) I really need your help |
| 2. Could you have helped me ? | b) It's too late now , ofcourse |
| 3. You should have helped me | c) I just want to know |
| 4. Could you help me ? | d) you'll be in trouble if you don't |

**4. SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS**

In this chapter I have described a pedagogic application of a general but principled relationship between grammar , lexis and context , in which the communicative function of grammar is exploited as the means whereby lexically signalled meanings are given greater focus in relation to contexts . This approach is sufficiently broad based to accommodate the Givonian notion of grammaticization , so that grammar is developed as part of the learning process, rather than as a construct which is pre-formulated (cf. Givon 1979b/Hatch 1978) . The emphasis is thus on the learner's capacity to make sense for herself , without losing sight of the need to retain some pedagogic control over classroom activity.

In the next chapter , I argue that this kind of methodology is best serviced through a syllabus design which is supportive and flexible rather than prescriptive ; a syllabus design in which the traditionally 'item oriented' focus of product syllabus designs is de-emphasized and balanced by a genuinely process element .

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## *GRAMMAR , LEXIS & CONTEXT : AN APPROACH TO SYLLABUS DESIGN*

### 1. PROPOSALS FOR SYLLABUS DESIGN : INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 Grammar , lexis and syllabus design : a perspective

In chapter two I discussed some of the major developments in syllabus design since the onset of the structural syllabus . I argued that syllabus designers have for the most part given very little attention to relationships between grammar and lexis . With the **structural syllabus** it was grammar which was given priority , and considerations of lexis and appropriate contextualization were downgraded . Lexis was kept to a controlled minimum (just sufficient to provide adequate illustration of grammatical structure cf. Fries 1945) , while context was considered a matter for individual teachers at the classroom level (Widdowson 1964) .

The development in the 1970's of **communicative methodology** (following Hymes 1966) , with its new emphasis on meaning in context , was not paralleled by advances in syllabus design . The so-called **notional/functional syllabus** , although it embraces a much wider network of contextual specifications , continues to treat grammar as dominant over lexis . In chapter two I argued that this imbalance is explicable in terms of the **organizing principle** of such syllabus designs ; with this approach , a single component (usually grammar) is taken as dominant , so that other components (including lexis) are organized around and in reference to it .

Both the structural and the notional/functional syllabus have been criticized on the grounds that they "present language as an inventory of units , of items for accumulation and storage" (Widdowson 1979:248) . Thus grammar and lexis , rather than being organized in a way which is complementary to their dynamic interrelationship , have tended to be presented as lexis subsumed by grammar . What is needed is a 'way in' to the organization of lexis , grammar and context which

facilitates not the simple **accumulation** of language items , but "the **investment** of knowledge for future and unpredictable realization" (Widdowson 1990:132) , so that learners can be given direct access to the communicative function of grammar .

Having described an approach to methodology in which this kind of investment is given prominence , and in which the potential **generativity** of language is opened up , what is required is a syllabus design which directly facilitates this process . A syllabus design , in short , which mediates an element of clear linguistic guidance in terms of **product** through a complementary recognition of the potential dynamics of the cotext/context relationship in terms of **process** .

## 1.2 PROPOSALS FOR A REVISED SYLLABUS DESIGN : AN OUTLINE

### 1.2.1 Separating out grammar , lexis and context

In this chapter , then , I suggest a revised approach to syllabus design - one in which **lexis** and **grammar** are separated out , so that it is the learner (rather than the syllabus designer) who integrates them in the creation of meaning . This means that grammar is not a component of the core syllabus in the conventional sense . Rather , since it is treated as the end point in the learner's exploitation of lexical items , **grammar takes the form of a checklist** : essentially a list of structures with no prescribed sequence between one form and the next . Exactly if and when particular structures receive 'guided focus' is something which cannot be legislated about except in the specific circumstances of the classroom setting .

In chapter six I discussed the crucial role of **context** , and how contextual information , in association with lexical items , can be used as a device for facilitating the 'onset' of grammaticization . Its function is **to indicate those aspects of meaning (interpersonal , ideational) which will guide the learner to manipulate lexis toward particular areas of grammaticization** . It allows learners , that is , to perceive the meaning potential of lexis . Contextual information , as

I argued in chapter 6 , may lie partly in lexical associations (particularly in lexical schemas and lexically transparent routines) and partly in the extra-linguistic ideational and interpersonal context . In order to reflect this crucial distribution , the syllabus designer's job is to carefully sequence a lexical component and a contextual component .

**Thus the basic framework of the syllabus comprises a sequence of lexical items and example lexical associations (in the lexical component) related to a parallel sequence of 'contextual' specifications (the context component) . The latter includes notional/ideational and functional/interpersonal specifications . It is through taking bearings on these two components that the materials writer is able to decide on the kind of balance between lexical and contextual cueing appropriate for each task . The grammar checklist remains outside this sequence of lexical and contextual specifications , but grammatical forms which are deemed likely to occur over a series of 'lexico-contextual' units are located roughly alongside them . Thus the materials writer can see at a glance which forms of grammaticization are 'targeted' in relation to which lexical and contextual specifications .**

For example , one cross-section of the syllabus may deal with such notions as temporal relations (sequence and simultaneity , past and future time) . The syllabus designer's task here is to provide an adequate contextual specification , to give a clear indication of the kind of schematic lexical associations which will be facilitative , and to indicate relevant areas of grammaticization . This cross - section , then , might look as follows :

| CONTEXTUAL COMPONENT | LEXICAL COMPONENT |
|---|---|
| Past time (completed) vs. present (ongoing) states | example schema : *Shakespeare - live - Stratford (to cue past)* *Vargas Llosa - live - Lima (to cue present)* |
| Past time (completed) vs. present (habitual) events | example schema (routine present vs. unusual past) : *eat - breakfast / watch - TV (to cue present)* *lose - wallet / go - police station (to cue past)* |
| Future time : degrees of possibility/probability | example schema (predictions) : Bill is a doctor *get - pension - 65 years old (to cue probability)* *become - famous - surgeon (to cue improbability)* |
| Sequence of events | example schema (daily events) : *eat - breakfast / drive - office / go - meeting etc.* |
| | example schema (logical ordering of events) : *1) Paul - want - take - holiday* *2) go - travel agent - look - brochure* *3) decide - fly - Rome etc.* |
| General cause/effect | example schema (participant reactions) : *John - feel - sick* *take - aspirin* |

| ***GRAMMAR CHECKLIST*** | *(example entries from a much larger list)* |
|---|---|

Inflections (marking temporal distinctions) : *-ing* (progressive)
*-ed* (past)
Linking grammar words/conjuncts : *so/because*
*after/before/when/while*
Modal verbs : *may/might/will*

Fig. 1 *Example cross-section from syllabus*

Contextual information , then , is effectively distributed between the contextual and the lexical components . However , while the notional (and functional) labels in the contextual component constitute key concepts which need to be systematically covered , the lexical component is suggestive rather than prescriptive . Thus the syllabus designer may , as in figure 1 , include 'exemplar' schematic associations as a guide , it is ultimately up to the teacher/materials writer whether to pick up on these or not . Similarly , it is the teacher who decides how best to achieve an appropriate balance between more and less guided activities , between the use of

schematic and routine-oriented lexical associations on the one hand , and the use of more 'open ended' situational associations on the other .

### 1.2.2 Co-reference and co-occurrence

As for **sequencing and integrating** , the contextual and the lexical components tie in closely with each other , so that for each entry in the former , the materials writer/teacher refers across to the lexical component in order to see which lexical items and associations may be relevant . At Elementary level , ofcourse , the lexical component is likely to be more detailed , perhaps including specifications of which individual items of vocabulary should be introduced at each stage .

The relationship between the contextual and the lexical components is one of **co-occurrence**, whereby the one is directly related 'horizontally' with the other . With the grammatical checklist there is no such direct association . It should be borne in mind that figure 1 is only a small cross section , and that in actuality there may be a single , unsequenced grammar checklist which **refers to** very large number of lexis/context co-occurrences . Thus there is no predetermined integration between grammar and lexis , but instead the relationship between grammar and lexis/context is one of **co-reference** . In other words , grammar does not subsume lexis , as it does in conventional 'product' syllabus designs . Those forms of grammaticization which underlie particular lexical associations are located in the same section of the syllabus . They are separate and in this sense they are not integrated , but they co-refer , so that the teacher/materials designer is able to see which aspects of the grammar might be firmed up in the course of particular activities . However , the actual integration of lexis with grammar is largely dependent on individual learners , and the decisions of individual teachers to focus on particular aspects of the grammar at appropriate stages .

In short , while the syllabus outlines a sequence of tasks based on work with , and co-occurrence between the lexical and the contextual component , there is no prescribed integration between these components and the grammar . Since

grammaticization is dependent on the classroom synthesis of work with lexis and contextual configurations , the syllabus designer cannot legislate about which grammatical forms should be worked on at which point . The basic relationship between thee three components is thus as follows :

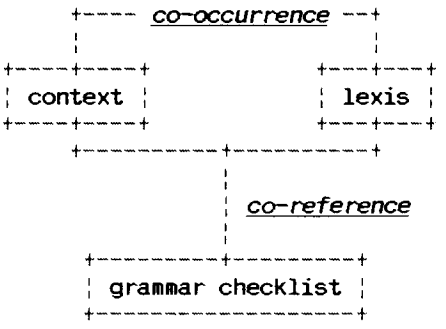



Fig. 2

In short , the whole concept of **integration** - conventionally considered a matter of **product** handed down by the syllabus designer - becomes a **process** facilitated by the syllabus designer . It is the learner who integrates , who grammaticizes lexis in relation to contexts . We can observe this whole process going on in studies of language acquisition (cf. chapter 6) ; the methodology attempts to create conditions in which it can take place in the classroom (fig.3) , and it is the job of the syllabus designer to devise an organised and coherent framework which harmonizes with this objective (fig. 4) :

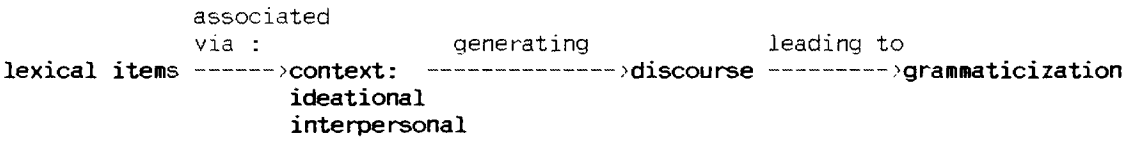



Fig. 3 *The methodological process : learner integration*

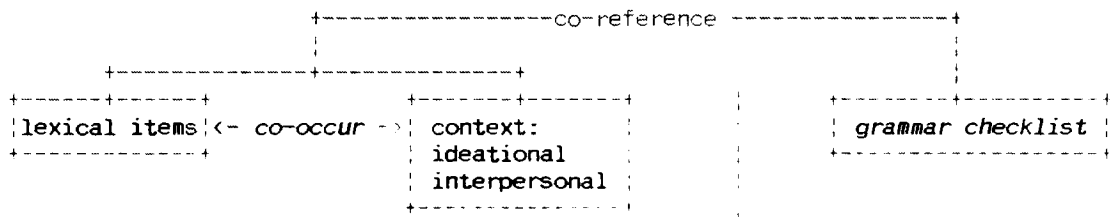



Fig. 4 *Syllabus design : co-occurrence and co-reference*

## 1.3 SYLLABUS DESIGN AND THE PROCESS/PRODUCT DICHOTOMY

### 1.3.1 Product syllabuses : the *item-based* approach

Wilkins claimed the notional/functional syllabus was a genuinely **semantic syllabus**, but this claim has been strongly criticized on the grounds that the N/F syllabus , like the structural syllabus , is essentially about presenting discrete , pre-formulated items of target language :

> The notional syllabus , it is claimed , ... [accounts for] communicative competence within the actual design of the syllabus itself . This is a delusion because the notional syllabus presents language as an inventory of units , of items for accumulation and storage . They are notional rather than structural isolates , but they are isolates all the same . .. .. it deals with the *components* of discourse , not with discourse itself. As such it derives from an analyst's and not a participants' view of language , as does the structural syllabus .
>
> (Widdowson 1978:248)

It is very difficult to see how this kind of product syllabus can be fully justified through theories of language learning . As Widdowson says , product syllabuses are based on the analyst's perspective , rather than that of the language user . Brumfit justifies a grammatical organising principle in terms of systematicity , saying that "such a claim has strong support in learning theory" (1981:91) , but what does this mean ? Where is the learning theory that says simply that the way we learn a language is by progressively mastering its structures ? - this is not so much a view of how we learn as a view of what we learn . Brumfit continues by saying that theorists do not claim that we learn grammar as grammar , rather "it is clear that grammar has always been seen as a means to a communicative end" (1981:91) . Yet much of recent research into learning strategies suggests that we first learn to communicate using whatever resources are immediately available , and that grammar is as an end, not a means in this process (cf. Hatch 1978/Peters 1983/Givon 1979b) .

Ofcourse there is a connection between systematicity and learning theory , but the appeal to learning theory as a justification for product syllabuses is superficial . The problem is that by pre-specifying target language , we constrain methodology , which attempts to present language in a meaningful context and to

focus (atleast to some extent) on meaning rather than form despite the inevitable tendency to manipulate learner output towards target language which is not the learner's own . **We pre-empt the learner's own capacity to make sense by refining and restricting target language in this 'product-oriented' way :**

> Each dimension to a syllabus is a criterion for the choice of language samples to be used - that is to say , for the delimitation of language. If a sample of language has to meet two criteria simultaneously , it has fewer alternatives available than if it has to meet only one criterion . Samples of language which can meet 5 or 6 predetermined categories simultaneously ..... can be so specific that teaching is reduced to focussing on a fixed list of language forms ..... the more 'content' a syllabus has in the sense of 'detail' , the less exposure to language the learner is likely to get.
>
> (Prabhu 1987:92/3)

### 1.3.2 Syllabus design and language learning

Reviewing various proposals for syllabus design , Widdowson comments :

> We might focus on elements of the abstract system as in the much maligned structural syllabus , or on the notions and functions which this system is used to express , or on idealized schematic constructs of situated language events ..... If one recognizes the stereotypic character of the syllabus , I am not convinced that it much matters which of these , or other , alternatives is taken . .....None of them self-evidently allows any greater latitude than any other for methodology to set up the most favourable conditions for actual learning . As defined here there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus : there can only be a methodology that stimulates communicative learning . ... For it is perfectly possible for a notional syllabus to be implemented by a methodology which promotes mechanistic habit formation and in effect is focused on grammar ....
>
> (1984:26)

For any syllabus design which is based , covertly or overtly , on an inventory of linguistic units , it would be difficult to disagree with Widdowson . It is always going to be possible to turn a notional/functional syllabus upside down , so to speak , and to see it as little more than a structural syllabus with notional and functional labels tagged on .

So by 'stereotypic syllabus' , Widdowson presumably means 'any syllabus which specifies target language as product' . Such syllabuses cannot go very far in setting up favourable conditions for learning , because they are not designed to capture the process of learning , nor are they necessarily designed to establish conditions in which target language will be developed by the learner . By virtue of

being item - oriented , they are necessarily concerned primarily with product .

Despite the wide interest in communicative approaches to language teaching , syllabuses of notions and functions have never been able to adequately accommodate this crucial process aspect to language learning . Developments in methodology have far outstripped developments in syllabus design , as I suggested in 1.1 above . The only approaches to 'syllabus design' which have clearly gone in this direction - the Candlin/Breen process syllabus (Breen 1984) , and Prabhu's procedural syllabus (1987) - have only managed to do so by effectively downplaying the whole concept of syllabus as prior specification of language content , and by upgrading the role of methodology . Thus these approaches have been given the label 'method' syllabuses , to distinguish them form product-oriented 'content' syllabuses (White 1988:45) .

The process syllabus is essentially 'retrospective' - no attempt is made to order or even to pre-specify language content in any way : the emphasis is placed instead on procedures for negotiating the style , process and content of lessons between teacher and learners (Breen 1984) .

Similarly with Prabhu's procedural syllabus (1987) , there is no specification of content as such - either in linguistic or in semantic terms - but only a loosely ordered list of tasks .

The implication seems to be that there is an intrinsic dichotomy between process syllabuses , which by definition emphasise the connection between how language is learned and how it can be taught , and product syllabuses , which are not concerned with how language is learned , and which have only a superficial justification in terms of learning theory .

### 1.3.3 Process and product : dichotomy or continuum ?

I would like to suggest that the approach to syllabus design presented here constitutes a mid-way point between stereotypic content syllabuses , and process syllabuses . This implies that process and product are infact two end points on a

continuum , emphasizing what language is learned at one end , and how language is learned at the other .

> **The approach suggested here does not deal primarily with items of target language , though it is still a content syllabus in the sense of containing lexical and grammatical components . Conversely , it does not deal exclusively with processes of language learning , and yet it is a process syllabus in so far as it deals with the process of discourse creation rather than with abstracted and isolated components of discourse.**

I am not suggesting that it is , strictly speaking , a syllabus which is based on a **semantic organizing principle** . Decisions about the ordering and co-occurring of lexical and contextual specifications are not made in terms of abstracted semantic categories , but by reference to grammar and with careful regard to potential syntheses between grammar , lexis and context . In short , **there is no single component which acts as the backbone of the syllabus ; the organizing principle is multiple , so that the emphasis is on potential combinations of grammar with lexis in contexts (actualized at the classroom level) , rather than on actual integration between one component and another** . Thus there is no grammatical organizing principle in the conventional sense , because the grammar checklist remains **covert**, being neither tightly sequenced nor fully integrated with the other components . In this way the grammar does not constrain the distribution or the exploitation of other components in the syllabus .

According to Widdowson , what is missing with the notional/functional syllabus is "an appeal to cognition , to the language processing ability of the learner" (1979:249) . He goes on :

> There is no demonstration (in Notional Syllabuses) of the *relationship* between form and function , of the meaning potential in the language forms which are presented . And so there is no attempt to develop an awareness of how this potential is realized by interpretative procedures .... the focus of the notional syllabus is still on the accumulation of language items rather than on the development of strategies for dealing with language in use.
>
> (ibid.)

As long as the language content of syllabuses is defined in terms of discrete items which act in unison through being tied to a single organizing principle , I do not see any way in which this kind of meaning potential can be catered for . The difficulty , perhaps , is that while agreeing that syllabuses should be methodological supports , designers continue to 'over-structure' them : *this grammatical form with this lexis realizing this meaning at this point in the programme* (cf. Crombie 1985b/Yalden 1983/Yalden 1987) . As an alternative approach, I argue for a reduction in this kind of structural interdependence between syllabus components . By replacing integration with co-occurrence and co-reference , and by replacing the grammatical backbone with a grammar checklist , I argue that the process of realizing the meaning potential in language is accommodated more easily than with the structural or the notional/functional syllabus .

In figure 5 I summarize this discussion of the process/product continuum , locating the approach outlined in this chapter in relation to product syllabuses on the one hand , and process syllabuses on the other :

| **PRODUCT SYLLABUSES** (structural , N/F) | **SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK** | **METHOD SYLLABUSES** (process/procedural) |
|---|---|---|
| **product**----------*----------*----------*---**process** | | |
| target language conceived as the product of pre-specification | target language conceived as the product of guided learner choice | target language is the product of learner choice |
| deals with the component parts of discourse as static but integrated items | accommodates components of discourse together with procedures for its creation | focus on conditions for the creation of discourse |
| tight and pre-specified correlation between form and meaning/context | allows for meaning potential through co-reference and co-occurrence | 'exclusive' focus of meaning : the learning of form is unconscious (Prabhu) |

Fig. 5

## 2. NOTIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

### 2.1 *Product syllabuses* : the problem of structural disorganization

During the 1970's and the early 1980's , there was considerable discussion of how to resolve the conflict between a product syllabus with a single organizing principle on the one hand , and the desire to accommodate both notionally and functionally coherent target language on the other . The argument went as follows : if we take functions as our organizing principle , then we are faced with the difficulty of retaining structural coherence in the notional components ; but if the syllabus has a grammatical organizing principle , then we are faced with the problem of accommodating functional exponents which resist explicit structural grading . In the latter case , according to Johnson , "it is difficult to impose any kind of structural grading" (1982:92) . Brumfit put the case in stronger terms:

> Unless we can produce a relatively finite set of rules for functioning within a given language , and demonstrate that such rules are not largely available to learners through their knowledge of how to operate in their mother tongues , there is little argument for building up a syllabus of functions . A syllabus which consists of unrelatable because unsystematizable items can be no more than a checklist .
>
> (1984b: 93)

Others have taken the line that since functional exponents are too important to be left to chance in the way suggested by Brumfit , we should dispense with structural grading and replace it with a functionally organized syllabus . Nattinger (1980) argues for what he calls a 'lexical phrase grammar', supported by a syllabus which is organized around lexicalized phrases , and in which there is no evident place for structural criteria of any kind :

> since patterned phrases are more functionally than structurally defined, so also should be the syllabus . Thus we would take the desired communicative ability as a starting point , for what people want to do with language is more important than mastery of that language as an unapplied system ....the items we select to teach would not be chosen on the basis of grammar but on the basis of their usefulness and relevance to the learners' purpose in learning .
>
> (1980:342)

The difficulty with all these arguments is that they presuppose a rigid dichotomy between grammar (the systematic operation of productive rules) and lexis (the

unanalysed occurrence of lexicalized units) : we have to choose , it seems , between one or the other . But as I have already argued , neither of these perspectives adequately captures the nature of language as a construct whose 'systematicity' and 'generativity' is necessarily conditioned by the interdependence between grammar , lexis and context . What we have , in effect , is degrees of analysability , and most language forms are neither completely accessible to rule making nor completely impervious to it .

I do not wish to suggest that applied linguists have been unaware of this perspective . The problem has been that a syllabus based on a single organizing principle cannot by its very nature accommodate this concept of continuum : a single organizing principle inevitably leads to the highlighting of one component at the direct expense of another (cf. discussion in chapter two:section 5) .

**2.2 *Grammar as process* : accommodating the grammar/lexis continuum**

However , the organizing principle of the model suggested here is essentially multiple : both notional and functional language is subject to the same systematized relationship between lexis and context in relation to grammar . It is not a question of constraining one component to fall in line behind another . Instead , the variable balance between grammatical and lexical material - between one degree of analysability and another - is accounted for by virtue of the separation between grammar and lexis within the syllabus organization . Those features of the language which are most open to generalization through rule are entered into the grammar checklist and are targeted through carefully chosen lexical and contextual specification . Conversely , those features of the language (including formulaic holophrases) which are the least productive , the least open to generative reassembly , are entered in the lexical component and are thereby treated as extended lexical items .

But this does not mean that functions occur in the lexical component and notions in the grammar checklist . What actually happens is that formulaic units are gradually broken down , so that having been first specified as single units in the lexical

component , they are subsequently segmented and their most grammatically salient parts re-allocated to the grammar checklist . Thus , for example , the request form *could you help me ?* , initially entered as a single unit , is later divided up so that the grammaticizing stem (*could you*) is entered in the grammar checklist . In this way the learner is guided (through careful contextual specification) towards perceiving the need to specify a clear and on record request through grammaticizing with the *could you* stem in reference to context . Furthermore , even where lexicalized units are entered as undifferentiated wholes in the lexical component , this does not mean that they are simply 'given' to the learner as part of a matrix of predetermined target language . The whole purpose of the lexical component is to provide an indication of how certain lexical items (whether individual items or larger units) can be loosely associated by the materials writer so that it is the learner who formulated their final assimilation through reference to context .

But it is not only with functional language that different degrees of analysability are accounted for through the grammar/lexis distinction in the syllabus . The same process can be adopted with notional/ideational language . For example , the fixed participle inflection on the passive form (cf. chapter 4 :section 3.5.2) might first be entered as an unanalysed in the lexical component ; subsequently it may be transferred to the grammar checklist , in which case the learner is called upon to further invest in the meaning potential of the passive form , by grammaticizing with the participle inflection in relation to a guiding contextual specification . Once again , then , the syllabus organization specifically supports an approach whereby the learner progressively breaks down language units and increasingly invests in the meaning potential of grammar in relation to lexis and context .

What I have attempted to demonstrate through this brief argument is that , both with functions and with notions , the syllabus explicitly allows for the learner's investment in the meaning potential of language form , to a greater or lesser degree depending on the choice of lexical or grammatical specification . The crucial point here is that , since there is no determining grammatical organization , there is no sense in which potential target language is

'disorganized' . With the single organizing principle the (artificially enhanced) difference between notions and functions is unavoidably problematic . But with this 'grammar-as-process' model , it is not these distinctions which are central , but rather the similarities between them , since in both cases it is the grammar/lexis/context relationship underlying language generativity which informs the organizational framework .

## 3. THE GRAMMAR CHECKLIST

### 3.1 Overview

One of the main reasons why the syllabus has sufficient flexibility to support a methodological emphasis on language as meaning potential is that grammar remains a checklist specification . But an undifferentiated checklist may well lack the kind of focus which is required for a methodology which facilitates degrees of grammatical focus . In other words , the more the teacher wishes to develop (grammatical) focusing and semi-focusing activities , the more she may require a syllabus in which such grammatical focus is anticipated and built in to the system. It is with this in mind that I suggest , in this section , an approach whereby certain 'targeted' grammatical forms can be highlighted and marked for their potential convergence with specific contextual and lexical specifications .

### 3.2 Horizontal and vertical checklists

I argued in chapter six that there are many forms of grammaticization which are pervasive , whose function is to code the most common features of context , and which are therefore likely to recur again and again without the need for specific focusing tasks . In contrast , other forms of grammaticization code very specific meanings , resist easy contextualization and are particular to a relatively small number of structures : conditional forms , relative clause structure , and so on .

Given this kind of distinction , there is a strong case for making a parallel distinction between two kinds of grammar checklist . The first I refer to as the **vertical checklist** . The vertical checklist includes common and pervasive

grammatical forms which are listed vertically - that is , without any kind of one-to-one co-reference with lexical or contextual specifications . They are forms which are likely to occur so often that detailed co-referencing would be uneconomical and counter productive . Thus the vertical checklist comprises a single , unsequenced list of grammatical forms which refer to a very large number of sequenced lexico-contextual specifications .

There will be many opportunities for these forms to get 'firmed up': each and every time learners work through a narrative or descriptive task , they may grammaticize through tense , word order , suffixes , affixes , and so on . So for a large number of structures , there need not - indeed , there should not - be a prescribed , linear sequence .

The second kind of grammar checklist , consisting of grammatical forms which code more complex meanings resisting easy contextualization , is a **horizontal checklist.** The horizontal checklist refers to those features of the grammar for which specific focusing and semi-focusing tasks are designed , and is located alongside a single unit ; in this way the teacher/materials writer can see at a glance that certain structures have been targeted for specific attention at or by certain points in the programme .

Let us say , for example , that the syllabus is divided up so that each series of four lexico-contextual specifications constitutes a **unit** of work lasting approximately 12 hours , and that we are looking in figure 6 at the overall framework for an entire intermediate course which lasts 72 hours , so that there are six units in the course . In these circumstances , there might be a single vertical checklist whose reference spans the entire course . In figure 6 I have highlighted just one of the units involved , summarizing the main semantic focus of each , and indicating a horizontal checklist which co-refers specifically to these two units :

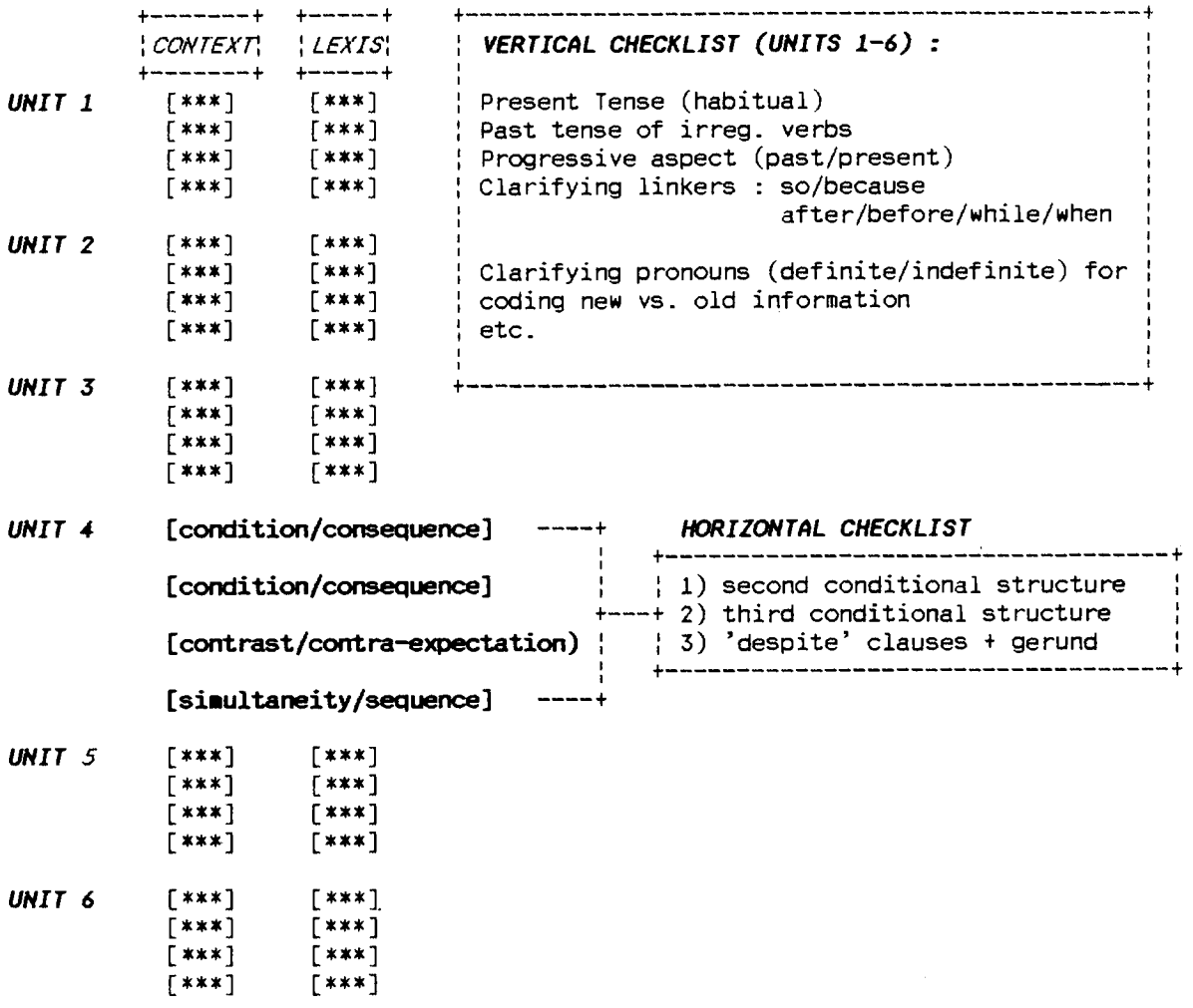



Fig. 6

### 3.3 The grammar checklist : varying the control

Ofcourse the situation is not likely to be quite as neat and tidy as figure six implies . The teacher may well find , for example , that learners are working toward areas of grammaticization which were unforeseen by the syllabus designer . Unlike product syllabus designs , this grammar-as-process model is not intended to inhibit such developments , since it represents a variable balance between organized pre-specification and the variable learning routes taken by individual learners .

In chapter six I suggested that the teacher/materials writer can guide the learner towards particular areas of grammaticization , and that this can be done more or

less explicitly , from 'unguided' through to 'guided' activities . There will , after all , be many circumstances in which the teacher and/or the learners require that particular structures are 'covered' within a certain period of time , perhaps in relation to examination requirements . In such circumstances , the teacher is able to 'step up' the amount of guidance , leaning more towards guided and semi-guided activities , but without having to fall back on the conventional 'presentation' of target language . Thus the methodology allows considerable flexibility in responding to the varying demands of different situations .

This kind of flexibility can be accommodated not only within the methodology , but also at the syllabus level . By altering the distribution of grammatical specification between the vertical checklist (less control) and the horizontal checklist (more control) , the syllabus designer can make the framework more or less 'process-oriented' ; a syllabus where the horizontal grammar checklist is given greater prominence will be more appropriate in situations where specific items of target language are required at regular , pre-specified intervals . Alternatively , if the vertical checklist is made more prominent and the horizontal checklist is de-emphasized , then the syllabus will be more process-oriented .

In many circumstances a 'fully process' syllabus - along the lines of the Candlin/Breen model (Breen 1984) or Prabhu's Procedural syllabus (1987) - may be considered excessively open-ended . As Brumfit has pointed out , the chief justification for a product syllabus is that it ensures "there are some controls on the activity that takes place in the classroom" (1984b:117) . I would argue that in order to provide this kind of security while at the same time facilitating the exploitation of language as meaning potential , we need to limit the degree of specificity in the syllabus design . This is the main justification for having grammar as a checklist rather than as the controlling and dominant component . Within this perspective , it is the vertical checklist which is most crucial , because it is chiefly through the vertical checklist that grammaticization is allowed to develop 'naturally' through learner choice .

### 3.4 Contextual distance and grammaticization : an approach to sequencing

I have suggested that the problems of tight integration between one component and another , problems which are characteristic of product syllabus designs , do not present any great difficulties with the grammar-as-process model . The reason for this is simple : it is the learner , not the syllabus designer , who integrates grammar with lexis . The job of the syllabus designer is to facilitate this integration by providing principled co-occurrences and co-references between all three components - contextual , lexical and grammatical .

As for sequencing , it is useful to distinguish between functional language and notional language . With functions and functional exponents , I have already suggested (in 2.2) a progression from lexical entry (where exponents are listed as unanalysed chunks) to grammatical entry (where they are segmented according to their syntactic saliency) . In more general terms , I see no good reason for sequencing from contextual (implicatures) through to conceptual (coding interpersonal meaning) . Rather , it remains a matter of introducing functions on the basis of their "usefulness and relevance to the learners' purpose in learning" (Nattinger 1980:342) .

With notions the situation is rather different . It seems to me that the congruence between notion and forms of grammaticization is sufficiently salient for the syllabus designer to exploit it as a guide to the sequencing of notional/ideational concepts in the contextual component . **What I propose here is a development from contextual to conceptual** . For example , the syllabus designer could begin with chronological **sequence** (on the basis of knowledge of the world schemata , and subsequently move into **non chronological sequence** . Chronological sequence is , by definition , iconic with the actual patterning of events in the ideational context. With non chronological sequence , the language user is at one step removed from this actuality , deliberately rearranging and reformulating in order to express her own conceptualization . Thus *Bill sat down and then he had a drink* is contextual , iconically faithful to the sequence of events as they occurred ; *before having a drink , Bill sat down* (non chronological) is more conceptual .

In order to realize this kind of sequencing in a principled fashion , ofcourse , the syllabus designer needs to provide appropriate co-references between the contextual component and the grammar checklist ; the more specific the targeted forms of grammaticization , the more 'directing' should be the lexical and contextual specification . Thus I am not arguing for a notional classification and sequence in the abstract , but for careful co-referencing between lexis/context on the one hand , and the grammar checklist on the other . In this way , objections to notional organization *per se* are obviated (cf. Brumfit 1981:91/2) .

More generally , **a sequence from contextual to conceptual supports a gradual focussing on more complex syntax** . For example , the early exploitation of **general cause/effect** relations - which can be expressed through the simple juxtaposition of propositions - might develop into specific focus on the **means/purpose** and the **means/result** relation , both of which require the use of conceptual forms for their grammatical clarification (cf. chapter 3 : section 4) . Similarly , an early concentration on **general contrast relations** might give way to the exploitation of more conceptual **contra-expectation** relationships , where the latter involve the use of more complex conceptual forms (cf. chapter 4 : sections 3.4.3/3.5.4) .
In all these cases the targeting of more complex semantic relationships in the contextual component might well be paralleled by greater use of the horizontal grammar checklist , on the assumption that more complex/specific inter-propositional relations often tend to correlate with a more complex (and often more conceptual) forms of grammaticization .

Thus a sequencing from contextual through to conceptual can be justified not only because it realizes a gradual progression towards more complex grammatical forms , but also because it is paralleled by increasing semantic complexity . Recent studies in second language acquisition tend to add weight to the belief that conceptual forms - and particularly the use of infinitive and gerund forms - are properly mastered only after the acquisition of language requiring less complex forms of grammaticization (cf. Sato 1988) .

## 4. THE LEXICAL AND CONTEXTUAL COMPONENTS : *GIST SPECIFICATIONS*

### 4.1 Introduction

In mainstream pedagogy , syllabus designers have tended to treat lexis as a subsidiary component , dependent on and subsumed by grammar . The choice of which lexical items to select and decisions about how they should be organized are matters which , broadly speaking , are likely to be determined through the handling of other components in the syllabus :

> .... lexical choices , if they are to be principled , will arise out of the other [syllabus] categories . Morphological , syntactic and notional criteria , as well as situational , functional and content criteria , will always have a major effect on selection of lexis ....Consequently , wheras checklists of items in all the other analyses will have value in defining the appropriate range of particular sets of materials and syllabus specifications , the lexicon can be regarded as potentially always present , to be called upon , as a dictionary is by adults , whenever there is a need in terms of one of the other items .
>
> (Brumfit 1984b:97/8)

I have already suggested that this view - with the implication that lexical ties (with other components) necessarily imply lexical subservience (on other components) - is not the only possible perspective on the relationship between lexis and other parts of the syllabus .

More generally , it is precisely this kind of rigorous subservience of one syllabus component to another which is symptomatic of a product syllabus dealing with pre-defined and tightly integrated target language . In section 2 I argued that grammar in the form of a checklist is one way in which this sort of tight integration can be reduced . But in order to properly represent the process element in the methodology , it is also necessary to provide lexical and contextual specifications which are deliberately partial , in the sense that they do not specify all aspects of fully integrated target language : they are , that is , **gist specifications** which refer only to those features of lexis and context which are sufficient to give the learner a general semantic direction . The primary function of these components is to facilitate the classroom exploitation of meaning potential (rather than to define component parts of a prefabricated meaning) . What is required , therefore , is just sufficient information to help set up tasks which

emphasize the role of learner choice , but not so much that the learner reacts to choices made , on her behalf , by the syllabus designer .

### 4.2.1 Lexical and contextual specification : interpersonal meaning

In chapter six (section 3.2.4) I outlined an Elementary level task based on the context of buying/selling goods . I argued that this kind of simple , routinized exchange can be **lexically cued** through providing learners with a few lexical items - *cheese sandwich/please/thankyou* etc. . Alternatively , a similar activity can be **contextually cued** through presenting learners with (for example) pictures of shops and eliciting the kind of language typical of buying/selling exchanges .

This kind of activity may be represented in the syllabus in the following way :

| (INTERPERSONAL) CONTEXT | LEXIS |
|---|---|
| **buying/selling goods**<br>*interpersonal schema:* buyer/seller in shop<br>**suasion** | *20-50-75-pence*<br>*cheese/tomato*<br>*sandwich*<br>*please - thanks* |

Fig. 7

The specification in both components is **partial** , in the sense that there are component parts of a 'fully worked out' exchange which are left unspecified . The items in the lexical component are not intended to provide a complete specification of a 'target dialogue' . Thus the teacher/materials designer is explicitly given 'space' to introduce additional , unfamiliar lexical items which might call for further procedural work on the part of the learners . Furthermore , there is no mention of the precise **register** adopted by each interlocutor - polite , familiar etc. This omission is deliberate , since this signalling of role relations , together with its grammaticized expression through the selection of appropriate stems ( eg. *could I have .... ?*) , is left open to the learners . So both the contextual and the lexical component consist not of a complete definition of target specifications , but of what we might call **gist specifications** : that is, just sufficient information to motivate the learners toward making guided choices .

Ofcourse , the kind of language which learners finally settle on may be indistinguishable from coursebook target language . The crucial point , though , is that with the approach suggested here , it is the learners themselves who are directly involved in the process of formulating the language used . This is in contrast to the more traditional approach to the teaching of suasion and of request forms , where lexis and grammar tend to be presented as preformulated units in association with a context in which the role relationship between interlocutors has already been established . This is the approach taken in the following example (from Swan and Walter 1984:54) :

**4** **Work in pairs: ask to see things, and answer.**

**6** **Work in pairs: ask to see things again, and answer. Examples:**

*'Could I see that box, please?'*
*'This one?'*
*'No, the one behind the teapot.'*

*'Could you show me those glasses, please?'*
*'These?'*
*'No, the red ones.'*

**4.2.2 Lexical and contextual specification : valency & ideational meaning**

The kind of gist specification I outlined above applies equally to the ideational context . At Elementary levels , individual verbs can be finely graded according to the number of arguments which they infer . For example , a verb like SEE has two arguments (agent and goal: John saw Mary) while a verb such as OFFER has three (agent , object and goal: Mary offered John a chocolate) . I argued in chapter one that these **case relations** between a verb and its semantic arguments lie on the cusp between grammar and lexis , so that the choice of lexical item as verb has clear reflexes in the grammar : SEE leads to a [subject - verb - direct object] frame , while the choice of OFFER leads to a [subject - verb - direct object - indirect object] frame . There is a clear sense in which verbs with fewer arguments are less complex than verbs with more arguments , and L2 interlanguage development is

characterized by a development from the former to the latter (Rutherford 1987:48) .

What we have here is a congruence between **syntactic valency** (such as the selection of direct and indirect objects on the basis of the choice of verb) and **semantic valency** (the different case roles which the choice of verb implies) . There are clear pedagogic applications here , since by specifying particular lexical items as verbs , certain syntactic consequences can be predicted on a principled basis (for an extended discussion here , see Lachlan Mackenzie 1988) . Given that the higher the valency , the more complex and the more difficult to acquire , it makes sense as a general principle for the syllabus designer to **gradually introduce verbs with higher valencies** , provided this kind of lexical specification does not lead to incongruous co-occurrences with the contextual component . In other words , it makes little sense to begin by introducing only verbs with , say , a syntactic valency of 2 where this might well lead to incongruous juxtapositions in terms of contextual/situational coherence .

Figure 8 indicates the kind of lexical and contextual specification which might occur early on in an Elementary syllabus , where the emphasis is on verbs of low syntactic valency and the *agent/process/objective* frame :

| **CONTEXTUAL COMPONENT** | **LEXICAL COMPONENT** |
|---|---|
| Intra-propositional : | ***wake up - 10.00*** |
| **agent - process - objective** | ***eat - breakfast/lunch*** |
| Inter-propositional : | ***drive - car - office*** |
| **chronological sequence** | ***write - report*** |
| Topic : **daily routines** | etc. |

Fig. 8 : *Contextual & lexical specification : Elementary level*

Once again these are gist specifications : the focus is on contextual and lexical parameters which are sufficiently specific to guide the learner's choice within the general context of agent/process/objective relations . However , there is no prespecified constraint in terms of the temporal context , and the lexical specification - being non prescriptive - explicitly allows for the development of a variety of meanings depending on learner choice . It is with this kind of

specification that the horizontal grammar checklist - referring to those features of context which most commonly require further focussing - comes into its own . Tense (marking a temporal context) , basic word order , time and place prepositions may all be required in order to clarify the learner's meaning .

At Intermediate levels , there will be less need to continue to specify this kind of basic intra propositional relationship , but specification of inter-propositional relations can be developed so that more complex meanings are targeted , as I argued in section two . For example , one section of the syllabus might be concerned with the notion of intention , and the coding of cause/effect relationships involving **participant determinacy** : means/purpose , means/result and so on . Instead of providing a detailed lexical specification - which would be unwieldy and constraining - the syllabus simply provides a gist specification ie. **example lexical associations** which may help the materials designer in the construction of lexically cued tasks :

| **CONTEXTUAL COMPONENT** | **LEXICAL COMPONENT** |
|---|---|
| Participant determinacy :<br>**means/purpose relation**<br>Topic : ***planning/preparing for a holiday*** | Example schema :<br>***Bill - want - visit - Italy***<br>***go - travel agent***<br>***get - information***<br>***BUT - office - closed*** |

Fig. 9 *Contextual & lexical specification : Intermediate level*

This kind of specification is not intended to be prescriptive , and anyway it is far too brief to constitute the basis for the design of actual tasks . It simply gives an indication of the kind of schematic lexical association which could be developed in order to lexically cue expressions of participant determinacy (eg. *he wanted to visit Italy*) and the means/purpose relation (eg. *he went to the travel agent's to get some information , but the office was closed*) . As I argued in section 2 , the specification of more specific and more complex binary values is likely to correlate with more specific (and more complex) forms of grammaticization . Consequently the kind of specification illustrated in figure 9 may well co-refer to a horizontal grammar checklist which includes infinitive and complement clause structures coding expressions of participant determinacy .

## 4.3 THE MENTAL LEXICON AND LEXICAL SPECIFICATION

So far I have discussed the roles of the lexical component and the grammar checklist using examples which support the traditional distinction between 'content lexical items' (entered into the lexical component) and 'grammar words' (entered into the grammar checklist) . But how should lexicalized holophrases be dealt with in such a syllabus ?

In chapter one I discussed how studies in first language acquisition (eg. Peters 1983) and second language acquisition (eg. Vihman 1982) suggest that learners begin by memorizing fixed phrases as multi-word chunks associated with specific contexts of use , and that atleast some of these formulaic units are subsequently broken down and stored through syntactic parsing . Widdowson (1990) argues that with this in mind , we should consider :

> presenting language as lexical units , both as single words and **as complex packages** , and then creating contexts which constrain the gradual elaboration of the first , **the gradual analysis of the second** .
>
> (1990:96 My highlighting)

This approach to 'gradual analysis' is not only consistent with current theories of language learning , but is also facilitated in a syllabus which makes a structured distinction between grammar , lexis and context : **formulaic units are first encountered in the lexical component (where they are entered as lexicalized chunks) and those which are usefully segmented are subsequently entered in the horizontal grammar checklist** . In this way lexical entries are given to the learner as unanalysed units and as part of the process of lexical cueing , and these units later re-appear in the grammar checklist as segmented and potentially analysed structure , targeted as the outcome of directed work with context and lexis .

For example , the syllabus designer might begin by entering certain stem/predicate forms (such as *could you/would you help me ?*) as holophrases in the lexical component . In this case , those features of the interpersonal context having to do with register and the grammatical coding of interlocutor dependence (through the

*could you* stem) are all part of the contextual information which is given to the learner . This kind of specification might look as follows :

| CONTEXTUAL COMPONENT | LEXICAL COMPONENT |
|---|---|
| **Interpersonal/functional**<br><br>**Suasion**<br>Setting : **service encounters**<br>eg. bank/post office | ***[Could I help you ?]***<br>***[Could you help me ?]***<br>cash - cheque<br>buy - stamp<br>etc. |

Fig. 10 : *Lexical entry of formulaic units at early Elementary level*

At a slightly later stage , these forms are segmented so that stem and predicate are separated out for generative reassembly through reference to context . That is, the stem (whose function is to place the predicated action on record through a coded appeal to the hearer's deference , cf. chapter 5) is entered into the horizontal grammar checklist ; the predicate , which is lexically variable in response to relevant features of the particular context , remains in the lexical component . In this case the syllabus designer specifies those features of context which will guide the learner toward perceiving the need for attaching these stems to appropriate predicates in order to make her meaning clear :

| CONTEXTUAL COMPONENT | LEXICAL COMPONENT | *HORIZONTAL CHECKLIST* |
|---|---|---|
| **Interpersonal :**<br>**Suasion**<br>Topic : asking for a loan<br>**Roles :**<br>**formal (friend/friend)**<br>**Vs. informal (customer/bank manager)** | ***I - borrow - £20/30/50***<br>***You - lend - £20/30/50***<br>etc. | ***Could you/I*** |

Fig. 11 : *Segmentation of formulaic unit at late Elementary level*

The additional specification of roles in the contextual component , together with its co-reference to the grammar checklist , tells the materials writer that at this point the learner needs to be guided to the coding of interlocutor dependence ; on this basis , a **context gap task** may be developed in which learners need to distinguish between the expression of formal (interlocutor dependent) and informal suasion .

Ofcourse the range of formulaic units is far too vast for the syllabus to accommodate more than a few , particularly salient and useful examples . The point, though , is that by making a principled distinction between lexical and grammatical entry in this way , the syllabus designer is able to develop a framework which is consistent with the methodological emphasis on learner choice and learner investment .

## 5. SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In this final chapter I have proposed a syllabus design which stands mid-way between product and process frameworks , retaining some of the advantages of each . As a product syllabus , it does not lose sight of the need to maintain some control over classroom activity , so that it is possible to develop programmes with explicit objectives which can be scrutinized , and which can be keyed in to the requirements of educational authorities . In terms of process , the syllabus deals not with items of target language pre-specified for learner accumulation , but with components of discourse only partially assembled by the syllabus designer . In this way , the organization of the syllabus can reflect a view of language as meaning potential , congruent with the methodological emphasis on learner choice and learner grammaticization .

Central both to the methodology and to the syllabus design is a conception of the processes underlying language generativity and language learning . Grammar , lexis and context are separated out so that the ontogenetic development of grammar (Givon) can be directly exploited .

*APPENDIX A*

## A SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF STATIVE VERBS

**STATIVE VERBS**
***states not brought into existence through deliberate action***

| **receiving sensory input** | **emotive states** | **innate states of affairs** | **unaffecting intellectual states** | **unintended effects** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| hear | regret | resemble | believe | impress |
| see | feel | possess | understand | please |
| | hope | look | expect | amaze |
| | desire | have | mean | appall |
| | want | lack | know | horrify |
| | like | | think | stun |
| | enjoy | | realize | stagger |
| | hate | | recognize | |
| | resent | | remember | |

A similar but more detailed categorization can be found in Quirk et al. 1985:198-205 .

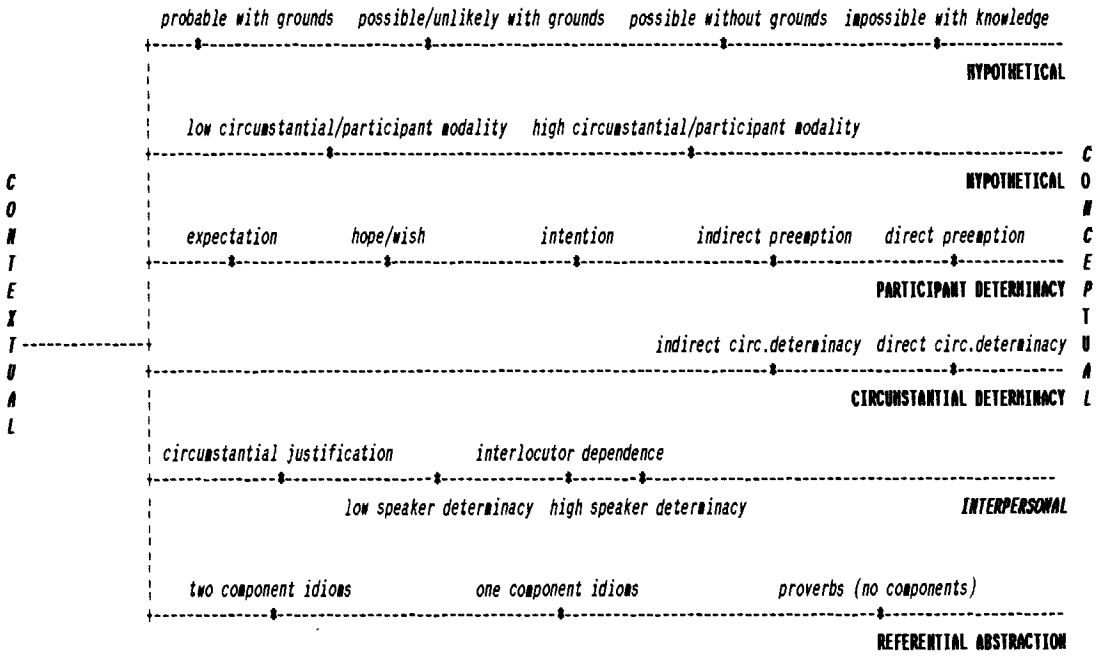
## *APPENDIX B*

### A CATEGORIZATION OF IDIOMS/PROVERBS IN TERMS OF CONTEXTUAL CONSTITUENCY

| no contextual components (proverbs) | one contextual component (idioms) | two contextual components (idioms) |
|---|---|---|
| Absence makes the heart grow fonder | Be born under a lucky star | Break a record |
| All good things come to an end | Be full of oneself | Break the news |
| All that glitters is not gold | Be worth its weight in gold | Break someone's heart |
| Beggars can't be choosers | Be the making of someone | Break a promise |
| Better the devil you know | Be at death's door | Break the law |
| Do as you would be done by | Be at wits end | Break a rule |
| Fools rush in where angels fear to tread | Be in the know | Cast a new light on |
| It never rains but it pours | Be in a rut | Clear the air |
| Money talks | Blow one's trumpet | Clear the decks |
| Necessity is the mother of invention | Blow the gaff | Clear the table |
| No news is good news | Blow one's top | Close a deal |
| The early bird catches the worm | Cast an eye over | Cook the books |
| Where there's a will there's a way | Catch fire | Drive a hard bargain |
| | Come down to earth | Drive someone mad |
| | Come into force | Gain the upper hand |
| | Come into play | Give the game away |
| | Come to one's senses | Go to great expense |
| | Come to pass | Have other fish to fry |
| | Do someone down | Hold the fort |
| | Do the honours | Keep the wolf away from the door |
| | Do the trick | Play A off against B |
| | Eat humble pie | Put a case |
| | Eat one's heart out | Put someone in the picture |
| | Fall in love | Set the ball rolling |
| | Follow suit | Set someone's mind at rest |
| | Get someone's back up | Set the scene |
| | Get on someone's nerves | Spin a yarn |
| | Get up someone's nose | Spill the beans |
| | Get the sack | Take the bull (firmly) by the horns |
| | Get wind of | Turn someone's head |
| | Give the slip | Turn the tables |
| | Give up the ghost | Waste time |
| | Give the cold shoulder | Weave a web of lies |
| | Go to the wall | Pop the question |
| | Hang fire | Pull someone's leg |
| | Have a hand in | Put all eggs in one basket (prov.) |
| | Have one's head in the clouds | Reach a pretty pass |
| | Kick the bucket | |
| | Land on one's feet | |
| | Lose one's head | |
| | Lose one's heart | |
| | Make a clean breast | |
| | Make a scene | |
| | Pull a fast one | |
| | Put one's foot down | |
| | Read between the lines | |
| | Ring a bell | |
| | Sit on pins and needles | |
| | Shit bricks | |
| | Shoot the bull | |
| | Take the piss | |

***APPENDIX C***

**CONTINUUM OF CONTEXTUAL DISTANCE : OVERVIEW**




When all the components and sub-components of conceptual meaning are arranged alongside each other in this way , it becomes clear that contextual distance can be appraised in one of two ways . It can be appraised horizontally , so that the focus is on increasing degrees of conceptualization within each individual string . Or it can be appraised vertically , in which case we focus more on the correspondences between the development of one string (such as participant modality) and another (such as participant determinacy) .

Where the latter perspective is adopted , it is worth noting that the model is not completely systematic . I have presented it so that the semantic correspondences between one string and another cross-refer in a coherent and logical way . Thus , it seems to me , there is a logical parallel between interlocutor dependence (interpersonal) and intention (speaker determinacy) , and between low circumstantial modality (hypothetical) and circumstantial justification (interpersonal) . But in order to emphasize this coherence , I have had to allow correspondences in terms of conceptual lexico-grammar to become slightly disorganized .

We could re-formulate the model so that the 'organizing principle' (so to speak) is primarily linguistic rather than semantic . In this case we would have to line up the component parts of , say , participant determinacy somewhat differently : expectation , hope/wish , intention and preemption would all be located at the same point , but the 'low' and 'high' variables of each would be separated out , with the latter - representing greater linguistic restriction - being further along the continuum than the former .

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