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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

A DISSERTATION

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DAVID H. DOBKINS

Norman, Oklahoma

1979

INITIAL THERAPY SESSIONS AS NEGOTIATED REALITY:

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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INITIAL THERAPY SESSIONS AS NEGOTIATED REALITY: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

CHAPTER I

PROCESS AS PERCEIVED ORDER

The study presented in this work constitutes the preliminary testing and validation of an approach to the analysis of human communicative interaction.

The work begins with the argument that traditional research methods inadequately cope with the process nature of communication. The study proceeds to develop an argument that the analysis of human interaction should proceed inductively using a descriptive base to provide a basic understanding of what is taking place within the interaction between individuals. It is further argued that the writings of ethnomethodologists such as Garfinkel, Cicourel and Wieder offer a conceptual approach to data analysis which is helpful in achieving this descriptive base.

The study then proceeds to suggest a possible analytic framework which is compatible with this rationale

and to demonstrate its utility by applying it to a body of data.

In recent years some communication scholars have argued that two contradictory notions of process are implied by the conceptual models of communication which are postulated by scholars and by the research methods which are used to test such models. David Smith, for example, observes that while "most theoretical writings emphasize the dynamic nature of communication, in practice the bulk of research on influence through speech imposes a static view."[1] Research practices, according to Smith, have been based on what he called a Newtonian notion of process which assumed deterministic relationships between variables which are linearly linked in law-like manner. On the other hand, communication itself, says Smith, must be conceived of as a process in a different sense, which has been described by Alfred North Whitehead in this manner: "The how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that entity is, so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent. Its being is constituted by its becoming."[2] The implication of this contradiction is that we need to "re-examine our notions of the word process" and why our "theories differ from our studies."[3] Such an examination

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[1]David H. Smith, "Communication Research and the Idea of Progress," Speech Monographs 39 (August 1979):174.

[2]Ibid., p. 175. [3]Ibid., p. 174.

requires "not so much a search of dictionaries and lexicons as it does a review of our whole concept of science and the phenomena on which our inquiry is focused."[4]

More recently, O'Keefe, Delia and O'Keefe have argued from a similar point of view that current interaction research continues to advocate a "radical process metaphysic" which has proved "unrealizable in empirical research."[5] Because of the absence of any clearly articulated theory of interaction which directs research, O'Keefe, et al., assert that communication researchers have come to use interaction coding techniques and analytic methods which "embody a model of communication as discrete units of behavior linked on the basis of probability and contiguity."[6] Such methods focus on linear surface relations between "superficial act-categories" which do not recover the full complexity of the organizational pattern which constitutes communication.[7]

Such concern for a compatible conceptual and methodological approach to communication research is not

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Barbara J. O'Keefe, Jesse G. Delia and Daniel J. O'Keefe, "Son of Process: Theories of Change in Communication Research," unpublished manuscript, 1977. Quoted in Scott Jacobs, "The Practical Management of Conversational Meanings: Notes on the Dynamics of Social Understandings and Interactional Emergence," paper presented to the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Washington, D.C., December 1977.

[6]Ibid. [7]Ibid.

peculiar to the scholars mentioned thus far. A survey of communication journals published in the last seven years reveals a large number of works dealing with the problem of an appropriate conceptual and methodological paradigm for the investigation of communication. Stanley Deetz, for example, suggests a phenomenological approach which he says may make possible a "non-abstract, non-theoretical understanding of direct language experience."[8] In other works, Robert Sanders,[9] Leonard Hawes,[10] Barnett Pearce,[11] and Jesse Delia,[12] to name a few, address the same basic concern. Further, all of these articles have focused on process as the central concept for the development of an appropriate paradigm.

A line of criticism related to the conceptual-methodological contradiction suggested by Smith and the others has been advanced by a body of scholars who argue

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[8]Stanley Deetz, "Words Without Things: Toward a Social Phenomenology of Language," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (February 1973):40-51.

[9]Robert Sanders, "The Question of a Paradigm for the Study of Speech Using Behavior," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (February 1973):1-10.

[10]Leonard C. Hawes, "Alternative Theoretical Bases: Toward a Presuppositional Critique," Communication Quarterly 25 (Winter 1977):63-68.

[11]W. Barnett Pearce, "Metatheoretical Concerns in Communication," Communication Quarterly 25 (Winter 1977): 3-6.

[12]Jesse Delia, "Alternative Perspectives for the Study of Human Communication: Critique and Response," Communication Quarterly 25 (Winter 1977):46-62.

that current research methods tend to neglect the description of how messages are used for pragmatic purposes.[13] Instead the claim is that we have studied variables which are external to the act of communication itself. With the exception of some recent works by Hawes,[14] Cushman,[15] and a few others, we have little or no data, for example, dealing with the exercise of choice by communicators with regard to variables such as language use, thematic shift, or strategy within the overall context of the interaction. Dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of descriptive analysis is reflected in the increasing attention paid to a body of communication research which represents the combining of conventional forms of analysis and approaches which Dell Hymes has described as "jointly ethnographic and linguistic" or as ethnographies of speaking.[16] In these works. the focus is on language used in social context, as it varies with changes in the social environment. Thus communication is seen as a functional means to a social end.

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[13]Jacobs, "Notes," p. 5.

[14]Hawes, "Alternative Bases."

[15]Donald P. Cushman, "The Rules Perspective as a Theoretical Basis for the Study of Human Communication," Communication Quarterly 25 (Winter 1977):30-45.

[16]Dell Hymes, "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life," in Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication, ed. John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972), p. 39.

In summary, many scholars in the areas of language and communication have recognized that the way in which communication research is carried out is inconsistent with our concept of what communication is. The result of this inconsistency is that we produce research which bypasses the dynamic process nature of communication in favor of linearly arrayed probability models which represent process only as a time sequence.

Hawes suggests a possible direction for the resolution of this problem when he conceives of communication as a process which "functions to create and validate symbol systems which define social reality and regulate social action."[17] Communication is assumed by Hawes to be rule governed insofar as interactants may be seen to behave according to a set of constraints which are both appropriate to and products of the symbol system in use. He points out, however, that an investigator's "knowledge of rules alone is insufficient to explain, in a deterministic sense, human action in symbol systems."[18] He elaborates that:

> patterns and cycles of action being manifested within a specified rule-set must be described. The description of these patterns of action is undertaken inductively. That is to say, the action is observed, its function ascertained and the functional patterns of action finally inferred.[19]

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[17]Leonard C. Hawes, "Elements of a Model for Communication Process," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (February 1973):11-21.

[18]Ibid. [19]Ibid.

Hawes' admonition that we need to proceed inductively from a descriptive framework springs directly from Whitehead's notion of process, namely that the patterns and cycles of action put emphasis on the becoming of the entity as its being. We may infer, then, that before rules or rule systems may be generated, we must find an appropriate descriptive framework which allows for an accounting of the patterning of interaction processes. It is logical that a rule system be based on occurrences within the data to which it applies if that system is to offer any explanation of what goes on there. Before we can develop an adequate rule system we must have an accurate idea of what goes on within the phenomenon in question. Only after such descriptive work is completed and the units of analysis validated, may we begin going about the business of constructing rule systems which are meaningful.

Interaction As Achieved Order

A major thrust in social science known as ethnomethodology offers a conceptual and procedural approach to the problem described above. This approach entails Hawes' suggestion that we proceed inductively from a descriptive base. Aaron Cicourel, for example, calls attention to much the same problem in sociology that Smith pointed out in communication. Cicourel observes that typical sociological constructs are inadequate for the explanation of rules governing social structure and

interaction.[20] Constructs such as role and attitude are static in application, and thus not capable of coping with the variety and creativity which constitute the process of every social setting. In Cicourel's words:

> The dramaturgical metaphor of the stage is defective in explaining how actors are capable of imitation and innovation with little or no prior rehearsal, just as a child is capable of producing grammatically correct utterances that he has never heard and is capable of understanding utterances that have never been heard before. Terms like attitudes, values, need dispositions, drives and expectancies are inadequate because there is no explicit attempt to formulate basic rules the actors must learn to negotiate novel experiences, as well as be able to construct constancy in his environment.[21]

This perspective, as developed by Cicourel, as well as Garfinkel,[22] Wieder,[23] and others, depicts participants in social activity as being interactively involved in a communication process. That is, participants are involved in the development of explanations and interpretations which serve to make the events in their world understandable and predictable for them. The ethnomethodologist would focus on this process of explaining and interpreting as it represents the development of a coherent pattern within the system.

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[20]Aaron V. Cicourel, "Basic and Normative Rules in the Negotiation of Status and Role," in Recent Sociology, ed. Hans Dreitzel (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 28.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967).

[23]D. Lawrence Wieder, Language and Social Reality (The Hague: Mouton Press, 1974).

Wieder explains that, "within every social scene the participants are constantly engaged in explaining to each other what they had done in the past, what they are doing, and what they intend to do in the future."[24] This is to say that members of a social system are almost constantly engaged in describing the behavior of others and in explaining themselves, essentially through talk which manifests their conception of the governing constraints of the situation. The role of such talk according to Wieder is that:

> group members in producing their descriptions, simultaneously make observable and understandable the pattern of collective life and the individual activities which contribute to that pattern.
> . . . . . .
> Such descriptions are essential to human social life, for they give to that life its patterned-ness. The orderliness that humans detect in their own activities is an achieved orderliness through their own descriptive work.[25]

Put simply, this view conceives of man as constantly involved in the process of developing shared meanings or sets of parameters or in Imershein's words, "ethno-paradigms,"[26] which may be seen to represent social reality for those involved. In short, man socially develops his

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[24]D. Lawrence Wieder, "Ethnomethodology and Ethnosociology," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, April 1975, p. 3.

[25]Ibid., p. 5.

[26]Allen W. Imershein, "The Epistemological Bases of Social Order: Toward Ethnoparadigm Analysis," in Sociological Methodology 1977, Institute for Social Research, Florida State University, 1977, pp. 1-51.

own reality which is shared by those involved as participants in the social system and which serves as the standard to which appropriate behaviors are compared. Further, this process is constant and ongoing.

Wieder and the others focus much of their analysis on the larger or macro levels of social organization. However, the ethnomethodological approach is also valid at the micro-structural level of one-to-one interaction, since it is in fact this level of interaction which provides the basic data for the analysis of larger systems.

Ethnomethodologically, then, talk is conceived of as functioning to construct for interactants a set of parameters which operate for them for that interaction. Communication between any two individuals begins with a basic set of socially learned assumptions, and proceeds to the negotiation of new, expanded or refined assumptions or parameters.

Joan Emerson has demonstrated this well with her study of the creation and sustaining of definitions of reality in gynecological examinations.[27] This work describes how medical personnel, through their talk, create and sustain an alternative reality while performing in what would otherwise be an embarassing situation.

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[27]Joan Emerson, "Behavior in Private Places: Sustaining Reality in Gynecological Examinations," in Recent Sociology, Hans Peter Dreitzel, ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), pp. 77-101.

Though Emerson's study provides a striking example, such activity is not to be seen as a special case. Participants in common, every-day social interaction are involved in precisely this kind of interpersonal activity. Any interaction between two or more people is concerned with negotiating or arriving at a mutually understood set of parameters concerning participant relationships and the options for appropriate behavior within the situation. This, in fact, is the basic function of talk; apart from, but related to, its surface meaning, it is a tool in the exploration of socially created reality. Given this concept of interaction, the focus of any analysis of discourse is placed not on the form or the manifest content of individual utterances, but on their function as units of interaction in the ongoing activity of communication, and on the patterning of such functions as it reflects the structure and perceptual balance so gained.

An utterance, then, is seen to have at least two related but separate functional components: The first is evident at the level of manifest content or surface meaning. The second may be thought of as the utterance's symbolic function within the overall structure of the discourse, or that functional component which is a part of the negotiating process. Further, this latter component relates directly to the patterned or structured nature of the interaction since such pattern or structure is

accomplished through talk.

This last point will become more clear as we examine two terms which are central to the ethnomethodological account. At the same time they are seen as representing the two major components of the functional component of meaning. They are reflexivity and indexicality.

Reflexivity refers to an interactant's account through talk of the particular set of assumptions which are shared by himself and other interactants. This assumptive base provides the achieved pattern in talk, which makes it sensible or meaningful to participate. Garfinkel explains that the:

> recognizable sense, fact or methodic character, or impersonality, or objectivity of accounts are not independent of the socially organized occasions of their use. Their rational features consist of what members do with, what they make of, the accounts in the socially organized actual occasions of their use.[28]

Thus Wieder observes that talk as a social account is reflexive in that it is a "feature of the very scene it describes."[29] Leiter illustrates this reflexive quality of talk in his discussion of teacher interviews with students. He observes that the teacher is involved in "both deciding what is happening in the interview and simultaneously making it happen." This reflexive characteristic lies in the fact that the teacher "evaluates the information

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[28]Garfinkel, Studies, p. 11.

[29]Wieder, Language, p. 224.

she receives from the student while at the same time she produces that information through decisions to probe the student or by continuing on with the next part of the interview."[30] The teacher thus projects a plan or pattern into the interview and in so doing demonstrates a perception of meaning within context. As Leiter puts it,

> through her use of the elicitation practices, she decides what is happening as she makes it happen. In this manner, the elicitation practices provide continuous (reflexive) feedback, thus enabling her to sustain the sense of what's happening.[31]

It is important, then, that our research take into account the reflexive nature of human interaction, since an account of reflexivity is an account of the perceived or imposed pattern within what is taking place. If we observe, for example, an interactant's choice of conversational strategy with regard to any number of variables such as topic selection, terms of address or lexical selection, we may infer from the choices made something about that person's perceptions of the social situation at hand, and his or her relationship with other interactants. Such talk is reflexive in that by its presentation we may infer some of the negotiated pattern within

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[30]Kenneth C. W. Leiter, "Ad Hocing in the Schools: A Study of Placement Practices in the Kindergartens of Two Schools," in Language Use and School Performance, ed. Aaron V. Cicourel, K. H. Jennings, S. H. M. Jennings, K. C. W. Leiter, Robert MacKay, Hugh Mehan and David R. Roth (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1974), p. 31.

[31]Ibid.

the situation. Reflexivity represents a major aspect of the second functional component mentioned earlier in that the achieved organization of the situation and the interaction itself is a product of our reflexive involvement in the interaction.

Indexicality, simply put, refers to the context-bound nature of a communication event. Thus the meaning or interpretation of an utterance is taken from its situation within a given context. Garfinkel describes indexical expressions as:

> expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an auditor without his necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and the purposes of the user of the expressions, the circumstances of the utterance, the previous course of the conversation, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between the expressor or the auditor.[32] [Underlines mine.]

By considering the indexical nature of an utterance, then, a hearer is brought to considerations of the speaker's perceptions of the organized, negotiated, context-bound pattern of the interaction. This is true, as Garfinkel explains, because indexical expressions are ordered expressions in that they are the product of perceived order or pattern within a situation. Indexical expressions consist of the characteristics of talk which demonstrate its sense of organization. This organized sense is an accomplishment of talk itself. In

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[32]Garfinkel, Studies, p. 4.

short, the indexical nature of an utterance is its representation of the background assumptions or the context upon which perceived pattern is based.[33]

The emphasis of an ethnomethodological account of communication behavior is on the indexical and reflexive qualities of that behavior as they represent the continual emergence of shared realities or understandings by the interactants.

By shared realities it is meant that the participants, through their talk, go about the business of establishing parameters for acceptable behavior within a particular situation. This process may be thought of as the participants' establishment of a rule set which defines not only participant relationships but the range of relationships within a given set. Thus, by the give and take of their talk; by their use of options; by their responses and counter-responses, interactants define the rule set which is the definition of what the game will be in this instance. In other words the parameters established in the process of interaction are the parameters of what will be reality for these people in this situation at this time.

By way of illustration, any two interactants are assumed to bring to their first meeting some set of understandings in common concerning the "reality" of their

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[33]Ibid.

situation. In a counseling session, for example, each of the participants, assuming they are from the same culture, share some basic understandings about the reality of the counseling situation; for example, that one person asks questions and the other answers them. These understandings form the basic rule set within which participants will operate. Within that basic set, however, there remain for both persons many options and variations which function to more sharply define the reality for these interactants at a particular time and place. In other words, participants may understand that it is appropriate for one person to ask questions and another to answer them, but how those questions are asked and how they are answered are products of the negotiating process through which we arrive at an agreement: the "we will behave as if" assumption, which is the nucleus of negotiated reality. What participants have, in fact, negotiated is a rule set toward which they will behave as if it were a reality. Such rules define acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the situation at hand.

These rules are dynamic in nature in the sense that they are never in a static state of being. Thus they are not analogous to a rule set as we might think of it in terms of, say, a baseball game, in which the rules are finite and relatively unchanging.

We may say that negotiated reality is: (1) situationally bound in scope; (2) describable in terms of

appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; (3) representable as a dynamic rule set which in the perceptions of the interactants defines reality for a given situation.

Thus seen, communication is linked by its functional structure to the perceptions of each of the interactants in that it is both a product of, or a building block for, those perceptions. By considering the indexicality and reflexivity of discourse we are forced to adopt analytic units which are not restricted in the sense that they are represented by a closed class of events, since strictly or rigidly defined categories are not capable of recovering the context-bound nature of the occurrence. Rather, our analytic units must be flexible with regard to the situationality of the utterance.

Standards for a Descriptive System

There are three requirements of an ethnomethodological approach to the descriptive task outlined by Hawes.

First, such a descriptive approach is usable only in so far as it may render data organizable and manageable.

Second, such analysis must be based on units of function as they give pattern to the discourse and only secondarily on units of the structure itself. That this is true follows from the argument above, that closed classes of events such as those represented in structural analysis do not recover the situationality or indexical quality of

utterance, and thus do not get at the negotiating process from which shared realities are developed. Structural devices may be usable in the recognition of functional units. However, as the chief or principal units of analysis, they are insensitive to the ongoing development of pattern which is the focus of our inquiry into process.

Finally, the units of analysis must be combinable into patterns which form larger functional units, until the functional patterns of action are finally describable and thus capable of yielding systematic inference. In other words, the system must be hierarchically arranged in order to show the relationships between levels of discourse, and in order to fully demonstrate the dynamic process which is taking place.

Summary

The following points have been made.

1. Many scholars within the social sciences, including communication, have recognized that a failure to cope with the process nature of communication has handicapped our search for new knowledge.

2. The assumptions and procedures of ethnomethodology provide a useful framework for viewing this process and a means of analysis which is compatible with this view.

3. A system of analysis which takes as its major data the functional aspects of interaction as indexical and reflexive properties of perceived structure would allow

fruitful descriptive studies of the process of communication.

Accordingly the research described in the following section has a three-fold purpose:

1. The presentation of an analytic system which focuses on the second functional component of interaction and places the focus of analysis on the ongoing process of communication.

2. A demonstration that the analytic system will produce a descriptive analysis of individual utterances as integral units in the ongoing mosaic of the communication process.

3. An attempt to conceptually validate the system by demonstrating its conceptual relationship to the construct of negotiated reality.

CHAPTER II

A SYSTEM OF ANALYSIS

The analytic system used in this research is hierarchically structured. There are four levels of analysis, each subsuming the levels below it, and each connecting within and across levels to produce a layered pattern which provides the descriptive framework. Conclusions concerning the functional structure of the discourse as it relates to emerging perceptual patterns may be inferred from the nature of the individual units which occur; from the relatedness of those units within layers or levels of the system; and finally, from the patterned relatedness of the levels themselves.

The analysis proposed here involves a view of interactants in a communication process as constantly exercising or choosing between options within the discourse. Each utterance is seen as providing a part of the context for that which follows in that it imposes some restrictions on those choices which are available for appropriate response. Further, the totality of utterances which precede

any given point in the discourse are seen as combining to form an overall context which the interactants use as a means of making decisions about the appropriateness of their choices among the options.

Speech Functions

The first level of the hierarchy will be called the level of speech function. A speech function is defined here as a single unit within the overall discourse which may be identified as doing a particular job, or serving a particular function within the overall utterance. It is the smallest unit in the system. It is possible for the same segment of an utterance to serve more than one function, and thus to be classified as more than one function. For example, in response to the question, "Do you understand what I have said so far?", one might respond with a simple "Yes." The "yes," however, serves at least two functions: it tells the questioner that I do understand what has been said so far, and at the same time it serves to tell him that it is appropriate to proceed.

Most research dealing with this basic unit of analysis has approached it as a structural unit involving sequences varying in length from a word to a sentence. There are, however, a number of works dealing with the function of the speech act as a basic utterance. In general, research dealing with the organization of pattern of an act has centered around three major propositions which

may be seen to relate to function.[1]

The first of these propositions is that speech functions convey the planned nature of the discourse. Speider, for example, argues that utterances are to conversation as sentences are to language. He assumes that utterances are formed in accord with a set of conversational rules which are analogous to grammatical rules.[2] Further, the dynamics of such conversational rules are tied to the social environment. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson[3] point to the planned nature of single lexical units when they argue that Wh-words project the possibility of a question which is to follow. They also observe that apositional words (well, but, now) do not reveal much about the construction of an utterance and so allow the speaker to convey the absence of a purposive plan.

A second major proposition concerning the function of utterance units is that they perform acts. Philosophers of language have for some time recognized the act potential of utterances. Ordinary language philosophers particularly

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[1]Elaine Marie Litton-Hawes, "A Discourse Analysis of Topic Co-Selection in Medical Interviews," Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1976, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[2]M. Speider, How to Observe Face to Face Communication: A Sociological Introduction (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear, 1973).

[3]Harvey Sacks, E. A. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, "A Simplest Systematic for the Organization of Turn Taking in Conversation," Language 50 (1974):690-735.

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take the meaning of an utterance to have something to do with the "speech acts" it may be used to perform.[4] Austin, for example, has devoted much of his attention to the establishment of criteria whereby "performatives," or those utterances which perform illocutionary acts, may be distinguished from those which do not.[5] Searle offers a more forceful treatment of the point by making a distinction between the sentence and the act that it is used to perform.[6] For Searle, the proper unit of linguistic analysis is not the symbol, but the production of symbols in the performance of an act. A theory of language, therefore, must be a part of a theory of action or a theory of acts. He thus calls for the study of the formal features of speech acts as a complement to the study of form alone. Works demonstrating this approach include Searle's work on promising,[7] Labov's rules for ritual insults,[8]

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[4]Richard A. Wasserstrom, "Three Levels of Meaning," Journal of Philosophy 56 (1968):590-603.

[5]J. L. Austin, How to Do Things With Words: The William Jones Lectures Delivered at Harvard University, 1955 (New York: Galaxy Books, Oxford University Press, 1965).

[6]J. R. Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[7]Ibid.

[8]William Labov, "Rules for Ritual Insults," in Studies in Social Interaction, ed. E. Sudnow (New York: Free Press, 1972), pp. 120-169.

Jefferson's treatment of side sequences,[9] and Nofsinger's analysis of the use of the "demand ticket."[10]

A third major proposition dealing with the function of utterance units is that they direct the patterning of topical segments. Schegloff[11] describes topic as an activity achieved through utterances. He demonstrates that interactants involved in topic selection must perform operations of categorization and analysis to find the relevant respects in which utterances are used. Schegloff finds it useful to conceptualize the study of topic-related talk as the co-selection of aspects of topic.[12]

Perhaps the most definitive work dealing with the function of basic utterance units is Sinclair and Coulthard's analysis of discourse between teachers and students.[13] From their analysis of a massive amount of interactive data they arrived at twenty-two separate functional

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[9]G. Jefferson, "Side Sequences," in Studies in Social Interaction, ed. E. Sudnow (New York: Free Press, 1972), pp. 294-338.

[10]R. E. Nofsinger, "The Demand Ticket: A Conversational Device for Getting the Floor," Speech Monographs 42 (1975):1-9.

[11]E. A. Schegloff, "Notes on Conversational Practice: Formulating Place," in Language and Social Context, ed. P. P. Giglioli (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1972), pp. 95-135.

[12]Ibid.

[13]J. McH. Sinclair and R. M. Coulthard, Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

speech acts. For purposes of this study seventeen categories of speech function have been extracted from the Sinclair and Coulthard work. The use of these categories is appropriate since they were extracted from the analysis of human interaction in a natural setting. Their use with this data, then, may provide us with some insight into their usefulness across situational boundaries. After preliminary analysis of the data used in this study, one additional category was created by the author. That category is called elaborations and is defined later. Some of the original categories used by Sinclair and Coulthard were dropped from this study because they utilize nonverbal or phonological data which is not of interest here. While it is recognized that paralinguistic and nonverbal variables are an inherent part of the communication system, such data is not being considered here since this work seeks to focus on the function of the verbal elements of interaction alone. There are several reasons for this decision.

First, much of the research dealing with the functional analysis of linguistic data such as that being considered here has focused on nonverbal and paralinguistic variables. Studies by Boomer and Dittman,[14]

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[14]Donald S. Boomer and Allen T. Dittman, "Hesitation Pauses and Juncture Pauses in Speech," Language and Speech 4 (1961):18-26.

Goldman-Eisler,[15] Duncan, Rice and Butler,[16] Markel,[17] Pittinger and Smith,[18] and Pittinger, Hockett and Danehy[19] all underscore this emphasis. Thus our knowledge level in these areas is at a more advanced stage. Research is now needed into the functional aspects of the verbal portion of the system in order to gain a more complete understanding of the system as a whole.

A second reason for the focus on verbal behavior in this study involves pragmatic necessity. While studies of all three levels of linguistic interaction (verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic) are essential to a full understanding of interactive discourse, such a monumental task is strategically beyond the scope of this study. Hopefully, insights gained from this study may be considered in the light of work with other levels so as to provide further

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[15]Frieda Goldman-Eisler, "A Comparative Study of Two Hesitation Phenomena," Language and Speech 4 (1961).

[16]Starkey Duncan Jr., Laura N. Rice and John M. Butler, "Therapists' Paralanguage in Peak and Poor Psychotherapy Hours," Journal of Abnormal Psychology 73 (1968):566-570.

[17]Norman Markel, "Biosocial Factors in Dyadic Communication," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 23 (1972):11-13.

[18]Robert E. Pittinger and Henry Lee Smith Jr., "A Basis for Some Contributions of Linguistics to Psychiatry," Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes 20 (1957):61-78.

[19]Robert E. Pittinger, Charles F. Hockett and John J. Danehy, The First Five Minutes (Ithaca, New York: Paul Martineau, 1960).

insight. Additionally, the system being considered here may, in time, be used with paralinguistic and nonverbal systems to provide comprehensive analysis of the data.

Finally, by studying the verbal element in isolation, we may in fact be able to gain knowledge of its relative importance within the overall system. Such studies of elements in isolation are needed to more closely assess each element's overall importance.

The functional categories used in this study are:

1. Markers (Mk)	A marker serves to mark boundaries in the discourse, although not necessarily topical boundaries, since boundaries may be used within topics as well. Marks are frequently but not always realized by a class of items such as "OK," "Well," "Good," etc.[20]
2. Starters (St)	Starters function to direct attention to, or thought towards, an area in order to make a desired response more likely or more clearly visible as an option. Starters usually but not always take the form of a question or command.[21]
3. Elicitation (El)	Elicitations function to gather new information. They are often realized by a question which asks but does not guide a response. Elicitations may be seen as an indication that a genuine need for knowledge is present.[22]

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[20]Sinclair and Coulthard, Analysis of Discourse, p. 41.

[21]Ibid. [22]Ibid.

4. Check (Ck)	Checks function to tell a previous speaker whether it is appropriate to continue, or to determine the accuracy of a previous statement.[23]
5. Directive (Dr)	Directives are imperative statements which function to request a non-linguistic response.[24]
6. Informative (If)	This class consists of statements which function to provide new information.[25]
7. Elaboration (Ela)	Elaborations function to provide additional information or clarification of informatives, elicitations or other kinds of statements. This category is not a part of the original system developed by Sinclair and Coulthard. It was added by the author after preliminary examination of the data used in this study.
8. Prompts (P)	Prompts function to encourage directives or elicitations by encouraging a continuance.[26]
9. Clue (Cl)	Clues function to provide additional information as an aid to answering an elicitation or complying with a directive.[27]
10. Bid (Bd)	Bids function to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse or gain attention.[28]
11. Cue (Cu)	Cues evoke an appropriate bid from another interactant. They indicate that it is appropriate to initiate another turn.[29]
12. Acknowledgement (Ak)	Acknowledgements indicate understanding of a willingness to

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[23]Ibid. [24]Ibid. [25]Ibid. [26]Ibid. [27]Ibid.
[28]Ibid. [29]Ibid.

	comply. They may be thought of as units of verbal feedback.[30]
13. Accept (Ac)	Accepts function to indicate agreement or acceptance of a previous statement. This category is exemplified by such events as "yes," "no," "good," "fine."[31]
14. Evaluation (Ev)	Evaluations provide an evaluation of previous utterances. Evaluations frequently serve the dual function of the prompt.[32]
15. Conclusions (Con)	Conclusions are a summary of preceding chunks of discourse. Their function is to describe or direct intended structure.[33]
16. Meta Statements (MS)	Meta statements function to place previous or current action in perspective. They may be thought of as statements which refer to the future actuation of present topics.[34]
17. Loop (Lp)	A loop serves to return the discourse to a previous stage.[35]
18. Aside (As)	Asides are utterances which are not directed to another party. This is not to say they are not meaningful to the other party, however, since they may serve to impart information concerning the speaker's attitude or involvement with the conversation.[36]

These eighteen categories make up the basic units of the system. Analysis begins by marking the discourse into apparent functional units. Each of these units may

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[30]Ibid., p. 42. [31]Ibid., p. 43. [32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid. [34]Ibid. [35]Ibid., p. 44. [36]Ibid.

then be labeled according to one or more of the categories in the following manner:

(1) If you look at this map,/ you'll see it's in big type.

This sentence has been divided into two functions signaled by the dash. The first function "If you look at this map," may be labeled as a directive since it requires a non-linguistic response. The second function, "you'll see it's in big type," is classified into two categories and thus is seen as having two functions. First, it functions as a starter by indicating areas of appropriate response. Second, it functions as an informative by providing information. We then can characterize the utterance with the following notation:

(2) (Directive—— Starter Informative)

In this notation the parentheses denote the beginning and completion of one complete utterance. Notations which are not separated by a dash denote functions within the same segment of utterance. It should be pointed out that divisions do not always follow clause structure as in this example.

Utterances

The second level of analysis within the system will be called the utterance. An utterance consists of one or

more contiguous functions which are preceded and followed by either the absence of interaction or the speech of the other interactant. Thus the functional unit utterance is always one turn at speaking regardless of the syntactic structure or structures involved. Given this definition, the sentence, "If you look at this map, you'll see it's in big type," is seen as one utterance. It should be noted that even segments of several sentences length are seen as one utterance. Thus the following is also classed as one utterance:

(3) I went to town, but first I had lunch. Joe and Fred were there, too. They went home later.

As noted earlier, the utterance is denoted by the use of parentheses. For the system to work, however, utterances must be related to the other utterances which are contiguous to them in sequence and to units of analysis which are above and below them in the hierarchy. Before we can proceed, then, we must be able to characterize not only the utterance's relationship to the functions of which it is composed and to the other utterances around it, but to the next unit of analysis which is made up of utterances combined. To this end three classes of utterances are defined here.

1. Echoes — This class is denoted by the selection words, particularly key words, within the utterance

	which were used by another speaker at some point previous to the utterance under consideration. We might tentatively hypothesize that a lot of echoing indicates agreement or acceptance of a particular relationship with another speaker.[37]
2. Substitutes	This class is the reciprocal of echoing. It consists of the selection of synonym for key words used by a previous speaker.[38]
3. Ellipticals	This class is denoted by utterances in which the syntax of the utterance depends on the syntax of a previous act or turn by another speaker. The simplest form of this class would be the simple yes or no answer to a question.[39]

The significance of these classes is that they represent what Sinclair and Coulthard have referred to as the process of orientation.[40] This process is one aspect of the emergence and maintenance of a relationship between the interactants (such as dominance and submission) which is "signaled through a complex network of choices."[41]

Exchanges

The third level of analysis in the system is called the exchange. An exchange consists of two utterances in contiguous relationship which are spoken by different

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[37]Ibid., p. 131. [38]Ibid., p. 132. [39]Ibid.
[40]Ibid. [41]Ibid.

interactants. Previous work on utterance sequencing, exchange or turntaking suggests several levels of organizational activity. Labov,[42] for example, identifies two levels of rule-conforming sequencing in the ordering of utterance pairs and the sequencing of topics. Schegloff and Sacks,[43] ascribe the following characteristics to utterance pairs.

1. They are of two utterance length.
2. Component utterances are adjacently positioned.
3. Different speakers produce each utterance.

Schegloff and Sacks observe that although utterance pairs may have other functions such as ritual performances, they serve also as an organizing function of social talk, and can be described as rule-conforming.

> Given the recognizable product of a first pair part, on its completion, its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second utterance pair part from the pair type of which the first is recognizable as a member.[44]

Similarly, Sacks' rule for question and answer pairs states that a proper question gets a proper answer. If one wishes to convey a new sense of planning, however, he

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[42]William Labov, "The Study of Language in its Social Context," in Language and Social Context, ed. P. P. Giglioli (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1974).

[43]E. A. Schegloff and Harvey Sacks, "Openings and Closings," in Ethnomethodology, ed. R. Turner (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1974).

[44]Ibid., p. 239.

may change the sequence by following a question with another question.[45] The upshot of all this is that the purposeful selection of options with regard to the combination of utterance type and sequence is a functional means of manipulation available to the interactants in their talk. Thus given the utterance, "If you look at this map, you'll see it's in big type," followed by the utterance, "I suppose you're thinking of Chicago, my home town," we have an exchange which may be described according to the system as it has been thus far developed.

(4) (Directive—Start Informative)——(Acknowledgement—
Clue Elaboration)

What we have, then, is two utterances connected to form an exchange. The exchange relationship is noted by the long line. Exchanges, then, form another level of analysis as another level of pattern is formed in the move from one exchange to the next.

Topics

Topical segments are the highest level in the hierarchy aside from the overall discourse itself. A topic is bounded by the initiation of what will be considered

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[45]Harvey Sacks, unpublished lecture notes, 1968. Reported in A Discourse Analysis of Topic Co-Selection in Medical Interviews, Elaine Marie Litton-Hawes, Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1976, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

a sub-topical segment dealing with one subject of conversation and ending with that segment's conclusion.

Previous research dealing with topical sequencing demonstrated its major role in the interaction process. Several researchers have shown that topic selection and choice are one means used by interactants to reveal their reflexive involvement in achieving the perceived order or pattern within a situation. Grice, for example, makes the observation that topical sequence seems to be based on a principle of cooperation. This principle would require that interactants make "conversational contributions such as it required at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."[46]

Sacks more parsimoniously argues for a general method of coordinating topics which is based on the connection of concepts of the same class. Thus judgments are based on a class or category system for the data being discussed.[47]

From another perspective topical control may simply be a matter of turn order. Schegloff, for example, suggests that the caller in a phone conversation may suggest

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[46]H. P. Grice, "The Logic of Conversation, Part II," unpublished manuscript, 1968, reported in A Discourse Analysis of Topic Co-Selection in Medical Interviews, Elaine Marie Litton-Hawes, Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1976, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[47]Sacks, unpublished lecture.

the first topic.[48] Turner suggests that in face-to-face conversation the initial greeter has the right to talk again after the greeting has been reached.[49]

In this system the movement between exchanges and their relationship to topical sequencing will be described in one of two ways, depending on each exchange's function within the topical segment. Some pairs of exchanges may be said to have a lateral relationship, in that they are both units within the same topical segments. Other pairs of exchanges may be said to have a vertical relationship, in that they are the outer boundaries of two topical segments. Thus another patterned layer may be seen to emerge as exchanges for segments which in turn make up the overall discourse. Two topical segments, shown in (5) are described below in the system's notation in (6).

(5)

A⌈ (Well,—I suppose my research is really in cross
B⌊

A cultural,—with a pretty heavy linguistic interest.—
B

A Maybe someone will want one of those.—)
B (Yeah,—I have

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[48]Schegloff, "Notes."

[49]R. Turner, "Words, Utterances and Activities," in Ethnomethodology, ed. R. Turner (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1974).

A

B some interest in reciprocity/ but really I haven't done

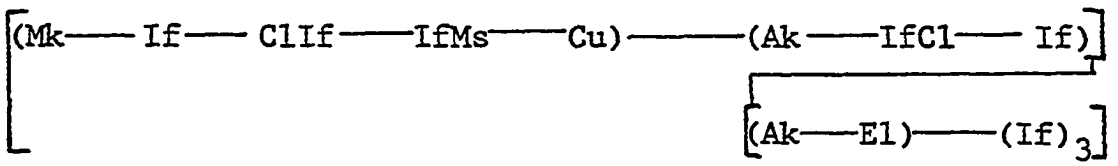
A ⌉

B much with it.— I don't really plan to—)⌋

A ⌈(Oh,—I see,—when do you plan to take generals?— ⌉

B ⌊ September.)⌋

(6)



These two exchanges involve a topical shift, which occurs between the first and second exchanges. The topical shift, indicated by the vertical line in (6) occurs in the next to last utterance: "Oh, I see, when do you plan to take generals?" Each of the exchange pairs are composed of two utterances marked by parentheses. Utterances are in turn composed of functions. It may be noted that the last function of the second exchange is marked with the subscript 3, which indicates that it is an elliptical utterance.

This analytic system is aimed at developing a descriptive analysis of interactive discourse. Its main function is to render a massive body of data organizable. While the categories themselves are somewhat artificially derived,

they are the product of response to observations of discourse in many settings. Further, the four basic levels of the system have been shown by previous research to be significant factors in the patterned nature of discourse. Whether the description derived from the system is in any way valid or meaningful in relation to the evolving perceptual balance between interactants is, of course, another question. Toward that question the study described below is directed.

Plan of the Study

Data used in the study were made up of the discourse between psychological counselors and their clients. The selection of these data was based on two major criteria. First, any study of the social aspects of language requires data taken from social contexts. Psychological interviews are routinely tape-recorded by the counselors involved and so taping is a normal part of the social scene for this event. Thus the use of such data helps to avoid the problem of affecting the data set by the simple act of gathering it. Second, such interviews are purposive in nature and involve interaction between individuals who have little or no previous history with one another. These factors should increase the purposive behaviors of the interactants and thus make them more detectable. In order to provide the most active data base possible, only first interviews of sessions with each client were used.

In order to insure that the data obtained were fairly typical several steps were taken. First, the researcher exercised his own judgment as to the seeming normalcy of the data. Second, checks were made with the counselors involved to determine whether they perceived any of the subjects as pathological in any way or to an extent which would render their behavior abnormal. Additionally transcripts of occupational counseling sessions were included in the data. Since occupational counseling data meet all other criteria set forth for the study, and since there is no reason to suspect abnormal behavior from these subjects, their data were used as a means of comparison for the therapy sessions. No indications were found that any of the data samples contained any pathological or particularly abnormal behaviors.

Six one-hour first sessions were obtained by tape recording from the University of Oklahoma Counseling Center. While the number of tapes obtained may seem small by traditional standards, it must be pointed out that the real subject of this study is not sessions or people but function, utterances, exchanges and topics. The six hours of data recorded contained more than five thousand utterances. This amount of data provides ample opportunity for preliminary assessment of the system.

The study reported in the following chapters is a descriptive one. No attempt has been made to test for

statistical differences between tapes or groups of tapes with regard to any of the units of analysis. Instead the data were used in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How well does the system cope with the data? That is, does it leave large amounts of data unclassified? Do the units of analysis fit the data in the sense that specific segments are recognizable as performing functions which fit the categories?

2. Does the system yield a potential for systematic inference on the basis of the ethnomethodological assumptions discussed earlier? In other words, what does the system allow us to say concerning the emergence of shared realities between interactants?

3. What changes, if any, are needed in the system to make it more useful as an analytic device?

Method

Each of the taped interviews was transcribed using a system in which each utterance was shown in the context in which it occurred, including its temporal relationship to preceding and following utterances. An example of transcribed material may be found in the Appendix.

Because of the massive amount of material present in the discourse used in the study, a systematic method was needed in order to search the data effectively. To this end data were gathered concerning the perceptions of the counselors involved in the tapes, so that some notion of grouping the tapes into representative categories could be obtained. After completing each interview, the

counselor was asked to respond to a two-item questionnaire. The instrument used asked the respondent to indicate one of five response options which most nearly summarized his or her reaction to the interviews. The response options were: (1) very positive; (2) positive; (3) neutral; (4) negative; (5) very negative. The second item simply asked the counselor for comments concerning any factors in the interview which may have influenced his or her perception. This information was used to make the data more manageable. It was used to divide the transcripts into three categories which were representative of the general types of data obtained. These were (1) positively evaluated therapy sessions; (2) negatively evaluated therapy sessions; (3) the occupational counseling session. Three tapes were placed in category one, two tapes in category two and one tape in the third category. One transcript from each of the categories was selected and each was examined to determine possible trends or occurrences within the data. Following this analysis of the representative sessions, tentative hypotheses were formed concerning what might be taking place in the data. The remainder of the tapes were then examined to confirm or deny these preliminary findings. All of the sessions used were first session, zero history, goal-directed dyads whose members were a therapist and a client. Five of the sessions used were counseling therapy sessions while one session was an

occupational counseling session. Three different therapists were used in the tapes.

Each session was approximately fifty-five minutes in length and was held in a private room which was wired for recording. Subjects were seated in comfortable chairs which faced one another. Therapists met their clients outside the room and accompanied them into the room, and, so, routine interactions such as greetings, information concerning past counseling experience, permission to tape, fee schedules and other similar information were not part of the data collected.

Each of the sessions began with the gathering of some preliminary data about the client. This consumed only the first three to five minutes of the session. The bulk of time was spent on identifying the problem at hand and discussing its particulars. Finally, possibilities for appropriate courses of action, including such points as whether the client wished to continue the sessions and, if so, with this or another therapist, were discussed.

The data span a full continuum of emotionality from very emotional behaviors, such as weeping, on the part of the client, to very business-like and unemotional discussion by both participants.

In every case the sessions exhibited a general pattern in which the therapist elicited information, summarized or organized that information and directed topicality. In

turn, clients provided information and generally followed the lead of the therapist. The structure of these sessions, then, suggests a fairly typical interview situation. The following data sample demonstrates the characteristics mentioned above as well as showing the general interactive nature of the data.

The data were transcribed into paired lines so that the reader may see not only what was said, but get some idea of the temporal relationship of each utterance. Lines labeled "C" are client speech; those labeled "T" are therapist speech.

(1)
T Well, how can I help you today?
C Well, let's see,

(2)
T What kind of trouble?
C I'm having trouble at school.

(3)
T What kind of trouble?
C Huh? I just don't make good

(4)
T
C grades . . . don't do the work either . . . and

(5)
T You don't feel good about your
C things like that.

(6)
T school work, or something else. Which one?
C Yeah.

(7) T
C Well, I feel bad about not doing my school work

(8) T Do you
C and it's not going the way I want it to.

(9) T know why? Have some idea?
C Yeah, yeah, I think

(10) T Hard to put into words?
C I do. Yeah, well I want

(11) T
C to and I just won't go to the trouble to do the

(12) T Like during the day . . . what kind of things
C work.

(13) T do you . . . what happens in a regular day . . .
C

(14) T let's say like today.
C Well, let's see . . . Today I

(15) T
C went to . . . well I usually get up late and miss

(16) T Late at work.
C my first class. Oh, you know . . .

(17) T
C about 9:30 and then usually . . .

With the data transcribed in this manner the researcher was able to get some idea of the flow of the interaction. For example, overlapping of the lines indicates interruption or attempted interruption by one interactant. Similarly, long pauses are indicated by gaps between the lines. These relationships were checked by reading through the data while listening to the tapes.

The results reported in the following chapters are offered as a preliminary testing and validation of an analytic system. What is reported is an approach to the analysis of communicative interaction in a way which is more compatible with our notions of process, and a demonstration of the usefulness of that approach.

CHAPTER III

THE SYSTEM'S VALIDITY: AN INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

This chapter reports on the validity of the analytic system in terms of its internal consistency and comprehensiveness. The chapter is aimed at providing an answer to the first research question.

> How well does the system cope with the data? That is, does the system leave large amounts of data unclassified? Do the units of analysis fit the data in the sense that specific segments are recognized as performing functions which fit the categories? In short, does it render a description of the data which is both internally consistent and describable?

This question will be answered through a detailed description of the data and the system's application to it.

The Units of Analysis

This section provides a detailed description of the data as the analytic system applies to it. It begins with a consideration of function units and proceeds to considerations of utterances, exchanges, topical segments and finally the sessions as a whole.

Functions

The first level of analysis, functions, consists of those units extracted from the Sinclair and Coulthard work and defined in the previous chapter. These are the basic units of analysis for the system, and are applied to units of talk which can be identified as performing one or more of the functions described. As a whole, these units fit naturally into the data with the exceptions noted earlier. That is, it was relatively easy to identify functional units within each utterance, and then to identify a function category which described what was taking place within that segment. Further there was little confusion as to whether one or another of the categories was the best descriptor of the segment.

While it is evident that any one of a number of categories could be applied to a segment of utterance, the researcher attempted to make decisions which were compatible with the indexical qualities of each segment. By considering the contextual nature of each segment, the researcher was able to obtain results which seem consistent with an overall understanding of the discourse. To further check on the researcher's reliability as a coder of the data, a twelve page, one hundred-utterance segment of one of the tapes was classified, then re-classified one week later. It was found that sixty-four percent of the utterance segments had been classified the same way in both trials.

The following example, taken from the text presented in the Appendix, demonstrates how the data was coded.

(P) Prompt
(Cl) Clue
(Mk) Marker
(Ela) Elaboration
(Ak) Acknowledgement
(El) Elicitation
(If) Informative

(18)
T (You don't feel good about your school work—or (P)
C

(19)
T something else? (Cl)
C (Yeah.) (Ak)
(Which one? (El)
(Well, I feel bad (Mk)

(20)
T
C about not doing my school work—and it's not going (If) (Ela)

(21)
T
C the way I want it to.)
(Do you know why?—have some (El)

(22)
T idea why?) (Ela)
C

The dashes in this sample represent boundaries for segments which have been identified as serving individual functions. The abbreviations above each functional segment indicate the function which was assigned to each segment.

For example, the segment, "You don't feel good about your school work," has been classified as a prompt, while the following segment, "or something else," is classified as a clue, which provides more specific direction in terms of an intended answer. The arrows used in this sample are a convention used in conjunction with elaborations in order to indicate which segment was being elaborated on.

While all of the categories at the level of speech function were used with this data, some were obviously used much more than others. Specifically, 71 per cent of the data was accounted for by only four of the seventeen categories. These categories were elicitations, prompts, elaborations and informatives. Table 1 shows the exact percentage for each of these categories.

TABLE 1

PRIMARY USE OF CATEGORIES

	(El)	(P)	(If)	(Ela)	Total	Others
Per cent of Total	10.28	6.93	25.35	28.46	71.02	28.98

These results reinforce the conclusions made earlier, that the general format of the sessions is that of a question-answer interview. That conclusion is given even more support when the categories are broken down by participant. The most commonly used categories for therapists were elicitations and prompts. These categories are directly

related to the business of gathering information and account for nearly forty per cent of the therapists' speech.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF THERAPISTS' SPEECH

	(El)	(P)	Total	All others
Per cent of all functions for therapists	23.91	15.21	39.13	60.87

Structurally, elicitations range from a single word or two, such as the questions, "Why?" and "Why not?" to more complete sentences, such as "What happened after you left home?" The more complex structures are more common in this data. Prompts, on the other hand, are generally less complex in structure. They vary from very short bits of feedback, "Go on," to a simple phrase such as "So you're not too happy about that?" Generally they urge continuance with a specific line of talk rather than seeking a new area of information.

For clients the results show that informatives and elaborations account for over 60 per cent of their speech.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CLIENT'S SPEECH

	(If)	(Ela)	Total	All others
Per cent of all functions for clients	40.62	23.35	63.96	36.03

Structurally, informatives show much the same variation as elicitations: they range from phrase to sentence length and occasionally consist of only one word. Elaborations usually take the form of a dependent clause and only rarely consist of a complete sentence.

Utterances

The functional categories discussed above are the building blocks for the level of utterance. An utterance is defined as one speaker's turn at speaking; thus each utterance consists of one or more functions. We may discuss the structure of utterances, then, by describing the number and type of functions from which they are constructed and how those functions relate to each other.

Utterances occurring in these data were composed of from one to as many as twenty-two functional units. From five to nine functions per utterance was more typical of the data as a whole. The speech of clients tended to contain slightly more utterances than those of therapists. For purposes of data management, each utterance was reduced

by a notation system which showed each function within it. For example, the utterance

(23) You don't feel (P) good about your school work—— or (C1) something else

was noted in the following manner: (P-C1), with the brackets marking the boundaries of the utterance. (See Page 48, line pairs 18 and 19 for utterance and its context.) More complex utterances required more complex notations.

(24) Settling down (If) means sticking with it —— (E1a) staying in one place —— (E1a) not going to school —— (E1a) at least not full time.

This utterance would be diagrammed as follows:

(25) (If-E1a-E1a-E1a)

The arrows indicate which function the elaborations apply to.

More interesting than the number of functions per utterance is the type of functions which are used to build those utterances.

The structure of utterances

The most commonly used function for therapists, the elicitations, occurred in utterances of four basic

structural types. These were: (1) single functions of elicitations; (2) elicitations preceded by one other function; (3) elicitations followed by one or more other functions; and (4) elicitations preceded and followed by other functions.

The first type, elicitations occurring alone, represent just over five per cent (5.2%) of the therapist speech which contains an elicitation. For example:

(26) What happened after you left home?

Type two, an elicitation preceded by one other function, was more common, representing about thirteen per cent of those therapist utterances which contained an elicitation. The elicitation was preceded by only six other functions, however. These were marks, starts, meta-statements and loops, and less frequently, acknowledgement and accepts. A therapist might say, for example,

(27) About the study thing —— why do you think you can't do that?
(Lp-El)

Or simply:

(28) Yeah,—— when do you work?
(Ak-El)

The third structure, those followed by one or more other

functions, was by far the most common, (44%).

(29) Did your father like that?——What was his attitude?
(E1-P)

When more specific information was gathered, the elicitation could be followed by one or more elaborations or a loop or clue. For example:

(30) What happened there after you left Tulsa after you left home?
(E1-E1a-E1a)

Or in the case of a loop:

(31) Do you find that sort of thing depressing —— with your stepfather?
(E1-Lp)

The phrase, "with your stepfather," refers to a previously discussed topic.

The fourth structural type, in which elicitations were both preceded and followed by other functions, was nearly as frequent as type three, (37.33%). When this occurred, however, the initial utterance was always a mark or a start.

(32) Ok,—— so when you go out in the evening and don't study——do you feel guilty about that——do you feel bad?

(Mk-Ms-El-Ela)

Obviously structures three and four were by far the most functionally complex of the therapists' utterances since they involved basically an elicitation and from one to three functions which clarified, added specificity to the question, or which provided direction for the expected answer, (as in the case of loops or clues.)

Prompt utterances

Another structure frequently used by therapists was utterances which centered around the prompt. Structurally these utterances are much less complex than those which center around elicitations. In fact prompts occurred in single function utterances in 18.31 per cent of utterances which used the prompt. For example:

(33) So you think a lot about that?

(P)

Prompts never occurred in conjunction with more than two other functions in an utterance. In fact prompts occurred in only the configurations shown in Table 4. These fourteen configurations represent the range of possibilities for therapist utterances involving the prompt. The simplicity of these structures plus the fact that they nearly always occur at the beginning or end of utterances are the basic characteristics of their use.

TABLE 4

CONFIGURATIONS OF THE PROMPT

Preceded by	Followed by	Preceded and followed
(If-P)	(P-El)	(El-P-Clu)
(El-P)	(P-If)	(Ak-P-Clu)
(Ms-P)	(P-Cn)	(Lp-P-El)
(Lp-P)	(P-Ela)	
(Ak-P)	(P-Ck)	
	(P-Clu)	

Client utterances

Utterances for clients demonstrated considerably more complexity than those of therapists. This is true from at least two points of view. First, there are higher numbers of functions per utterance, and second, there is a more complex relationship between functions within an utterance.

By far the most common utterance for clients centered around the informative function. Occasionally the informative was preceded by one other function. In these cases that function was a check, an acknowledgement or an accept. Much more frequently, however, the informative was followed by one or more elaborations. The range was from one to twelve. On some occasions a single utterance contained multiple informatives (up to four) each of which had its own elaborations appended. Further, the structural complexity of these utterances varied considerably in terms of the elaborations' relationship to the informatives and

to other elaborations.

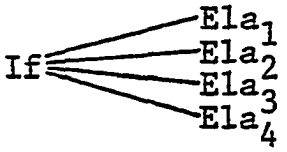
Four basic structures for these informative utterances occurred in the data. The first and least complex involved an informative in which all subsequent elaborations pertained directly to the informative. For example:

(34A) I had spent a whole year being ill—— (If) of being (Ela$_1$) very physically ill—— very mentally ill—— (Ela$_2$) financially —— (Ela$_3$) the pits. (Ela$_4$)

(If-Ela$_1$-Ela$_2$-Ela$_3$-Ela$_4$)

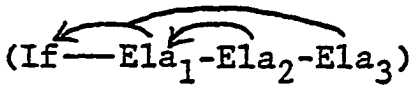
Here all subsequent elaborations refer back to the original informative (as indicated by the arrows.) The structure might be more graphically diagrammed as follows.

(34B)



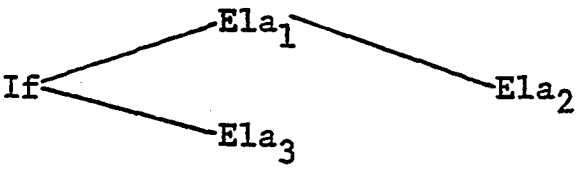
In other utterances, however, clients added elaborations to elaborations in such a way as to provide more specific focus on the elaborations themselves. For example:

(35A) I had my dreams and ambitions —— (If) of being (Ela$_1$) a hairdresser —— of having my own shop —— (Ela$_2$) and I thought (Ela$_3$) about that a lot.



This utterance represents a more complex structure in which elaboration two is actually an elaboration on an elaboration. This structure is diagrammed as follows:

(35B)



A still more complex structure involves utterances which contain more than one informative. Within this structure two basic substructures may be described. In the first the utterance is arrayed more or less linearly in that the informatives occur in sequence and are followed by elaborations of the structural type shown above in line 35B. For example:

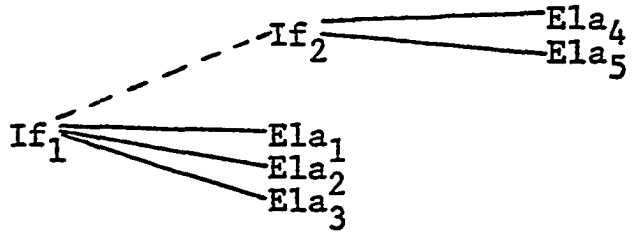
(36A) I look at him (If1) more squarely now——the way (Ela1) people look at their father.——They're (Ela2) supposed to be perfect,——to have all (Ela3) their shit together——but he was gone from the (If2) time I was thirteen —— just (Ela4) gone—— just (Ela5) left.



This structure may be diagrammed as follows, where the dashed

line indicates only that the connected elements occurred in the same function.

(36B)



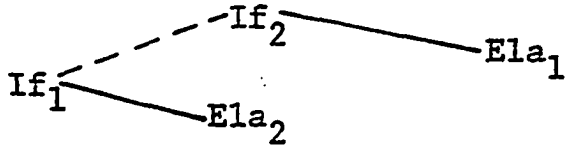
Even more complex, however, are cases in which elaborations referred to informatives which preceded another informative. For example:

(37A) My stepmother$_{(If_1)}$ tells him to back off —— from the time I was a child,$_{(If_2)}$ I was drilled I was to be an artist—— that was the plan,$_{(Ela_1)}$ —— but she cautions him.$_{(Ela_2)}$

(If_1-If_2-Ela_1-Ela_2)

This structure is represented in the following diagram.

(37B)



These structures represent the basic structural types for the vast majority of those client utterances which centered around informatives. Each type varies in complexity depending on the number of elaborations and informatives.

That range, in fact, was from one to seven informatives and from one to eleven elaborations.

These structures characterize utterances used by clients and therapists in this data. Further they underscore the general nature of the data in terms of the interview format described earlier. The most frequently used structures demonstrate various strategies of gathering information on the part of therapist and of providing that information by clients.

Exchanges

Exchanges are defined, for purposes of this analysis, as one utterance or turn at speaking for both of the participants. The data were divided into exchanges on the basis of the first person to speak, which in every case was the therapist. This gives a general A-B, A-B structure to the discourse. Pairing the utterances into exchanges by simply beginning with the therapist is in fact defensible because dividing the data into exchanges each of which begins with a client's utterance destroys much of the continuity of the discourse. In other words, a B-A, B-A structure makes less sense in this data since it would involve beginning a pair with an answer and ending with a question. This should not be taken as a denial of any meaningful relationship between the end of one utterance pair and the beginning of the next, but this aspect of the pairing will be discussed later in this chapter.

In general, the completion of an utterance followed by silence seems to be the cue for the next person to begin speaking. However, a closer examination of the structure of turn-taking reveals a more complex situation. Interactants did, in a comparatively small number of cases, attempt to interrupt the speaker by making a bid for a turn. For example:

(38)
T So you either have to move or adjust to living at
C yes, but

Each time this occurred the speaker responded either by stopping and allowing the interruptor to continue, or by continuing as if the bid had not been made. In every case, therapists responded to a bid of this type from the client with the latter option while clients used both options in about equal numbers.

In general, however, rather than attempting interruption, clients waited for the therapist to finish, that is, to complete a syntactic unit and become silent in anticipation of a response. For example:

(39)
T Do you, do you want to do your school work?
C No,

(40)
T
C not really.

For therapists, however, more options were available.

First, therapists simply interrupted on occasion to correct the client or to initiate new direction.

(41)
T Well, not
C Well, I guess it's really my fault and

(42)
T entirely, it takes two . . .
C

Additionally, therapists would occasionally jump in to help the client in expressing a thought or finding the appropriate word. For example:

(43)
T ..
C And when you don't make good grades because you

(44)
T
C worried about getting your bills paid and all that

(45)
T a vicious circle
C stuff . . . and it's kind of . .

(46)
T
C Yeah, right.

Clients, on the other hand, never used this strategy to aid the therapist. This was true even in cases where the therapists were obviously having some difficulty in completing a thought.

(47) T Well, what you said before, that you're . . trying
C

(48) T to have an idea what . . . what it is that . . um
C

(49) T you know, that's making you, that's not making you,
C

(50) T that explains why you're not doing your school work.
C

No attempt was made by the client in this case to aid the therapist in getting through a rather obvious difficulty.

Topic and Topic Change

In general, topical segments in this data consist of from two to forty-nine exchanges usually in the question-answer format. There were from five to eleven topical segments in a session. A topic change was considered to have taken place when one interactant attempted in some way to change the subject of discourse or area of information under discussion and the other interactant continued the new area in his next utterance. In all cases, successful change of topic was initiated by the therapists. In some instances, the client attempted to change a topic by offering new information in a different area. Therapists, however, ignored that information, or responded to it only briefly and in passing, and then asked a question pertaining to the old

topic area. Thus the attempt to change topic failed. For example:

(51) T
C It's going to take a little longer now, I mean just

(52) T
C as long as I have it before 40 when I graduate . .

(53) T
C before I get my degree . . . OK fine . . but at least

(54) T Yeah, you mentioned about having
C I did it some way.

(55) T some real fears about thoughts that are creeping
C

(56) T out and you keep trying to push down.
C

Functionally, there were three basic ways in which therapists initiated changes of topic: by using utterances which centered around elicitations, prompts or loops. That is to say, the therapist initiated change by elicitation; by prompting the client in a new direction, but not asking a specific question; or by looping the conversation back to a previous topic.

The first strategy, involving the use of

elicitation, is demonstrated in lines 7, 8, 9 and 10 in the sample data on Page 44.

(57)
T
C Well, I feel bad about not doing my school work

(58)
T Do you
C and it's not going the way I want it to.

(59)
T know why, have some idea why?
C Yeah, I think I do.

In this example, the therapist uses an elicitation, in the form of a direct question, to shift the topic from what the problem is to its cause. The client completes the shift by following with an answer to that question. When using this strategy, therapists frequently followed the elicitation with a clue or an elaboration. This is also demonstrated in the above example when the therapist elaborated on his question, with "have some ideas why?"

The prompt occurred as a topical change device which gathered less specific information. For example:

(60) What about staying in school?

This utterance does not ask a specific question but directs the client's attention in a general sense to a new area. These strategies were used by therapists when a new topic, one which had not been previously discussed, was approached.

The loop, however, was used when the therapist changed topic by returning to an old area. For example:

(61) Let's go back to what you said about not going to class.

Such loops were usually followed by prompts or elicitations as in this example:

(62) About the thing with your father, why do you think he wanted you to be an artist?

It is interesting to note that exchanges which accomplish topic changes are not structurally different from exchanges within topics. Lines 63 through 65, a diagram of exchanges from the data sample on Page 104, illustrates typical structures within and across topics. Brackets indicate exchange pairs, while the parentheses mark boundaries for utterances. Topic change takes place between lines 64 and 65.

Topic A

(63)
T [(Mk-E1)] [(E1)] [(E1)]
C [(Mk-As-If)] [(E1)] [(If-E1a-E1a)]

(64)
T [(P-Clu)] [(E1)] [(E1-E1a)]
C [(If)] [(Mk-Ak-If-E1a)] [(If-E1a)]

Topic B

(65)
T [(I)] [(Ms-E1-E1a)] [(P)]
C [(Ak-If-E1a)] [(As-If)] [(If-E1a)]

As this example illustrates, the exchanges bounding the topic change are not structurally different from the exchanges within the topic. This seems interesting not so much because of what it is as because of what it is not. Therapists are not choosing this point to summarize or evaluate information and then move on. Nor is the change in any way structurally marked. It is rather a part of the overall interaction.

Discussion

In summary the description of the data offered in this chapter has demonstrated several points in reference to research question one.

First, the system does not leave a large amount of data unclassified, although there are some small areas which may be meaningful with which the system did not cope.

Second, the units of analysis do conceptually fit occurrences in the data. Further, the components of the system are internally consistent in that the distinctions between levels of analysis do fit together, but do not overlap. More importantly, use of the system provides an organized sense of what is happening in the data. That is, the description produced seems agreeable with what common sense understandings of the situation tell us should be happening.

In general the system coped with the data reasonably well. However, some problem areas did arise during the

analysis which require some explanation.

The first of these problem areas involved the coding of utterances which were so fragmentary or incomplete as to make an identification of their intended function impossible. For example:

(66) It's just, well, sometimes, I just . . . Oh, I don't know.

With the exception of the last segment of this utterance, "I don't know," the entire utterance consists of a series of apparent false starts. Each of the segments seems to start a direction of thought, but none is carried far enough to allow the researcher to draw any inference as to what the speaker had in mind or what the function of that segment might have been in terms of response or reaction from the other participant. At the same time it may not be assumed that such segments are of no meaning within the overall structure of the interaction. It must be assumed then that these occurrences constitute a portion of the data which is not manageable through this system. It is, therefore, lost data. For purposes of analysis the researcher was forced to code only those elements for which function could be inferred.

Only thirteen utterances from a total of several thousand were affected. While these occurrences do constitute lost data, they do not in this case constitute a

significant loss of data, on a proportionate basis.

The second exception to the general codability of the data involves the occurrence of functions which are interrupted by segments identifiable as other functions, after which the first function is resumed and completed.

(67) Well, you know something that, it sounds like I'm contradicting myself, something that could get me motivated.

Rather than presenting a problem in which the data are rendered unclassifiable, this type of occurrence forces the investigator into a choice which could bring about radically different outcomes or interpretations of the data. The key portions of the above example, "something that" and "it sounds like I'm contradicting myself," could be classified as a part of the following function, assuming that its intended function was carried out by the segment which obviously completes the thought. It was decided, however, that such an occurrence indicates more to the hearer than would be obvious under such a form of analysis. By interrupting the segment in such a way, the speaker has called attention to the fact that the utterance is to be taken in a certain light. In short, he has classified the utterance.

For these reasons, it was decided that occurrences such as this would be considered not simply as the

completion of a functional unit but as simultaneously serving to loop the discussion back to a previous point, that is, to the point before the interruption.

In any event, the problem is not seen as a statistically significant one since its thirty-four occurrences in this data represent only about .5 per cent of the data.

From another perspective, however, any loss of data which is a part of the overall context of interaction is a significant loss. While the system is, as we have seen, still capable of yielding a usable body of data, more precise conventions designed to cope with the data loss would be useful.

It must also be noted here that one portion of the analytic system broke down completely at the second level, the utterance. This portion was the three-part classification of utterances as echoes, substitutes or ellipticals. These classifications were totally useless with this data, apparently because of the rather structured interview format and because of the apparent strategy on the part of the therapist to avoid technical or clinical terminology and to use more common terms.

In any case nearly all client utterances were in some way elliptical since they were answering questions asked by therapists. The only alternative in such a case is to answer in such a way as to repeat the question.

Perhaps because of the lack of identifiable

terminology, echoing and substitution were extremely difficult to identify, thus rendering the categories unreliable and not capable of giving good descriptive data. While this loss of data is regrettable, it does not prevent the system from rendering useful description. Future studies using this system need to look at a variety of data to further assess the usefulness of these categories.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYSTEM AS AN ANALOGUE TO PROCESS

The focus of this chapter is to provide external validation for the analytic system by arguing that the system renders data which are conceptually related to the construct of negotiated reality. This will be done by showing that: (1) rule-like generalizations may be generated from the data; and (2) these generalizations demonstrate that a dynamic negotiation process is taking place over time and that it reflects a building on common background understandings which are reflective of the negotiating process mentioned earlier. Thus the chapter is aimed at providing an answer to research question two.

> Does the system yield a potential for systematic inference on the basis of the ethnomethodological assumptions discussed earlier? In other words, what does the system allow us to say concerning the emergence of negotiated perceptual realities between interactants?

The problem, then, for this chapter, is to demonstrate that the data gathered from this kind of analysis

is externally valid. By external validity, it is simply meant that the data produced describe something which is a valid analogue to what does happen within the data.

Any descriptive analysis is valid not as a real entity but as an analogue to that entity. In short, the description is not the thing. Instead it is a product of the reflexive involvement of both the interactants and the researcher. The job of a system such as the one presented here is not to describe reality in an objective sense, but to describe subjective perceptions of reality to which interactants respond as though they were objective. Such shared realitites were described in Chapter II as defining the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior within a particular situation. Further it was argued that these shared realities are arrived at through a process of negotiation which is carried on as one of the functional aspects of talk. It is this process which the system must describe.

If, from the data of talk, we can generate a set of generalizations which explain participant behavior within a given situation, we may assume that we have produced an analogue to the subjective reality which exists in the perception of participants, and thus have described it.

Further, if the process nature of such interaction is to be included in such a description, it must be shown that the perceived parameters of action are developed over time.

This chapter, then, attempts to answer the research question posed above by first stating a generalization and four of its corollaries which are capable of explaining subjects' behaviors in the counseling situation. By using the data discussed in Chapter III it is shown that these generalizations are: (1) generated from the data, and (2) seen to develop over time. The implication is that this is reflective of the building of shared perceptions.

The generalization and its corollaries may be stated as follows:

Generalization: Therapists control the interaction.

C 1: Topical selection is the prerogative of the therapist.

C 2: Therapists are less restricted in turn-taking behavior than clients.

C 3: Therapists seek information while clients provide it.

C 4: Therapists organize and summarize information while clients follow that organization.

The generalization above represents a parameter of behavior in therapist-client relations for the sessions analyzed in this study. Each of the corollaries represents a constituent part of the generalization and is supportable by the data itself. The generalization is an extrapolation of the corollaries in combination. These statements do not represent startling insight into the counseling situation. Nor are they by themselves of great theoretic

significance. The significance of these statements is that they are obtainable from the data gathered with this system of analysis. The data provide more than an account of how the participants behave in this situation. They provide an account of how these parameters of behavior were arrived at through talk. This account is demonstrated in the following sections.

Corollary 1

Corollary 1, that topical selection is the prerogative of the therapist, is evident from the data described in Chapter III, Pages 64 to 67. It was observed there that in all cases, changes of topic were initiated by therapists, and further, that attempts by clients to change topic were rejected by therapists, either by ignoring the attempted change, or by acknowledging it briefly and then continuing the old topic. In the example on Page 64 of Chapter III, we see, for example, that the therapist has rejected the client's bid for topic change by simply acknowledging what the client had been saying with a simple "yeah," and then looping the discourse back to the original topic (or an area of it) by prompting her to talk some more about "fears and thoughts."

This example is typical of the manner in which therapists controlled the interaction through topical selection. On some occasions therapists did in fact initiate changes to topics which had been attempted by

clients earlier. Thus it would appear that therapists are controlling the interaction not only by determining what topics will be discussed, but the order of their discussion as well.

From the standpoint of process, interactants are seen to reach a better working understanding of this parameter of behavior as the sessions progress. By dividing the data into halves, it is seen that in the six hours of data recorded, 28 attempts to change topic by the client were observed. Of these attempts, all of which were unsuccessful, 19 or 67.85 per cent occurred in the first half of a session while only nine, or 32.14 per cent, occurred in the second half. In this situation, then, therapists not only appear to control interaction by controlling the selection of topic, but clients appear to develop an acceptance of this portion of the rule over time as they attempt topic selection less often.

Thus the data obtained at this level of analysis (that of topic change) is capable of demonstrating two separate but related elements of the communication process. First, the data shows what options are used by therapists in controlling topic. Secondly, it shows the pattern of response and counterresponse, which over the course of the sessions develops into a shared perception which is apparently accepted by both participants. Thus the system is capable of exhibiting the interactants' reflexive

involvement in the communication process.

Just as Cicourel described teachers as reflexively involved in the process of producing student interviews, both therapists and clients exhibit reflexive involvement in the emerging pattern of interaction. By responding in the ways described above, therapists both demonstrate a perception of the situation, and communicate that perception to their clients. Similarly, clients demonstrate, by their developing acquiescence, a mutual acceptance of this particular parameter of behavior.

The following sections demonstrate that the system yields similar results at other levels of analysis.

Corollary 2

Corollary 2, that therapists are less restricted in turn-taking behavior than are clients, is supported with data from the level of exchanges. In this case it is really the exceptions to the general rule which demonstrate the point. In Chapter III it was observed that:

> In general the completion of a syntactic unit followed by silence seems to be the cue for the next person to begin speaking. First A speaks, then B speaks. That is, B typically begins when A stops, and so on.

However, it was also observed that in some cases participants did attempt to interrupt, and that there was a difference in response to these attempts depending on whether the client or the therapist was interrupting. The choices were to stop and allow the interruptor to continue

or to continue as if the bid had not been made. It was observed that in every case, therapists did not allow the interruption to break the continuity of their utterance, while clients used both options. This action on the part of the therapist appears to be an effective strategy for asserting his control of the interaction if we observe the frequency of attempted client interruptions in each quartile of the data. Table 5 demonstrates the decreasing number of attempts by clients to interrupt the therapist. Nearly two-thirds of the attempts (63.65 per cent) were found in the first half of a session while only about one-third (36.36 per cent) occurred in the second half. It may be argued, then, that by decreasing the number of attempts at interruption, clients were "catching on" to the therapists' conception of Corollary 2.

TABLE 5

ATTEMPTED INTERRUPTIONS BY CLIENT PER QUARTILE

Quartile	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Percent	36.37	27.28	24.24	12.12

This conclusion is further supported by the observation in Chapter III that clients never offered aid to a therapist who was obviously having difficulty completing a thought while therapists offered this assistance with some frequency. It does seem apparent that change was taking place in the client's perception of his part in the

interaction.

It is apparent, then, that a part of the interactants' reflexive involvement in the negotiation process takes place at the level of exchange. By their choice of options available, interactants establish a pattern within their relationship which becomes a feature in the evolving perceptual balance.

Corollary 3

Corollary 3, that therapists ask questions and clients provide information, is perhaps the most supportable of the corollaries, particularly with data frcm the level of utterances. Obviously, therapists are devoting a large percentage of their talking effort to gathering information. It was shown in Table 2 in Chapter III that elicitations and prompts, both of which are, by definition, functions aimed at gathering information, represent 39.13 per cent of therapists' speech, while all other sixteen categories represent only 60.87 per cent. Conversely, well over half (63.96 per cent) of clients' speech is accounted for by two functions, informatives and elaborations, both of which center around giving information. (See Table 3, Chapter III.) While therapists also used informatives and elaborations and clients occasionally used elicitations and prompts, it seems evident from this data that a division of labor has taken place. Therapists seek information and clients give it.

It is also evident that clients experience an increasing awareness of their responsibility to provide information if we examine the structure of clients' utterances which center around informatives. In general it may be seen that the structural complexity of these utterances increases over time. The following table illustrates this by breaking the data into quartiles and reporting the percentage of utterances by clients with three or more elaborations per utterance.

TABLE 6

CLIENT UTTERANCES WITH THREE OR MORE ELABORATIONS BY QUARTILE

Quartile	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Percent	10.46	21.51	28.48	39.53

This table shows a trend toward increasingly complex structures and by implication a trend toward more information-rich utterances by clients. The argument is that the more elaborations appended to an informative, the more structurally complex the utterance, (as demonstrated in Chapter III) and thus the higher the information content of the utterances.

The occurrence of prompts in therapists' speech also supports the claim that clients increasingly become more attuned to their job of providing information. Prompts, as was pointed out earlier, are a means of

eliciting information without asking for specific content. Thus, the increasing use of prompts by therapists is an indication of the clients' increasing practice of giving information without direct elicitation. Direct elicitation by therapists becomes less necessary as the clients learn to provide more specific information. An examination of this aspect of the data indicates that 55.60 per cent of the prompts used by therapists occurred in the second half of the sessions, while 44.39 per cent occurred in the first half. This portion of the data is not conclusive, but does represent a trend which supports Corollary 3.

As with corollaries one and two, the interactants' reflexive involvement in their talk is apparent at this level. That interactants spend a large amount of their talk time performing selected functions is not surprising. In fact, such an occurrence is predictable if one has only a basic knowledge of the situation. However, the fact that the trends described above are seen to develop within the sessions indicates the emergence of a perceptual agreement between both of those involved.

Corollary 4

The last corollary is that therapists are responsible for the organization and summary of information. The functional categories which represent this activity are markers, conclusions and meta statements. Markers are functions which mark boundaries in the discourse, although not

necessarily topical boundaries. Conclusions summarize preceding chunks of discourse. Meta statements function to place previous or current action in perspective. While these categories were not used often by either of the interactants (only 211 occurrences in all of the data) a very high percentage of them were used by therapists. In fact, 62.08 per cent (131) of all markers, meta statements and conclusions occurred in therapists' speech. Contrary to the type of finding used in support of the other corollaries, however, the use of these functions by clients did not decrease over time as one might have expected. Instead, they remained relatively stable across all of the data.

Nor do these classes of function show any particular pattern with regard to place of occurrence within the data. We might have expected, for example, that therapists would summarize information just prior to a topical change. There is no strong indication, however, of a trend in this direction. Conclusions or meta statements do not signal an approaching topic change. They may just as easily appear at any other point in the topic segment.

Summary

In this chapter a set of generalizations were presented and shown to be generated from the data yielded by the analytic system presented earlier. Further, these statements are shown to develop over time, and thus represent some dynamic interaction.

It is seen from this analysis that the analytic system is capable of producing logical arguments which might be used in hypothesis testing situations. More importantly, the analysis has shown that the data produced by the system is related in some way to the construct of negotiated reality as it was discussed in Chapter I. I argued there that the production of a partial description which explains participant behavior in context, which is generated from the data of talk, and which demonstrates development over time, constitutes an analogue to or a description of the subjective reality of the participants. It seems, then, that this approach to the analysis of interactive data offers some insights not available through more traditional forms of content analysis.

By allowing the researcher to consider the data in its full context this approach circumvents some of the problems discussed in Chapter I. Specifically, by eliminating the constraint that units of analysis be discretely defined, the system allows the researcher to fully take advantage of his or her own reflexive involvement in the data. By doing so, it is possible for investigators to use their own knowledge as communicators in assigning each occurrence to a category within the system.

Additionally this approach avoids a consideration of elements of discourse as isolated units of analysis. Each element may be considered in its full context, not

just as it relates to those elements in contiguous relationships. This feature of the system sets it apart from more traditional forms of analysis which do not consider the full contextuality of data.

A typical example of this difference is Bales' Interaction Process Analysis, which is perhaps the most influential content analytic system of the past several years.[1] Bales' system does focus on the functional aspects of language behavior in that units of such behavior are categorized according to perceived functions within the discourse. Bales' system, however, "specifically rules out . . . the question of how a series of acts relate to each other as a part of the larger context."[2] Thus Bales' system does not capture the full nature of the data as interactants respond to one another over a period of time.

Additionally systems such as Bales' tend to focus analysis on only one level of the data. (In Bales' case this level is comparable to the level of functions.) By so doing, such systems lose a considerable amount of data concerning how levels of discourse relate to one another. We do not, for example, see how topical change is achieved at the level of functions, exchanges, and so on.

Because it focuses on several levels the system

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[1]R. F. Bales, Interaction Process Analysis (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1951).

[2]Sinclair and Coulthard, Analysis of Discourse, p. 138.

used here is capable of demonstrating the reflexive involvement of the interactants themselves. In so doing a description is obtained which not only shows what is happening, but which suggests how it is happening in terms of the choices which each participant makes from among the options available, and which shows the pattern of those choices as they emerge over the course of each interaction.

In short this approach focuses not on outcomes but on processes. By providing descriptions of how interactants arrive at the perceptual balances, or lack of them, which are an end result of their talk, this approach provides insight not obtainable by systems which focus on predicting outcomes. While the data produced here does yield a description of what happens in a given case, its more important function is that it sheds insight into the process through which these outcomes are obtained. As was suggested in Chapter I, the discovery of rules alone is insufficient as an explanation of human interaction. The strong point of this approach to data is that it puts emphasis not on the entity's being, but on its becoming, to paraphrase Whitehead.[3]

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[3]Smith, "Communication Research," p. 175.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter II three research questions were posed. They were:

> (1) How well does the system cope with the data? That is, does it leave large amounts of data unclassified? Do the units of analysis fit the data in the sense that specific segments are recognizable as performing functions which fit the categories?
>
> (2) Does the system yield a potential for systematic inference on the basis of the ethnomethodological assumptions discussed earlier? In other words, what does the system allow us to say concerning the emergence of shared realities or perceptual patterns between interactants?
>
> (3) What changes, if any, are needed in the system to make it a more useful analytical device?

The first two of these questions have been answered directly in previous sections.

In Chapter III it was observed from a description of the system's application to the data that the system did not leave large amounts of data unclassified. While there were areas of data which were lost in the analysis, they constituted a very small percentage of the overall

data. The largest problem in this area was at the level of utterances where no meaningful way to cope with the categories of echoing, ellipticals and substitutes were found. It was pointed out, however, that this may be situationally bound, and thus more study with varying data is required for a decisive judgment to be made. The proportion of data lost, however, is not a true indicator of its importance. In a system such as the one presented here, the loss of one utterance could conceivably be significant. New, more sensitive categories need to be generated in order to more fully analyze the data at these levels.

Generally, however, it was observed that the units of analysis do conceptually fit occurrences in the data. Further, the components of the system are internally consistent insofar as the distinctions between levels of analysis do fit together, but do not present significant overlap. The units of analysis themselves are not definitionally discrete in the sense that occurrences may be assigned to a category purely on the basis of the definitions alone. Rather, a consideration of the occurrence in context is required. In other words, each event must be considered in the light of what preceded and followed it in order to make a categorical judgment possible. This was as intended, however, since the very notion of process forces us to such considerations. Further, this situation is seen largely as a positive aspect of the system. While

the possible lack of intercoder reliability which could result from the discretely defined variables deserves some future investigation, it would seem that the advantages gained by allowing investigators to realize and utilize their own reflexive involvement in the system does much to overcome the intercoder disability.

In Chapter IV it was shown that the system does yield a potential for systematic inference on the basis of the ethnomethodological assumptions discussed in the first chapter. By presenting a set of generalizations and showing that they were obtainable from data produced by the system, it was shown that systematic inferences could be made. Further, it was demonstrated that arguments could be made that the system is capable of demonstrating these features over time, and thus of demonstrating the negotiating process involved in arriving at subjective realities. It was further observed that the unique qualities of the system are in its focus on process rather than outcome, which results from an accounting of the participants' reflexive involvement in their talk at several levels of analysis.

The third research question is only partially answerable from this study. In general the system needs to be applied to data from several different contexts in order to determine its full sensitivity. Studies dealing with a wide variety of data need to be conducted.

Particularly useful would be studies involving data which is of a less formal and goal-directed nature than the counseling sessions used here. Such studies could serve to explore the full sensitivity of the system as well as functioning to check for problems which may become apparent as less structured data is analyzed.

One shortcoming of the system as it now stands is that a more effective notational system needs to be developed which copes more thoroughly with the relationships between occurrences which are widely separated within the data. For example, the system as it was presented here does not cope readily with loops, insofar as it is difficult to determine from the notations the previous point in the discourse they refer to. Problems such as this, however, are solvable as the system is applied to more data.

The task of this work, then, was to present an analytic system which more fully approached the process nature of interactive data; to apply it to a body of data and to assess its value in terms of the research questions just discussed. Narrowly speaking, this task has been accomplished. Critically, however, there is much of possible value which might be said.

In Chapter I many studies in the area of communication were criticized because of a general failure to use methodological approaches which cope with the process nature of communication. Sociological constructs such as roles

were particularly criticized in that they are inadequate to explain the rich variety and creativity of the communication process. It was also argued, following Hawes, that a rules approach, inductively arrived at from the data of talk, offered promise as a means of coping with communication as a process in ways not attainable by other means of analysis.[1] Further, it was argued that such descriptive work could advantageously proceed from the assumptive framework of ethnomethodology as it centers around the reflexive and indexical qualities of interaction. Communication was conceived of in this context as representing a process in which participants, through their talk, negotiated reality as a subjective understanding concerning appropriate and inappropriate action. The overall goal of this work, then, was to find a way of approaching communication data which was capable of capturing the process nature of the act. From this point of view the study presented here has two important implications.

First, a functional descriptive analysis of discourse appears to offer insights into the process of communication which are not recoverable from either structural analysis or more traditional forms of content analysis. This study has demonstrated that it is possible to generate insight from a functional account of an

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[1]Leonard C. Hawes, "Elements of a Model for Communication Process," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (February 1973):11-21.

interactive episode, which, by focusing on the interactants' reflexive involvement in their talk, reveals not outcome, but something of the process through which the outcome was achieved. This kind of explanatory schema seems to have much utility in comparison with other approaches, particularly the sociological constructs discussed earlier, in that it allows the flexibility necessary to account for the variety and use of options which are observable in everyday interaction.

Second, a functional approach which concerns itself with the indexical and reflexive aspects of communication is more capable of coping with our concept of process as it applies to communication. The functional analysis presented here not only accounts for, but highlights, the reflexive quality of communication. It does so by placing emphasis on the participants' speech as it serves not just as units of content within the discourse, but as a means of structuring the discourse itself and thus the relationship between, or the rules governing, the interactants. For example, by choosing to respond to attempted interruptions by continuing rather than stopping for the interruptor, therapists structure the discourse and their relationship with the client. Similarly, by providing conclusions at particular points in certain ways, therapists structure the interaction by telling clients how to arrange the data in their own thinking.

Clients also may be seen to exhibit this reflexive involvement in the interaction. For example, by choosing not to aid therapists in expressing a thought, by continually providing more information in their utterances, by the simple act of answering questions and not asking them, they give structure to the situation which recognizes their place within the negotiated reality of the situation. It is this reflexive involvement in their talk which is the heart of communication as a process as it was described in the first chapter.

Further, a functional analysis such as this highlights an account of the indexical qualities of the interaction by accounting for the relationship between functional aspects of utterances and the overall structuring of social relationships. When, for example, we demonstrate that the structuring of topic change is determined by the functional aspects of another level of the discourse, we have demonstrated this relationship.

In summary, while more work needs to be done, particularly in the areas mentioned above, there are strong indications that this approach to interactive data has much to offer as a means of discovering the process of communication.

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APPENDIX

(1)
T (Well, how can I help you today?)
C (Mk) (As) (Well, let's see,

(2)
T (Eli) (What kind of
C (Inf) I'm having trouble at school.)

(3)
T trouble?) (Eli) (What kind of trouble?)
C (Eli) (Huh?) (I just

(4)
T
C (Inf) don't make good grades . . . (Inf) don't do the work

(5)
T (You don't
C (Ela) either . . . and things like that)

(6)
T (P) feel good about your school work, or (Clu) something
C

(7)
T else.) (Eli) Which one?
C (Inf) Yeah. (Mk) Well, I feel bad about (Inf)

(8)
T
C not doing my school work/ and it's not going the

(9)
T
C (Ela) way I want it to.] [(Eli) Do you know why?/ (Ela) Have some

(10)
T idea?
C (Inf) Yeah, yeah,/ (Ela) I think I do.] [(P) Hard to put

(11)
T into words?
C (Ak) Yeah,/ well (Ela) I want to and I just

(12)
T
C (Ela) won't go to the trouble to do the work.] [Like

(13)
T (MS) during the day . . . what kind of (Eli) things do
C

(14)
T (Ela) you . . . what happens in a regular day . . .
C

(15)
T (Ela) let's say like today.
C (Ak) Well, let's see . . . Today I

(16)
T
C (Inf) went to . . . well, I usually get up late and miss

(17)
T
C my first class.] [(P) Late at work. Oh, you know . . .

(18)
T
C (Ela) about 9:30 and then usually . . . (Ela) piddle around

(19) T
C a while . . . (Ela) when I miss my first class . . and

(20) T
C then I usually go (Inf) to my second one . . . and uh . .

(21) T
C and then I'm coming (Inf) here . . but usually I go (Inf)

(22) T
C home and eat something . . (Inf) and watch a little T.V.

(23) T
C and then . . uh . . (Inf) go over to this girl's house

(24) T
C and eat dinner at night . . . (Ela) and that's pretty

(25) T typical. [(Eli) Then do you study then after supper.
C]

(26) T
C Uh, sometimes (Inf) I read a little bit . . (Ela) I study a

(27) T
C little bit and then you know . . (Ela) nothing very

(28) T intentional. [(Ak) Uh-huh. (Eli) What kind of hours how
C]

(29) T many hours are you taking?
C (Mk) Um . . (Inf) started out with

(30) T
C sixteen and I'm down to twelve right now. (Inf) You

(31) T dropped some right away or (Eli)
C Yeah, I dropped a (Ak)

(32) T
C calculus course and I think I'll be down to nine (Inf) (Inf)

(33) T pretty soon. (Eli)
C How come. Because I haven't gone to (Inf)

(34) T
C my history class except for once. Is that the

(35) T one early in the morning. (Eli)
C Yeah . . . and there's (Ak) (Ela)

(36) T
C no way I can catch up. So you read something (P)

(37) T but it doesn't necessarily pertain to your home-
C

(38) T work, does it. (Clu)
C Um, well I have an English course . . (Mk) (Inf)

(39) T
C and I read . .I'll read about half the stuff . . . (Inf)

(40) T
(Ela)
C study a little bit on my econ you know . . I

(41) T
(Ela)
C don't study as much as I need to.

(Ak)
Uh-huh . .

(42) T (MS)
well what you said before that you're . . trying
C

(43) T (P)
to have an idea what . . what it is that um, you
C

(44) T know that's making you . . that's not making you . .
C

(45) T that explains why you're not doing your school
C

(46) T work.
(Mk) (Inf)
C Well, I'm more interested in my social life

(47) T
(Ela) (Ela)
C actually not in school. I put more interest into

(48) T
C that than I will in school.

(49) T
(Eli)
So what happens
C

(50) T
(Eli)
when you have that . . . is it a dilemma or is it
C

(51) T (Ela) just something that either school . . . school
C

(52) T (Ela) work or social life when you have to make a
C

(53) T (Ela) decision . . . I have a test tomorrow . . and I
C

(54) T going to study or go out.
C (Ac) Uh social life I . .

(55) T (Ela) I'll try to do both of them you know . . and . .
C

(56) T (Ela) uh the social life has priority . . which it (Inf)
C

(57) T should.] [What's going on in your social life. (Eli)
C [Oh,

(58) T (Inf) not a whole lot really . . . I've got a couple of (Ela)
C

(59) T girls I'm seeing you know . . and . . and I go out (Ela)
C

(60) T with the guys about once a week or something.] [Do
C

(61)
T you . . do want to do your school work. (Eli)
C No, not (Inf)

(62)
T
C really . . ha. I'd rather make grades without (As) (Ela)

(63)
T
C doing it. Uh-huh. Is that why you're here . . (Ak) (Eli)

(64)
T you figure you want to do it or . . (Clu)
C (Uh . . I want (Mk)

(65)
T
C to get through . . I want to graduate is what I (Inf) (Ela)

(66)
T
C want and I'm . . . not too enthused about the (Ela)

(67)
T
C school work. Uh-huh . . and you came here (Ak)

(68)
T because . .
C Yeah. So why did you come here. (Eli)

(69)
T
C Cause it seems like . . I just can't get involved (Inf)

(70)
T
C in it. Can you maybe tell me what goes on . . I (Eli)

(71) T mean what you're thinking of you know . . when you
C

(72) T (Ela) get up in the morning and you go throughout the
C

(73) T (Ela) day/ and you know you know you have school work/
C

(74) T (Ela) and classes to go to or . .
C (Mk) Um . . . well when I

(75) T (Ela)
C get up I usually don't think too well . . it

(76) T (Ela)
C takes me a while to . . Uh . . it's well . . I

(77) T (Inf)
C just think what I'm going to do through the day

(78) T] (Eli) [Which is what.
C you know when I get up.] [(Mk) Well, you

(79) T (Inf) (Ela)
C know . . I'll go to class . . oh well I'm running

(80) T
C late . . I'll just wait you know . . the first

(81) T
C class isn't very (Inf) important anyway / I'd just (Inf) soon

T (Ak) Uh-huh.
(82)
C not go to that one anyway. . and then I do (Inf)

(83) T
C that . . and then (Inf) I come home and I think . . .

(84) T
C well I'll (Inf) have a hot dog to eat or something you

(85) T
C know . . well (Mk) usually after school I start

(86) T
C thinking about what I'm going to do that (Inf) night . .

(87) T
C or I'll already (Ela) have something planned you know

(88) T
C and I'll try to think of what that was.] [Right

(89) T after school. (P)] [What are you majoring in
C Yeah. (Inf)] [

(90) T now.] [Accounting. . / and you're (Ak)
C Accounting. (Inf)] [