

1 INTRODUCTION

“The peculiar problem of the L2 classroom is that ... the classroom, by its very nature, may not provide the contextual and interactional ingredients that make language use a skillful and relevant enterprise in natural settings.”

Van Lier, 1988: 99.

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This study is an account of the conceptualisation, design, implementation and evaluation of discursive interaction in an innovative EFL (English as a foreign language) proficiency program, conducted at a small private university in Japan, in 1997. It is a ‘situated study’ (Lave and Wenger 1991) of a curriculum which has been designed to transform the discursive and participatory experience of foreign language learning for young learners of English, who have mostly just graduated from the Japanese high school system.

For a variety of reasons, this earlier institutional experience largely constructs learners as recipients of a ‘transmitted’ pedagogy, consisting of rules and grammar/translation of the target language. High stakes examinations for university places, based largely on knowledge of language usage rather than communicative proficiency, establish an ‘economy’ of practice (Bourdieu 1991) where communication in the target language has little kudos or functional currency within Japanese society. Despite widespread awareness of this ‘problem’, mass institutional testing is more easily administered with little or no focus on communication and so a situation persists where post-high school

learners are unaccustomed and uncomfortable with communicative situations, resulting in disappointing L2 participation levels, among foreign language learners in universities (Anderson 1993).

The period when learners enter universities in their first year is a significant transition period, between the rigours of the so-called 'examination hell' (*juken senso*) of the final year of high school, and the start of four years of foreign language study. The discourse that results from learning to communicate, participating in 'social action' through a second language (hereafter L2), is very different from learning a language in terms of rules and usage; the majority of learners have little or no experience of sustained communication in the target language. The Kanda Curriculum therefore aims to provide an interactional environment where learners are required to collaboratively negotiate, plan and present significant parts of the curriculum in small groups, i.e. co-construct the curriculum together, instead of being the recipients of teachers' 'instructional discourse'. This is intended to transform the pedagogic practice of learning English for the learners, towards more participatory and active roles across a range of problem-solving activities and situations.

On a more abstract level, the study is a theoretical exposition and evaluation of an innovative curriculum in educational linguistics. The target language is not modelled as a list of rules, relationships and structures, for the learners have just emerged from this kind of educational practice; instead, the focus is on language in its conversational, interactive form, for

“conversational interaction has a “bedrock” status in relation to other institutionalised forms of interpersonal conduct. Not only is conversation the most pervasively used mode of interaction in social life and the form within which...language is first acquired, but also it consists of the fullest matrix of socially organised communicative practices and procedures.”

Heritage and Atkinson 1984: 12/13.

This notion of conversation or talk-in-interaction is helpful but is not sufficient as a theoretical base for this study; more accurately the focus of the curriculum is on *discourse*, which we may characterise as follows:

“...a form of social practice...a mode of action in which people act upon the world and especially upon each other...(there is a) dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure.”

Fairclough 1992: 63/4.

In this way, discourse should be understood not so much as a unit larger than a sentence, but as social practice (see also Candlin 1997b: viii; Sarangi and Coulthard 2000: xv). Once we adopt a critical stance to this ‘social practice’, relations of power are unavoidably implicated and Bourdieu, from his position as a sociologist, has pointed out the neglect of the *social relations* of interaction, within linguistics (1977). Apart from the more critical, usually European focus, in communicative language teaching (especially Pennycook 1989, 1994, 1998), most accounts of L2 language learning do not address relations of power in classrooms as an issue within itself (but see Norton 1997, 2000; Canagarajah 1999). This seems to be a result of a preoccupation with psycholinguistic and cognitive aspects of language learning, in the Anglo American applied linguistics scholarly domain until recently when a more ‘sociocultural turn’ has become apparent (see Norton 2000; Lantolf 2000; Kramsch

2000, for representative samples), in areas concerned with L2 pedagogy and educational linguistics.

Central to this account of an innovative pedagogy is the issue of how discursive interaction might be structured, in terms of social relations, raising issues of equality and symmetry in the co-construction of discourse. The language of L2 classrooms is usually co-constructed but in conventional teacher-fronted classrooms, discourse is often not between participants of equal status and there may be wide differences in symmetry of participation, owing to unequal status and/or proficiency level of participants. This issue is the point of departure for the structuring of classroom interaction, later in the study.

This study is sociocultural in that it is an attempt to explicate the relationships between the participatory behaviour of the focus learners and the institutional practices, both current and historical, that make up their biographies. The crucial factor in determining the subject position of the learner in classroom praxis concerns the translation of power and control into principles of communication (Bernstein 1996: 93). Where the locus of control of discourse rests with teachers, the participation of learners must be constrained, to varying degrees, in terms of acting in other than responsive ways. However, when we initiate significant changes in the order of discourse, we simultaneously transform social practice. It is 'transformation of social practice' that is the essential goal. As I remarked at the beginning of this chapter, the first year of university study for foreign language major learners, marks a transition from the examination-driven pedagogy of high schools to the beginning of a new kind of institution. The Kanda Curriculum has been designed with proactive or future-orientated goals in mind: providing learners with subject positions that allow for active and creative signifying practices in the target language. In this way, L2 education is here modelled as sets of communication with

distinctive and defining modalities of control, associated discourse types and hence, different kinds of pedagogic identities available for learners.

Returning to an earlier point, the study is first and foremost an account of social practice and this overarching *social* perspective must be reflected in the both research approach and methodology; a concern with social interaction necessarily entails engagement with social theory (Habermas 1970). Layder (1994) has written about a fundamental problem in sociology: that of reconciling macro and micro levels of social analysis, and his work is of great value for applied linguistic research, such as this. A micro analysis concentrates on more immediate or face-to-face encounters between people while a macro analysis concentrates on more general features of society such as organisations, institutions and culture. Layder (1993) puts forward the 'realist approach' as an attempt to bridge the gap between macro and micro phenomena, claiming that this expresses better the multifaceted nature of the empirical world, than both 'middle range theory' (Merton 1967) and 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Compared with the middle range theory or grounded theory, the realist approach is a layered or stratified model of society, and also of research, which includes both macro (structural and institutional) phenomena and the micro phenomena of interaction and behaviour. According to Layder (1993:8) this layering has the advantage that it focuses attention on the organic links between layers. Secondly, viewing social reality as a series of interdependent layers, each with its own distinctive characteristics highlights the *difference* between units. For my purposes, Layder's metaphor of a map is very useful since his scheme imposes a *logical coherence* and *graphic set of relations* between elements of the study which are all intertwined yet also distinct. Therefore, following Candlin (2000), I adopt the four

elements of Layder’s (1993: 72) research map as a model which drives the logical organisation of the study, consisting of the following:

- *context
- *setting
- *situated activity
- *self.

Research element	Research focus
CONTEXT	Macro social forms (e.g. class, gender, ethnic relations)
SETTING	Immediate environment of social activity (schools, family, factory)
SITUATED ACTIVITY	Dynamics of face-to-face interaction
SELF	Biographical experience and social involvements

Table 1.1. Layder’s research map, adapted from Layder 1993: 8. (n.b. see Layder 1993: 72 for a more fully developed framework of research focus in the above map.)

While related, each element has its own distinctive characteristics and appropriate research focus, and the twin features of history and power permeate the operation of all the elements, although they operate in ways that are different. As for social activity, the elements operate in two important dimensions: vertically, from one layer to another, and also horizontally, across individual layers, with each one having its own independent time frame.

Layder (*ibid.*) states that no element takes priority over another, and in setting out the research agenda of the Kanda Curriculum, I choose to move from the macro

element of ‘context’ down to the micro element of ‘self’; this logically expresses the embedded nature of self and situated activity within institutional and societal settings and contexts.

Research element	Research focus
CONTEXT	Overarching macrosocial setting (sociohistorical analysis)
SETTING	Immediate environment of social setting (classroom within particular institution: kinesic and ethnographic analysis)
SITUATED ACTIVITY	Micro-structures of interaction, situated focus: analysed through textual analysis – register/systemic functional linguistics and ethnography/ ethnomethodology
SELF	Biographical experience (interviews, questionnaires)

Table 1.2. Research map of the Kanda Curriculum, derived from Layder (1993).

The first element, ‘context’, is the macro level of social organisation and refers to: ‘values, traditions, forms of social and economic organisation and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution...’ (Layder 1993: 72). In the context of this study, bearing in mind Layder’s emphasis on history and power, this points to the *sociohistorical* role of English language pedagogy in Japan, in the sense of assessing and sorting high school graduates into universities and colleges of differential rankings. This process, enabled through large scale normative testing which stresses knowledge of usage over communicative proficiency, enables Japanese society to establish elites and

graduations of 'symbolic status' for young people, depending on the institution of higher learning attended (see Chapter 4). This process has proved historically to be efficient as a meritocratic sorting mechanism, has achieved stability for this reason, and so is deeply implicated in establishing hierarchies both within private corporations and also organisations within the public service.

The second element, that of 'setting' (*ibid.*: 72) refers to 'intermediate social organisation', including specific institutions and organisations of various kinds. In the context of this study, this means the *transition in educational practice*, from high school settings, with associated goals, that the focus learners have graduated from, and the institutional (university) setting of the Kanda Curriculum. The university/research site in question does not occupy a high status position in terms of national ranking, nor do its alumni represent a significant network in the wider society, in terms of power and influence. Bernstein (1996: 74) notes that such institutions cannot expect to attract 'star' students on the basis of historical reputation and so must devote a lot of attention to the marketing possibilities of their pedagogies. This is very true of the genesis of the Kanda Curriculum and Bernstein's further observation (*ibid.*) that such institutions are likely to develop *projected* identities, is also very apt. Institutions that lack high levels of public recognition and symbolic status, must strive harder to construct a strong reputation based on the pedagogy they provide. In the context of this study, the focus is the transition from a 'performance' (as in high school: largely transmitted pedagogy) to a 'competence' (Bernstein 1996) model of L2 pedagogy, with the notion of constructivism at its core. Bernstein's ideas are developed more fully in Chapter 2.

Layder's third element, 'situated activity' has as its research focus: 'face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above (earlier two elements) contexts and settings.' This makes up

the prime data of my evaluation of the Kanda Curriculum (Chapter 6) and Layder's following comments are particularly apt for this study: "...focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings and subjective dispositions of individuals."

Finally, the fourth element, 'self' implies a research focus on 'self-identity and individual's social experience'. This is influenced by the previous elements as they interact with the psychobiography of the individual (see Chapter 4.3) and implies an ethnographic research orientation (Chapter 5.3). Layder's framework is very useful for identifying, integrating and relating key elements of the study, while also suggesting the individual research focus of each. This part of the thesis is developed in more depth in Chapter 5.

In scope, the study is driven by two central perspectives that characterise the approach to applied linguistics articulated by Candlin (1987): the first is that applied linguistics is social and the second is that it is problem-centred. The study hinges on the social praxis of interaction within the curriculum and language in this sense is always embodied; it is a form of social action ('discourse') rather than a formal system or rules, abstracted away from its (necessary) context of use. The study then falls within the domain of applied linguistics generally, and then in descending rank order: what van Lier has termed 'educational linguistics' (1990); language pedagogical research, as opposed to mainstream 'SLA' - with its cognitive connotations; and finally, classroom research.

The orientation is fundamentally sociocultural; the study explicates '...the relationships between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional and historical situations in which this functioning occurs, on the other side' (Wertsch *et al.* 1995: 3). This strand of research is attaining wider acceptance in

applied linguistic and educational academic circles recently, and a representative sample is the recent edited collection of papers in Lantolf (2000a).

I believe that the significance of the study is twofold. Firstly, it is a deconstruction and interpretation of situated classroom interaction within a theorised curriculum framework. There are no studies to my knowledge that explicitly address the relationship between pedagogic control relations, the discourse of L2 classrooms and the potential to transform pedagogic subject positions, in a similar context to this.

Secondly, I believe that the study is significant in terms of the research methodology and philosophical position that drives it. The study centres upon the interactional 'lifeworld' of participants and represents a break away from traditional notions in applied linguistics of 'objectivity' as unitising and generalising, with the goal of prediction and control, making judgements that can be anchored in certainty, beyond subjective intuition. Instead the account is interpretive (hermeneutic) and seeks to find commonalities and meanings, in the sense of exemplars or paradigm cases, that embody the actions and dispositions of participants. Such meanings are necessarily embodied and the fundamental point is that context is integral to, and also constructed in, all such actions. The study is therefore ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically constructivist; it seeks *understanding* (*Verstehen*) rather than theory and does not seek to control the environment for experimental purposes; it is also non- foundationalist.

I am therefore trialling an innovative curriculum, describing and evaluating it in an interpretative fashion as a case study. I believe that this will be a significant contribution to EFL curriculum studies.

I have discussed the goals of the curriculum and the goals of the study in outline above and these are elaborated in greater detail in the following section.

1.2 GOALS OF THE STUDY

PEDAGOGIC GOALS

As I discuss later in the study (Chapters 4.1 and 4.2), graduating from high school and entering university in Japan, as an English language major, represents a major transition in terms of social role and institutional practices. This transition time is very important. Elkonin (1972) sees institutional practice as the main source of psychic development of the individual and notes that different institutions: home, daycare, school, are dominated by different activities, each of which acquires the role as leading activities in different periods in a person's life (Hedegaard *et al.* 1999: 14). Elkonin's theory therefore relates the diversity of human development to the practices of societal institutions.

Young learners of English beginning their first year in university have usually graduated from very structural curricula, characterised by transmission pedagogies, which have constructed pedagogic subject positions in a very passive way. Assuming, from sociocultural theory (Wertsch 1985), that humans generate meaning from structures of their biographical experience and cumulative actions, it is not surprising that accounts of minimal and inadequate participation in interaction through English, in university classes, abound in Japan (Wadden 1993, *inter alia*).

In this (admittedly stereotypical) situation, many learners will have developed a 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1997) or disposition towards communication in English that is constrained by feelings of unnaturalness, anxiety about errors, etc. The specific problem that is of interest to this study is not connected at all with knowledge of the rules of English language *usage*, which most learners are fairly familiar with; rather, it concerns a deficit in prior experience and current opportunities for learning to

communicate. 'Communication' is a very unspecified term if invoked in contexts of applied linguistics and accordingly I theorise the term in some depth, in section 1.4. At this point however, it is enough to point out that the discourse resulting from learning to 'communicate' in a foreign language is very different from that of learning the language in terms of rules. The goal of the curriculum is to engender the former for learners, in contrast with the latter, which is a fair summary of the prior experience of English L2 pedagogy of most of the young people in the first year of university study.

The Kanda Curriculum has therefore been designed with the goal of facilitating a *transformation of (discursive) participation* (Rogoff 1994, 1995; Lave and Wenger 1991, Wertsch 1985, *inter alia*) in the practice of English language learning, at the critical transition period between institutions, in the first year of a four-year course of English study at university. The notion of transformation of practice is perhaps more meaningful than it might at first appear. According to Rogoff (*ibid.*: 209), taking a sociocultural view of development in these terms, instead of transmission of knowledge from others, or the acquisition or discovery of knowledge by oneself, amounts to a clear paradigm shift, away from the pivotal assumptions of cognitive science.

Implicated in transformation of participation is change in the *consciousness* of the individual, where consciousness is understood as the "...objectively observable organisation of behaviour that is imposed on humans through participation in sociocultural practices" (Vygotsky, cited in Wertsch 1985: 187). Van Lier (1996: 69) has conducted a very useful overview of the way that different models and notions of 'consciousness' have been appropriated in applied linguistics; for the purposes of this study however, consciousness is best understood in terms of what one *does*. Activity and practice are assigned priority over representation.

The origins of the centrality of the subject's consciousness in sociocultural theory lie in the work of Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1979) looked to the writings of Spinoza, Marx, Engels and Hegel to provide the foundations of an explanatory principle of consciousness and, following Spinoza, proposed that since thinking is the function of the brain, the explanation of the process is not to be found in the internal structure of the organ. Instead, explanations of brain function are to be found in the interaction between humans and other humans and sociocultural artifacts (Lantolf and Appel 1994:4). This means that social activity (or, to be more accurate, *mediated* activity, Wertsch 1985) has to be considered as the explanatory principle for understanding consciousness, since it is only through activity that consciousness can arise in the first place.

If we attempt to make systemic change in a discursive order, i.e. pedagogic practice, these changes are not superficial and restricted to the level of individual action, even though they may originate at the individual level. The implication is instead one of a social community (or in this particular case, an institution) changing its ways of doing and speaking (Foucault 1969). Chapter 2 critically examines the ways in which different social orders generate specific discursive orders and the later sections link different modes of L2 pedagogic practice with the positioning of different types of pedagogic subject.

Chapter 3 draws upon the arguments from chapters 1 and 2 and theorises an optimal design for the curriculum, given the resources available in the institutional setting where the research was carried out. The curriculum is modelled in terms of providing an interactive and collaborative environment in which learners must negotiate collective and individual roles and actions together, in small groups. Negotiation in this sense is not on 'meaning' but on reaching agreement, and it is

this ongoing negotiated setting and trying to achieve goals; goals in the sense of ongoing milestones in activity rather than just teleological end-points, that is intended to drive the interactive pragmatics of the curriculum. In this way, an environment is engineered where learners may develop in terms of coping with and collaboratively solving new kinds of interactive dilemmas and problems in English.

As discussed in Chapter 3.2, the syllabus aims to provide learners with opportunities to interact together in the completion of tasks and activities which implicate a *range* of discourse modalities, or language types. For example, task characteristics can be described in terms of the discourse types that they tend to implicate along the dimensions of: tight-loose, closed-open and procedural-interpretive (Chapter 3.2, later). Rather than asserting the greater utility of a type or narrow range of discourse types, I have instead designed the syllabus with the goal of including as wide a range of activities and discourse types as possible (Chapter 3.4).

RESEARCH GOALS

While the section above sets out the goals of the curriculum from the learners' point of view, the research goals of the study have a different focus. In chapter 3 later, I map out a 'provisional' syllabus (Candlin 1984) which consists of blueprints of tasks and pieces of work that learners are supposed to complete in small collaborative groups. This provisional syllabus was drawn up with the intention of having learners solve problems across a range of different activities and discourse types, according to the principles elaborated in Chapters 1 and 2, and discussed in the section above.

The research component of the study is concerned with recording and observing interaction that actually occurs in the curriculum, with two 'case study' groups (three persons each) of focus learners, and evaluating this *emergent* syllabus (what actually

happens) against the strategic plan. Using an ethnographic approach, the aim is to first, empirically describe the 'modalities of interaction' (to use for the moment, a highly unspecified term); using this description as a basis for evaluating the curriculum, later.

In Chapter 6, discourse analysis of classroom interaction is conducted in order to empirically describe the different 'modalities' of interaction afforded by different sets of activities, and hence interpret the efficacy of these different activities and the way they differentially afford opportunities for learner participation in the co-construction of the curriculum. Following Candlin and Hyland (1999) I adopt a three-part investigation, set out in greater detail in Chapter 5.4:

- a. TEXT. Linguistic and discursive *description*
- b. PROCESS. Hermeneutic and ethnomethodological *interpretation*
- c. PRACTICE. Sociological and ethnographically grounded *accounting*.

The *textual* description (part a) uses systemic functional linguistics to describe variation in the situational context (register) of discourse in the classroom. This allows us to model the ways in which discourse types vary according to activity, so allowing us to evaluate (at least in probabilistic terms) the ways in which certain activities tend to implicate or constrain particular discourse types. In this way, it is possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the syllabus in terms of the kinds of discourse (empirically described through systemic linguistic theory) that occur at different stages of the syllabus cycle (described in Chapter 3.4).

The interpretation of *process* (part b, above) takes an ethnomethodological perspective on discourse, examining how participants *strategically* co-construct the interactional culture of the classroom. This is related to the textual description in part

a, preceding, but is different in that it does not analyse text as a reified product but rather looks at the dynamic, on-line process by which discourse is collaboratively produced. Central to this process are the strategic and collaborative resources of participants through which context, in the situational sense of discourse, emerges on-line in talk.

Despite the dialogical principles outlined in Chapter 1.4 (following), an ethnomethodological perspective is useful not only for interpreting discourse as a collaborative achievement; but also, in a more monological sense, for deriving a sense of an interactional 'division of labour' within the group, or interactive profiles for each learner. Together, parts a and b account for Layder's 'situated activity' component in his 1993 research map, set out in Chapter 1.1, earlier.

Finally, approaching discourse as social practice (part c) shifts the focus away from the micro-structures of situated activity, as in parts a and b, and instead addresses the 'context' (macro-social order) 'setting' (immediate environment) and 'self' (biographical experience) components of Layder's (1993) research map. The sociological aspect of *practice* provides a sociohistorical context in which current praxis is embedded, while the ethnographic accounting allows for 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) to secure an in-depth description of interaction in the curriculum.

The philosophical and methodological frameworks of the study are set out in detail in Chapter 5. At this point it is sufficient to state that the research orientation is essentially interpretive, contextualised and situated, and is conducted through classroom ethnography, with a multi-methodological focus. This focus on an 'ecologically valid' (Cicourel 1992) interpretation of social semiotic behaviour is consistent with the centrality of the modelling of *context* throughout the study.

Context is seen both as institutionally framed and co-constructed by discursive participants, and also as something that has interdependent materialist and semiotic realisations (see later, Chapter 1.4.3).

The research component of the study (Chapters 5 and 6) does not seek to verify or falsify *a priori* hypotheses in the epistemological tradition of positivism (perhaps more accurately, 'post-positivism', at the current time: see Denzin and Lincoln 1998c). Instead, in epistemological terms, the constructivist/interpretive (Schwandt 1998; Guba and Lincoln 1998) orientation involves the goal of understanding (*Verstehen*) the L2 classroom as a particular site of social practice, from the point of view of participants themselves. From the researcher's point of view, in order to understand this interactional 'lifeworld' or culture, one must interpret it (Schwandt 1998: 222). Given the contextualised and situated nature of the study, it is not possible to claim that the findings can be generalised to larger populations but this does not mean that studies of this nature have little value. As Stenhouse (1984) points out, educational ethnographies such as this can provide documentary evidence for the discussion of practice, for comparisons with teachers' own particular cases, and may provide an account of critical standards by which teachers can interpret and evaluate their own standards.

1.3 OUTLINE OF THESIS

The following is a summary of the thesis as a whole, providing a gloss of each chapter and indicating how the component parts are integrated.

***Chapter 1**

Sections 1.1 to 1.3 lay out the general introduction and present the theoretical and conceptual orientation of the study and the research frame (Layder 1993). Section 1.4 theorises discourse and communication as the principal semiotic system that mediates collective human activity, and this is foundational to the rest of the study.

***Chapter 2**

This chapter shifts the discussion from issues of discourse and communication, to the social relations and cultural, historical and institutional contexts of interaction that constitute the *discursive identities* of human subjects. A central notion here (section 2.3) is the way that power and control relations translate into principles of communication (Bernstein 1996; Foucault 1969) and how these modalities of communication differentially regulate consciousness (Bernstein 1996: 18). The chapter begins with a (section 2.1) discussion of the classroom as a 'community of learners' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Breen 1985, 2001)) with a distinct communal culture. Section 2.2 is a theoretical overview of models of pedagogy that construct learner identities in either active, signifying roles, or passive, responsive ways (Bernstein 1996), while section 2.4 discusses agency in human interaction from the perspective of the 'investment' that subjects have in the outcomes of different modes of interaction (Norton 2000). Section 2.5 theorises communication in terms of the achievement of shared understanding and consensus (Habermas 1984) between participants and this provides the model for the Kanda Curriculum in Chapter 3, later. Related to Norton's (2000) notion of 'investment' earlier, section 2.6 discusses ideas of 'autonomy' in educational settings and links these with issues of motivation (Dörnyei 2001). Chapter 2 finishes with a theoretical analysis (section 2.7) of different participation formats in L2 learning contexts and the final

sub-section foreshadows discussion of the modelling of the Kanda Curriculum in the following chapter.

Chapters 1 and 2 form the conceptual base of the study that informs the remaining chapters.

***Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 sets out the principles and design of the (innovative) Kanda Curriculum and these are largely built around the ideas discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 above.

The Kanda Curriculum is a variation of the process syllabus of Breen and Candlin (1980), which essentially aims to for a strong degree of learner control and initiative in the direction of the syllabus (section 3.1); in this particular instance, it is learner initiative in the collaborative (between peers) negotiation of ‘procedural action’ that is the significant and defining feature. This resonates very well with Habermas’ (1984) ‘communicative action’ and the latter notion forms the conceptual template around which interaction in the curriculum is modelled. Section 3.3 explores the relationship between tasks and activities and extrapolating from this, sets out the design of the syllabus in a conceptual sense. Section 3.3 models the classroom community and the syllabus in terms of an ecology, where learners interact with each other and the syllabus in order to ‘co-construct’ the curriculum, rather than react as consumers to a transmission model of pedagogy, with clear definitions of what must be ‘acquired’ by learners.

Section 3.4 discusses the syllabus cycle and explains the features of its four component parts and the kinds of interaction that these are supposed to

‘facilitate’. The remainder of the chapter discusses the roles of teachers and learners (section 3.5) in terms that are consistent with the goals of the curriculum (in Chapter 1.3) and the spatial organization and grouping of learners (section 3.5) in the model classroom that was designed for the innovative curriculum.

***Chapter 4**

This chapter ‘contextualises’ the study for the later (Chapter 6) analysis of data in three important ways. Firstly, section 4.1 is a survey of sociocultural aspects of L2 learning in high schools in Japan: this is important for understanding the prior institutional enculturation of the learners in the Kanda Curriculum.

Secondly, section 4.2 provides a sociohistorical analysis of the history of the learning of English in Japan and sets out to explain how current institutional practices, based largely around transmission pedagogies and the downplaying of oral/aural proficiency, have attained a degree of stability in Japanese educational culture.

Finally, section 4.3 presents individual biographies of the six focus learners in the study and discusses interview and worksheet data of their initial reactions to the innovative curriculum, as a transition from their previous experience of L2 learning.

***Chapter 5**

Chapters 5 and 6 make up the research component of the study and Chapter 5 provides the theoretical underpinnings of the later data analysis (Chapter 6). The scope of the chapter is broad and there is an organic linkage between conceptual

discussion of the earlier part and the methodological section (driven by the former) at the end.

Specifically, section 5.1 situates the study within the wider context of competing paradigms in applied linguistic research, providing a gloss of the different assumptions of each. Section 5.2 focuses on the constructivist/interpretive paradigm which underpins the study as a whole and in section 5.3, I discuss ethnography as the approach that I take, consistent with the earlier (Chapter 2) modeling of the research site as a 'culture'. Section 5.4 is complex and presents in detail the methodology that I adopt for the modeling and analysis of discursive interaction in the classroom; following Candlin and Hyland (1999) this is a three part investigation: text, process and practice (discussed earlier in section 1.2).

Finally, section 5.5 presents information about the history of the research project, and explains and justifies the transcription convention used for the representation and analysis of classroom interaction.

***Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 presents excerpts from the complete transcripts of interaction in the curriculum and analyses these according to the three-part approach detailed in the previous section, above.

The data analysis is divided into four sections which each corresponds with the four stages of the syllabus cycle set out in Chapter 3.4 and represented graphically in Diagram 3.1. The main purpose of the analysis is to search for commonalities within each stage of the syllabus cycle and empirically describe the discourse

within each stage. From this description we can then evaluate the extent to which each stage *differentially* affords or constrains the pedagogical goals of the curriculum (see Chapter 1.2). This interaction represents the ‘emergent syllabus’ and it is the tension between this data and the provisional syllabus (Candlin 1984) as set out in Chapter 3.4, that drives the research component of the study.

***Chapter 7**

Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the study and evaluates the curriculum from the point of view of: a summary of interaction (section 7.1.1); a summary of learner perspectives, drawn from interview data and worksheets (section 7.1.2); and a summary of teacher perspectives, taken from the two focus teachers, on their reactions to trialling the curriculum.

Finally, section 7.2 concludes the study by drawing together the main points that have emerged throughout the study and emphasising those of most significance.

1.4 DIALOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN COMMUNICATION

The first step in developing a study of discourse and action must be to articulate a principle or conceptual framework that drives, integrates and provides internal consistency for the various components of the study. A linguistic theory *per se* is not appropriate in this instance since the study is primarily concerned with the sociopragmatics of communication and, in a collective and distributed sense, cognition. I therefore follow a number of scholars including Markova and Foppa (1990), Markova (1992), Holquist (1990), Rommetveit (1992) and Linell (1998) in

using the general epistemology of 'dialogism' in human communication, for this purpose. In fact, the notion of dialogism that I develop below amounts to a *theory* in the sense of Layder (1993) where

"...theories should be regarded as 'networks' or 'integrated clusterings' of concepts, propositions and 'world-views' ... In this sense they are rather more than simple specifications of the way in which two or more variables relate to each other in the empirical world."

Layder 1993: 15.

'Dialogism' originally referred to the humanistic-literary tradition established by the Neo-Kantian philosophers of the 1920s and early 1930s (Markova, 1992) but now usually means the epistemological mode of the heteroglossic theory of the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin: the simultaneous expression of different speech intentions, genres and speech types, performed in a literary work or in ordinary speech (Markova, 1992). The term 'dialogue' was broadened by Bakhtin in Volosinov (1973) to encompass any sphere of spoken communication. Markova (1992) claims that generally, dialogism is the epistemology of the human sciences because cognition of human beings cannot be otherwise: the activity of one who acknowledges the other person is always in a dialogical activity. Dialogism in its broad sense, then means an interindividual and intertextual approach to the study of mind and language, which is perhaps a less obvious claim than it first appears. A very useful illustration of this comes from Bateson (1980) when he discusses the example of 'aggression', which we might assume to be an antisocial trait of the individual. However from a dialogical perspective this is not an individual characteristic but is rather a function or characteristic of one's interaction with others. To borrow from the metaphor of Leontiev's Activity Theory (discussed later),

'aggression' then is something that is *co-constructed* in joint activity with others, rather than existing '*a priori*'.

Of the scholars mentioned earlier, Rommetveit and Linell in particular, employ dialogism as a framework for the study of talk-in-interaction. Linell (1998) claims that his work on discourse does not constitute an application of pure Bakhtinian thinking but instead, the principle is an elaboration of what Bakhtin would term the 'dialogical principle' (Todorov, 1984) and deals with reflexive relations between discourse contexts, co-texts, social participation frameworks and activity types.

Dialogism therefore stresses interactional and contextual features of human discourse, action and thinking and constructs the individual as 'in dialogue' with interlocutors and contexts (Linell, 1990: 35). Communicative actions are always other-orientated and so must be represented in social-interactional terms, rather than intramental and individual terms. Both Rommetveit (1992) and Linell (1998) use the term 'monological' in structural opposition to 'dialogism' to signify the antithetical paradigm which is the dominant theoretical framework in the language sciences.

This is a useful heuristic, since most theoretical stances suppose some rival theory or stance through which each mutually defines the other. Basically, monological frameworks adopt some of the following theories: cognition as individually-based information processing, communication as information transfer and language as a code. Returning to Bateson's example of aggression, a monological approach would tend to foreground the aspect of individual trait, with history and co-participants as background setting. The claims and counter-claims of dialogism and monologism are elaborated more fully in Chapter 5.1, which is more directly concerned with issues of methodology in researching discursive practice.

Linell (1990) identifies four intellectual traditions in the 20th century philosophy of the social and human sciences that he believes have exerted decisive influence on modern dialogism. These include:

- Phenomenology, entailing perspectives and multiple realities
- American pragmatism, especially that of William James
- Symbolic interactionism and social behaviourism, especially the work of George Herbert Mead
- Sociocultural theory, including activity types and semiotic mediation.

In a related vein, Gee (1999) discusses movements in a wide variety of disciplines which have figured largely in the 'social turn' of the last few decades. He identifies (*ibid.*) the first half of the 20th century with a focus on individual behaviour (behaviourism), the middle part of the century with positivism and the current period with a focus on social and cultural interaction. We may plausibly see the latter in terms of a dialogical development away from monological perspectives in psychology and the humanities. Gee (*ibid.*) discusses a wide range of movements in this "social turn" including, among others: ethnomethodology, discursive psychology, sociohistorical psychology, situated cognition and critical discourse analysis.

It is necessary to develop further some theoretical ideas, briefly glossed above, that derive from dialogism, in order to model the Kanda Curriculum in a later part of the study (Chapter 3). Rather than make a selection from the wide array of fields and sub fields briefly mentioned above, and summarize each in turn, I attempt in the next section to instead *integrate* several of the key notions discussed earlier. These form three interrelated perspectives on talk-in-interaction or discourse, that form a conceptual foundation for the study. These three perspectives are: cognition, action

and context. To some extent these overlap and so the boundaries that I have drawn are unavoidably arbitrary in parts.

1.4.1 LANGUAGE AS COGNITION

The 'other-orientated' nature of dialogism described above problematises the assumption of cognitive psychology that cognition is the inner world of perception, storage and inferences, set against an outer world of 'context'. Potter (1998) respecifies cognition by suggesting that 'cognition' and 'reality', conventionally the inner and the outer, can be treated as the *same* in talk-in-interaction, as things that are formulated, attended to, and orientated to, by participants. Rather than treating cognition as prior to and inseparable from interaction, it is something that is managed in, constituted in, and constructed in interaction.

With a growing acceptance of a *constructivist* view of human cognition (Palincsar, 1998), comes the logical idea that social processes should be treated as cognitions (Resnick, 1991) [in Saloman]. Several scholars have captured this collaborative and emergent sense of the cognitive-in-talk, including Cole's (1991), Schegloff's (1991) and Wertsch's 'socially shared cognition'; Saloman's (1993) 'distributed cognition'; and Edwards and Potter's (1992) 'discursive psychology'. However it is Schegloff's (1991) account that is particularly relevant for my purposes since he articulates most comprehensively the emergent, contingent and collaborative nature of talk-in-interaction: cognition that is distributed between participants.

Schegloff (1991) discusses a shift from terms such as 'common culture' or 'shared knowledge' to 'socially shared cognition' and traces this to Garfinkel's (1967) attack on the notion of common or shared knowledge that was roughly equal to the idea

of separate memory drums having identical contents. Instead, Garfinkel proposed a *procedural* sense of common or shared sets of practices by which actions and stances could be predicted and displayed as orientated to 'knowledge held in common' - knowledge that could be reconfirmed, modified and expanded. These are the roots of ethnomethodology.

Schegloff (*ibid.*) focuses on what he terms the 'interface between interaction and cognition' (1991:151), or mechanisms for organising talk-in-interaction, and in particular analyses *turn-taking* and *repair*. In common with other scholars glossed at the start of this section, he locates the domain of social action and interaction as being outside of the cognitive apparatus itself; the world of interaction has its own structures and constraints. In particular, he identifies turns in talk as the basic natural environment for utterances and it is this which lends the thoroughly interactional character to conversation between members of social groups. A second element intrinsic to the interactional context of natural language is the organisation of repair, the means by which participants in talk can address problems in speaking, hearing and understanding the talk. In this connection, Schegloff raises a very interesting point. The presence of such organisation in all talk-in-interaction means that the resources of natural language need not be unambiguous. Natural languages need not have invariant mappings of signs or symbols and their signifieds; they need not have a syntax that assigns literal interpretation to expressions. They may be used in idiomatic, metaphoric and other non-literal ways. Flexible arrangements and ambiguity may be permitted because repair is available to catch problems in speaking and hearing as they arise.

Thirdly, and of particular significance to the focus of the study, Schegloff focuses on *intersubjectivity* and ways that it is furnished through organisation of repair. By 'intersubjectivity' he means the maintenance of a world (including the development

of the interaction itself) understood as the same world by participants, and in this way he equates 'intersubjectivity' with 'socially shared cognition': we may also term this 'distributed cognition'. "Interaction and talk-in-interaction are structured environments for action and cognition, and they both shape the constitution of the actions and utterances needing to be cognised and the contingencies for solving them" (1991:168). This stresses an orientation to the organisation of activities, of conduct, and the practices by which activities and conduct are produced and ordered; this does not mean however that intersubjectivity is an all-or-nothing concept. It may be achieved to varying degrees by participants in speech events, or the researcher's analysis of talk may even focus on the failure of participants to achieve intersubjectivity (Matusov, 1998). It is clear that if we take collaborative attempts at co-construction of meaning to be the point of interest for research purposes, our approach must differ widely from studies in which the cognitive apparatus itself is the focus of interest.

The perspective here of cognition that is distributed between participants in collaborative activity leads away from a primary focus on the intramental processes in the brain of the individual. The practice of cognitive psychology involves abstracting people from interactions as far as possible while a framework of distributed or socially shared cognition assumes that interaction itself becomes the site of studying cognition. In this way we must look at embodied examples of interaction involving participants situated in a dynamic world of social affairs, or in contexts of actual or *situated* cognition (Lave 1988, Lave and Wenger 1991, Rogoff 1995, Wenger 1998, Cobb and Bowers 1999). I also discuss the idea of situated cognition (usually termed situated learning) in the next chapter, in the context of communities of practice but it is useful here to summarise the main differences between the fundamental assumptions of the two frameworks. Cognitive psychology assumes that knowledge can be acquired in one setting and transferred

to another while situated perspectives are always embodied in social practice. We can say that these positions are incommensurable as exemplars of monologism and dialogism respectively.

Since a dialogical account rejects a primary focus on intramental information processing, we must respecify the mechanisms by which distributed cognition operates. I have discussed the dynamic process of reaching intersubjectivity through repair in interaction but a semiotic account is further needed to demonstrate *how* such interaction is mediated. In order to do this, it is necessary to elaborate on the nature of the linguistic sign and then discuss the work of the Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky.

An elaboration of semiotic principles is foundational for understanding distributed cognition, with the linguistic sign at the centre. Put very simply, if we model natural language as a communal *resource* for making meaning, we can say that the 'mental map' that members of the language community share, is in fact a semiotic map with meaning-making potential. If meaning potential resides in the sign, then signification and hence meaning occurs when participants signify with each other in interaction. Cognition between, rather than inside individuals, is *mediated* via the linguistic sign. Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) point out that in contradistinction to the assumptions of cognitive science, they treat 'information' as meaning rather than as knowledge and they interpret language as a semiotic system rather than a system of the human mind. This semiotic system, the activity of signs, is best seen as taking place within the world and not in 'minds'.

There are two major traditions of semiotics in the West: the American one inaugurated by Charles Peirce (see Hoopes [ed.]: 1991) and the European one of Ferdinand de Saussure (1978), which differ markedly. The Peircian tradition

emphasises semiosis as the continuously dynamic and productive activity of signs with a triadic relation; Saussure was concerned more with relatively stable structures such as the syntactic and phonemic structures of a language. Further elaboration is not necessary here but it is important to emphasize the key point from the end of this section: foregrounding a semiotic system in human communication implicates meaning *within* the sign rather than within the minds of interacting participants. This does not however suggest that significations in discourse must be regarded as invariant, since a dialogical perspective holds that meaning is emergent, negotiable and constructed across turns and episodes of interaction.

Once we understand meaning as something that is outside the individual in the semiotic environment it is easy to grasp the essence of Vygotsky's (1962, 1987) idea that human consciousness is fundamentally *mediated* mental (and discursive) activity whereby development proceeds not as the unfolding of inborn capacities, but as the transformation of innate capacities once they interact with socially constructed mediational means (Lantolf and Pavlenko 1995). Therefore the child does not so much develop by externalising her internal thoughts, rather she internalises verbal interactions from the external social environment, and recontextualises these when she initiates communication with others. When trying to describe a system of communication one begins in the community and arrives at the individual, not the other way round.

Vygotsky's position was therefore different from Piaget's, who held that egocentric speech was a compromise leading from primary autism to socialisation; Vygotsky, on the other hand, interpreted this as internalisation of speech from the external social environment. Here the parallels with Halliday's theory of a language as a 'social semiotic' (1978) are apparent: from the very start of the child's development the external social environment is implicated in the speech (and indeed thought) of

the child. Vygotsky's ideas stand in strong contrast with solipsistic views of development which minimise cultural, historical and environmental influences on the development of the individual.

Vygotsky's work is of central importance in understanding human development in terms of mediating artifacts, especially the artifact of natural language. According to Kozulin (1996), while Vygotsky's work in cultural-historical psychology was generally concerned with the development of human mental processes, he was primarily interested in the development of language in relation to thought. The transformation of elementary processes into higher ones is possible through the *mediating* function of culturally constructed artifacts such as tools (in a general sense), symbols and more elaborate semiotic (sign) systems such as language.

According to Leontiev (1983), the problem of consciousness is the 'alpha and omega' of Vygotsky's creative path (1983: 25). Vygotsky conceived of the sociocultural setting as the primary and determining factor in the development of 'higher' forms of human mental activity with mediation between participant and collective as the key. It was concerning the nature of the mediating link that Vygotsky and his followers parted company, giving rise to a related but distinct strand of research.

1.4.2 LANGUAGE AS ACTION

Shortly after Vygotsky's death, a group of his colleagues and students including Leontiev, Galperin and Zinchenko established a research centre in the city of Kharkov. The so-called Kharkovites contested Vygotsky's notion of the centrality of the sign with the declaration that social development cannot be reduced to the history of the development of culture (Kozulin, 1996). Instead, the Kharkovites

believed that mediation arises fundamentally from practical activity with the world of objects. Specifically, the Kharkovites related consciousness and activity in this way:

“The development of consciousness of a child occurs as a result of the development of the system of psychological operations, which, in their turn, are determined by the actual relations between a child and reality.”

(Kozulin 1996: xliv)

According to Zinchenko (Lantolf and Appel, 1994:16) Vygotsky had separated himself from a true Marxist philosophy by insisting that culture (as represented by the sign) rather than actual relationships to reality determine the mind. Lantolf and Appel (*ibid*) doubt whether mediation has to be exclusively symbolic or exclusively practical; it is difficult to see human activity, practical or symbolic, as free of sociocultural influence.

This difference in emphasis is important as it means that today there exist two broad scientific paradigms: cultural-historical psychology and the psychological school of activity.

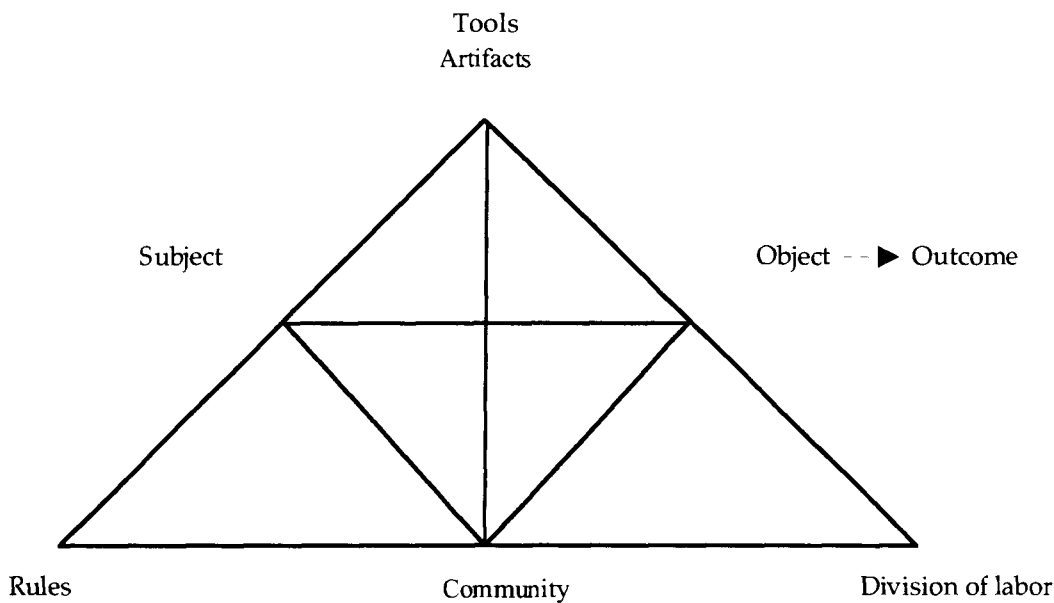
The Kharkovites, in fact largely Leontiev (1981), thus proposed their formal theory of activity, explaining and connecting individual development, activity and the social context. The explanatory framework of Activity Theory consists of: activity, action and operation, each of which provides a different perspective on the organization of events. The highest level of analysis, activity, is defined as the institutional setting or motive, which could be (in the context of this study) the learning of a foreign language. The second level is that of action which is always directed at a goal, and Lantolf and Appel (1994:18) illustrate this with the example of the action (goal) of

building a wooden table, which may be embedded in the activity (setting) of education, labour or play. Lastly, the operation (conditions) is the particular means that participants use to achieve the goal of the action. An action, being a goal, requires conscious attention while an operation is likely to be a well-practiced routine and therefore an automatised procedure.

Activity Theory is not without problems: namely Leontiev's shift away from the centrality of semiotic mediation in human activity in favour of practical activity, meant that Leontiev had no mechanism for higher forms of consciousness to arise from sociocultural activity (Kozulin, 1996). In this way a compromise position is to see human activity as driven by the material conditions of the interaction between people and environment, but socially mediated through semiotic means: language. This position is very plausible and is one which is foundational to this study as a unit of analysis. This is developed more fully in Chapter 4.

Leontiev had little to say (Wells, 1996: 3) about the cultural context in which activities and the actions through which they are realised, occur. Wells (*ibid*) maintains that Engeström's (1990) work is an important contribution in this area. Following Leontiev, Engeström starts from the mediational triangle in which the incorporation of the tool as mediational means radically transforms the relation between a subject and the object of her action. In the expanded model, the individual 'action' represented by the top portion of the diagram, is related to the larger cultural and historical context by the relationships represented by the other triangles. The overall structure appears very static but in fact the relationships depicted are not so; they are continually in a state of reformulation in the course of particular situated actions

Diagram 1.1: Engeström’s (1990) Model of an Activity System



A related and very significant contribution in terms of constructing and modelling the Kanda Curriculum, is the ‘participation’ (sometimes termed more specifically: legitimate peripheral participation) model of cultural development, usually associated with Lave and Wenger (1991) and Rogoff (1990). This, according to Wells (1996), situates activity more dynamically in a world of interacting and self-renewing communities of practice, and considers individual cultural development as a process of transformation of individual *participation* in sociocultural activity.

Matusov (1998) has conducted a robust critique of the ‘participation’ and ‘internalisation’ (Vygotskian) metaphors of development, contrasting the assumptions of both. He differentiates the two, claiming that the notion of internalisation, stemming largely from Vygotsky’s work, stresses the transformation of social functions into individual skills, leading to a chain of mutually related dualisms. These include the social and individual, the external and the internal, and the environment and the organism. He maintains (1998: 326) that

attempts to bridge these dualistic gaps are problematic since these dual abstractions mutually constitute each other and are thus inseparable from the beginning. Matusov (*ibid.*) criticises the notion of internalisation widely used in developmental theory; he does not focus exclusively on Vygotsky 's work, but he does identify Vygotsky as not only a founder of the internalisation model but also its archetype:

“Vygotsky...ethnocentrically considered Western societies as the historically most progressive and advanced [Rogoff 1990; Wertsch 1985]. His life project [using Sartre's 1968, term] seemed to be how to facilitate people's connection with the network of Western sociocultural practices of mass production, formal schooling, vast institutional bureaucracy, and alienated labour.”

(Matusov, 1998: 327)

The model overemphasises the value of people's independent social activity at the expense of joint activity; it privileges mastery of solo activity as the crux of human development. Matusov further argues that this emphasis on mastery of solo activity is an ideological trait of modern Western societies, based on alienated labour (labour that has no intrinsic value for the worker) as the dominant form of economic production (Marx 1962).

Arguing that sociocultural activities cannot be reduced to mental functions that can, in principle, be performed by one individual, Matusov (*ibid.*) then promotes an antithetical position using the participation metaphor. In this model of development, individual contribution to the activity is never fully completed and self-contained, but is rather relational, contextual and distributed: the sociocultural individual only changes participation in specific sociocultural activities, never 'leaving' or 'entering' sociocultural activity as such. So, consistent with the principle of dialogism outlined earlier, a sociocultural individual never joins or leaves the sociocultural activity, but

changes partners, directions, and forms of participation, even when the individual is in a 'solo' form of activity. Concepts like internalisation, acquisition, appropriation, and transmission are designed to address the question of what an individual brings to and gains from a specific sociocultural activity. In light of the participation model, the individual brings nothing to and gains nothing from sociocultural activity because the individual never leaves the 'flow' (as elaborated in Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer, 1995) of sociocultural activities. This interpretation emphasises the situational contexts of activities unlike the internalisation model, which attributes to the individual the transcended context-free, universal entities like generic skills, generic knowledge, and generic memory and is more consistent with the principle of monologism.

I have discussed Vygotsky's work mostly in terms of his explication of the role of the symbol in human development and have stressed Leontiev's work in terms of embodied activity. This somewhat simplistically represents Vygotsky's work as built on idealism and Leontiev's, more 'correctly' in the Marxist orthodoxy of the time, as built on materialism (Zinchenko, 1995). However, Wertsch *et al.* (1995) maintain that although Vygotsky did not explicitly formulate his ideas in terms of a theory of activity, the processes on which he focused (mental functioning, semiotic mediation) have very similar attributes to Leontiev's subsequent 'action'.

Wertsch *et al.* (1995) believe that inaccurate translation of key Russian terms into English have obscured the action orientation in Vygotsky's writing and his ideas about thinking and 'speech' (in the sense of discourse), have often been rendered as thinking and 'language' (suggesting a system), perhaps similar to Saussure's 'langue'. These authors further believe that while some see beyond Vygotsky's notion of function and process on one hand, and action on the other, we need *concrete* reinterpretations of his claims in terms of some notion of action. Therefore

Zinchenko (1985) has argued that action, rather than Vygotsky's preferred unit of word meaning, is the appropriate unit of analysis in Vygotsky's theoretical framework. Zinchenko's (*ibid.*) exact term is 'tool-mediated action'. Wertsch (1985, 1991) has similarly argued for 'mediated action' and both these two scholars base their units on the basis that Vygotsky's formulation is compatible with action as a unit of analysis.

The case for such a unit is strong and I incorporate 'mediated action' into my later account of data analysis. An alternative framework that should be mentioned is that of Edwards' discursive psychology (1997) in which he formulates discourse in terms of 'social action' (1997: 84). For my purposes however, sociocultural theory is more adequately theorized and provides a clearer basis for my later synthesis of discourse and action. As I argue in more detail later, the notion of (symbolically) mediated action captures well the synthesis of discourse and collaborative action that I discuss in Chapter 5.

There have been a number of similar and potentially confusing terms used in this section and following Wertsch *et al.* (1995), I use 'cultural-historical' and 'sociohistorical' when referring to the heritage received from Vygotsky, Leontiev, Luria and other earlier Soviet psychologists. This refers to elements of the study that explore historical and collective, group orientated perspectives. For the purpose of most of the study however, the 'sociocultural' theory of action (especially that of Wertsch and the North American authors) is more relevant, since this stresses sign mediation and interactional aspects of action instead.

Finally, any discussion of language and action must include an assessment of Malinowski's ideas from linguistic anthropology, and contributions from linguistic philosophy/pragmatics, notably the scholars Wittgenstein and Austin. Since I

approach the work of these scholars primarily from the perspective of context, I include them in the following section.

1.4.3 LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT, LANGUAGE AS CONTEXT

In later sections of the study where data of spoken interaction is analysed, the notion of context becomes extremely relevant as the explanatory principle of discursive patterning itself. This complex and multifaceted notion therefore needs amplification here. I begin with a review of sociosemantic (Martin 1992) perspectives on context from Malinowski, and (to a greater extent) Firth and Halliday in the British tradition, and contrast these with materialist perspectives linked with Soviet work on activity, as summarised in the previous section. There is an obvious tension between the two but, as becomes apparent in later sections dealing with data analysis (Chapter 5.4), it is beneficial to approach them in terms of hybridity, rather than incommensurability. I have already hinted at this by dismissing arguments which exaggerate disjunctures between semiotic aspects of Vygotsky's work, with the materialist orientation of Leontiev's theory (see Zinchenko 1985) and I model the two as different perspectives on a common phenomenon. Finally in this section, I briefly review the notion of context in applied linguistics from a more generalised perspective, outlining some main issues which bear on data analysis later in Chapter 6.

Malinowski's (1923) insight into the importance of context arose when he found that he could not explain to his European scholarly audience, the ritualised utterances of the aboriginal people he was studying, without lengthy footnotes. The context of situation and of culture, was unfamiliar and therefore unintelligible. At first Malinowski believed that this dependency of the utterance on its context of production was a feature of 'primitive' (unwritten) languages but by 1935 he had changed his view to see all languages as alike in this regard. At this time,

Malinowski extended the notion of context further: beyond the context of situation (of the utterance) lay the context of culture where "...the definition of a word consists partly of placing it within its cultural context" (Malinowski 1935: 18).

Malinowski was therefore making a distinction between two contexts, both of which lie outside of language itself. Firstly, the context of *culture* relates to language considered as system: its lexico-grammar. Secondly, the context of *situation* relates to instances of language in use: specific texts and their component parts. While Malinowski was the first to use the term 'context of situation', he was not the first to evoke the idea in linguistics, that events and actions are occurring when people speak; the Swiss dialectologist Wegener had developed a 'situation theory' before (Halliday 1999: 4). The relevance of situation is paramount once speech/discourse becomes the focus of attention in linguistics; the centrality of factors like reference to people, objects and events within participants' attention become apparent. According to Halliday (*ibid.*), Malinowski was therefore claiming that in spoken language, the 'situation' functions by analogy as a kind of context. This is a significant notion that runs through the work of Malinowski to Firth (1957), a younger colleague, and from Firth (Halliday's mentor) to Halliday.

Firth (1957) saw the potential of integrating this notion of 'situation' as context into a general theory of language. In contrast with Malinowski's work, which sought to interpret exotic culture for European scholars, Firth was concerned with typical texts and their contexts of production. He therefore mapped the idea of 'context of situation' into a general theory of levels of language (*ibid.*), interpreting it to refer to general situation types instead of the ongoing activity surrounding a particular utterance. Firth had less to say about the notion of *culture* as a context for language and according to Halliday (1999: 6), and with implications for his own views on 'context of culture', it is the work of Sapir and Whorf (see Whorf 1956) which fills this

lacuna. The Americans “...stress the *culture* as the context for language as *system*; and they see language as a form of reflection, as the construal of experience into a theory or model of reality” (Halliday 1999: 6). In the British tradition, for Malinowski and Firth, the ‘situation’ is the context for language as text where language is a form of action, the enactment of social relationships and social processes. These perspectives are drawn upon and elaborated in Halliday’s work on register theory (1985) which I summarise below.

Firth’s framework for modelling context of situation consisted of a four-part structure (Firth 1957):

- *participants in the situation
- *action of the participants
- *other relevant features of the situation
- *effects of the verbal action

[summarised from Halliday 1985:8]

and this was modified by Halliday *et al.* in 1964. Halliday’s model is the conventional one in systemic applied linguistics (Hasan 1999b: 232) and I draw upon this extensively, later in the study (Chapter 6), for textual analysis of interaction in the Kanda Curriculum. Essentially, Halliday’s context of situation is modelled according to three variables:

- **field of discourse* (social activity relevant to speaking)
- **tenor of discourse* (social relation relevant to speaking)
- **mode of discourse* (nature of contact for speaking)

[summarised from Hasan 1999b: 232]

and Hasan refers (1978, 1980, 1985) to this tripartite structure as the 'contextual construct'. In the totality of its detailed features it is termed the *contextual configuration* (or CC as an acronym) and in this way is an instantiation of the contextual construct. An instance of language in use must realise some CC; any variation in the CC will naturally activate some variation in the language. I draw upon this principle later in the study (Chapter 6) to demonstrate contextual shift across episodes in speech events that are complex, in terms of the variety of CCs realised.

In summary, Halliday's view of context (largely shared by Hasan, especially see Halliday and Hasan 1985/1998) does not see 'culture' and 'situation' as distinct phenomena, but instead, as the same thing viewed from different points of observation. In Halliday's terms, 'culture' is the paradigm of 'situation' types and is the total potential – the system – that lies behind each instance and class of instances (Halliday 1999: 17) of speech.¹

The development of work on context and register reviewed above represents a semioticising of frameworks (Martin 1992: 501) for relating language to context of situation and culture. This stands in contrast with the work of Leontiev in Activity Theory, reviewed in the previous section where, in accordance with the materialist orientation of Marxist theory, the context is the (tri-stratal representation of the) *activity itself*. These two positions – the semiotic and the materialist - may appear incommensurable but, as I have indicated earlier, can instead be seen as representing different perspectives on human activity. Briefly recapping from earlier discussion, the fundamental unit of sociocultural theory is that of *mediated action* (Wertsch 1985, 1991) or tool mediated action (Zinchenko 1985). Assuming that the mediation in this case refers to discourse, 'mediated action' represents a synthesis of the materialist and semiotic positions outlined so far, and foreshadows Sarangi's (2000) hybrid unit

of discourse/activity which I draw on later in the study (Chapter 5.4), for the purpose of interpreting data of interaction.

As long as people are jointly engaged in some activity through discourse that is *constitutive* of, rather than ancillary to the activity occurring; we may expect that discourse and activity will mutually configure each other. This will be discernible to the analyst of the text of interaction, at points where the context of the activity shifts, causing a change in the contextual configuration of the discourse. Or alternatively, in some instances, we could take a reverse perspective and say that a certain strategic move by a participant in the ongoing discourse, may reconfigure the contextual configuration of the situation, causing a contextual shift/change in the material activity in which participants are engaged. I elaborate further on this in Chapter 5.4.1.

A synthesis of discourse/activity is implicit in work in the field of pragmatics; Malinowski's insistence on the primarily action-orientated function of language foreshadowed the later Wittgenstein (1958), where *context* is the locus of thought and action for different 'language games'.² The notion of language games argues that the meanings of linguistic expressions do not just reside in someone's head: individual motives and intentions must be understood in the context created by public institutions, the study of turn-taking systems and expectations generated by continuous participation in them. As units of analysis, language games assume that language is a set of unbounded and yet manageable (and learnable) cultural practices (Duranti, 1997). In his later works Wittgenstein assumes that language is an extension of action and affords primacy to action, citing Goethe: "im Anfang war die Tat" [In the beginning was the deed] (in Canfield, 1997: 259).

The work of Austin (1962) has been more influential than that of Wittgenstein, in developing the notion that language functions primarily as a mode of action; Austin was dissatisfied with the contemporary prevalent views of language that focused on issues of truth and falsity. He turned to the cultural and social *conventions* that provide for interpretability and efficacy of performative utterances; context in the sense of recognizable conventions provides infrastructure through which the utterance gains its force as a particular type of action. A speech act is not 'grammatical' or 'ungrammatical', rather it works or does not, depending on whether felicity conditions are met or not. This foregrounding of convention and *context* contrasts with the psychologism of Chomskyan and post-Chomskyan linguistics, where intentionality and speakers' psychological states are the focus of interest.

To some extent however, the same problem, that of intentionality and speakers' psychological states, may occur in some versions of speech act theory where the speaker's intentions are privileged to the detriment of the listener. The listener is not represented as a co-participant in the meanings of exchanges, which misrepresents what ethnomethodologists such as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) see as the emergent and co-managed achievement of intersubjectivity across turns of talk. The elementary unit of face-to-face interaction, the turn at talk, is intrinsically positioned in a sequence, relates to prior turns and projects to next ones. Linell and Markova (1993) have termed this as an 'inter-act' rather than an act. An elementary contribution, a turn at talk, is not in itself a communication interaction; the initiator of a communicative action needs an 'interlocutor' to complete it. Therefore speech act theory, especially as developed by Searle (1969, 1975, 1992) can be seen as being more monologicistic and does not account for emergent and co-constructed intersubjectivities (contexts), between individuals in the in the social environment.

In the sense of textual resources, Linell (1998) argues that since the concept of 'context' is difficult to define, it is better to argue that episodes of discourse are embedded in, or activate, a matrix of *different kinds* of contexts. It is easiest to conceptualise these contexts in terms of 'contextual resources', or potential contexts that may be activated in dialogue. Linell (1998) goes on to assert that there is a basic tension between two theoretical accounts of context where

*one is a more or less stable environment outside the interaction,

and

*the other is deeply embedded within discursive activities and is emergent in the talk itself.

The former is more typical of a monological approach to discursive interaction while the second is more dynamic, locally developed and subject to transformation at any time. Hasan (1999b: 222) claims that despite an awareness of both aspects of the relations of language and context from scholars within systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1973, 1975, 1978; Martin 1992, 1995, *inter alia*), the emphasis has tended to remain on the role of context as the *determinant* of texts. This notion of context becomes more flexible however, once we model complex texts of spoken interaction as not one activity/context but several (Hasan 2000); I develop this idea of Hasan's later in the study in Chapter 5.4.1. It is the second view of context above that is usually adopted in most micro-studies of authentic talk-in-interaction, for example in Conversation Analysis (Heritage 1984, Drew and Heritage 1992) or interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982). In this latter case, contexts are not objective environments and contexts are only relevant in as much as they are attended to, on-line, by participants.

Linell (1998) suggests that the two views of context as given environments vs. emergent aspects of discourse be treated, in the case of the former, as contextual resources, and in the latter, as resources which are constructed and deployed as contexts by interlocutors in dialogue. The second view is the one which is more dialogistic, with regard to the '...co-constitution of discourse and contexts; discourse through-contexts and contexts-through-discourse' (Linell 1998: 136). In a similar way, Cicourel (1992) discusses the 'interpenetration of communicative contexts' as a basis for analysing the complexity of context in social interaction.

Lastly, there is one more type of context that has been glossed in the preceding section: that of the consciousness of the individual arising from prior interactions in the cultural/social environment. In Vygotsky's work on the social origins of higher mental functions, interactional (social) phenomena are transformed through internalisation into psychological phenomena (Wertsch, 1985a: 63). Thus, in social interaction, the individual is influenced by his/her biography of past interactions which form a kind of co-present historical context. I enlarge on this point in greater depth in Chapter 4.1.

In conclusion, the notion of context is complex and multifaceted. There are at least: logical, sociological, pragmatic, linguistic, ethnomethodological and psychological theories of context (Hasan 1999b) and as Duranti and Goodwin (1995) argue, it is not possible at the moment to give a single, precise definition. However, there has been a general shift from seeing context as a set of variables that statistically surrounds strips of talk, a classically monological position, to one where context and talk stand in a reflexive relationship with one another. In this way, talk, and the interpretive work it generates, shapes context as much as context shapes talk.

Given the limitations of space here, I have largely focused and elaborated on context in terms of systemic functional linguistics and activity theory. It is possible to take a 'strong' view and approach context as a primarily semiotic phenomenon, realised in discourse, or as a primarily materialist phenomenon, realised in activity. Later in the study (Chapter 5) I argue for the greater utility (for my purposes) of modelling context in terms of a fluid and changing (McCarthy 1998) configuration of discourse/activity (Hasan 1999b) where the semiotic and the materialist are best understood as related by hybridity (Sarangi 2000).

1.5 CODA

In this chapter I have set out the background and introduced the core constructs of the thesis: a sociocultural evaluation of an innovative EFL curriculum whose goal is the transformation of participation and signification practices of learners in the target language of study. I have attempted to theorize the study in terms of an overarching framework of dialogism: a theory of communication that has at its core, concepts such as reciprocity, contingency, emergence and co-construction of negotiated meanings in face-to-face interaction. I have also begun to sketch the key unit of analysis that I later employ in the analysis of data in the study, mediated action, which is a synthesis of discourse and action. I have provided a coherent philosophical base on which to model the design, implementation and interpretation of interaction in the curriculum, in later chapters.

I have also provided an outline of the thesis which serves as a map of the study. This is necessary in order to clarify the relationships between component parts; the research approach is 'multi-method' and the study is theorised in terms of both discourse and (pragmatic) action and both of these are contextualised in terms of

power and social relations. So far I have had very little to say about the latter and it is this which forms the focus of the next chapter.

¹ Within the field of systemic functional linguistics, Martin (1992, 1999) has proposed a different framework relating culture to situation, with implications for the way that he and his colleagues have operationalised the notion of ‘genre’. I refer to this alternative viewpoint later in Chapter 5.4.1, in connection with discussion of ‘genre’.

² Wittgenstein contradicted his earlier work by replacing emphasis on development of a self-contained formal system with that of language as a form of action. The *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* (1974) represents his earlier work and *Philosophical Investigations* (1958) is a fair exemplar of his later ideas.

2 THE LEARNER AS DISCURSIVE PRACTITIONER

In the previous chapter I have outlined a general theory of communication highlighting the dynamic and integral role of language in human activity. In this sense I have tended to reify the centrality of language as a semiotic system (actually the most important one) that mediates human social life. I now shift the focus away from theoretical discussions of language/communication as such, towards considerations of the relationships between 'discourse' (language as social practice) and the cultural, institutional and historical contexts in which it occurs. The scope of this chapter is very wide and I attempt to weave together the component parts into a coherent account. These components include: an account of classrooms and learning which foregrounds the social relations of participants and hence the idea of a group of learners as a *community* (section 2.1); an account of the forms of discursive interaction that are generated and structured by different hierarchical relations (section 2.2); an account of the way in which different ideologies of education realise their own participation formats (section 2.3); an account of the way that different participation formats afford or constrain learners' stakes in the outcomes of classroom talk (section 2.4); an account of a theory of communication that details idealised conditions for communication that is not distorted by vested interests or unequal power relations (section 2.5); an account of 'autonomy' in L2 education (section 2.6); an account of common participation structures in L2 classroom learning, and evaluations of the efficacy of these in the light of the goals of this study (section 2.7).

Together, Chapters 1 and 2 provide the conceptual and philosophical foundation upon which the Kanda Curriculum is later modelled, in Chapter 3.

2.1 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND CLASSROOM CULTURES.

Several scholars, including Lave and Wenger (1991), Rogoff (1994) and Wenger (1998) have focused on the communal and participatory nature of learning that is implicit in the sociocultural theory of learning, largely associated in its modern version with Wertsch (1991, 1998), *inter alia*. The dominant metaphor is that of a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) where learning occurs as people participate in shared activity with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles. The concept is one of (Lave and Wenger, 1991) novice participants being inducted by more practiced members into ever increasing degrees of expertise, often starting with minimal or 'legitimate peripheral' participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This is a powerful though somewhat unspecified metaphor and while very useful, does assume that participants both understand and accept the teleology of such apprenticeship. However Lave and Wenger's concept is a very useful heuristic for modelling and researching language learning as an institutional social practice. Since the conceptual domain of a 'community of practice' is very broad, I use this as a point of departure to review and draw connections between a number of different but related strands of work that centre on the idea of a collaborative context of activity in pedagogical settings.

The idea of a 'community' of learners, derived from Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'community of practice', has been elaborated by Rogoff (1994) who takes the perspective that learning is a process of transformation of participation itself. She contrasts this with the more familiar metaphors of (1) viewing development as either a product of transmission of knowledge from others or (2) of acquisition or discovery of knowledge by oneself. Rogoff (*ibid.*) stresses that she does not

necessarily see any of these three models as being better than the others, instead, what is learned in the three models differs. In a theory of participation, learning is a function of ongoing transformation of roles and understanding, where responsibility and autonomy by participants are both desired.

Turning to second language learning communities in particular, Toohey and Day (1999) echo this perspective on 'learning' in terms of increasing one's participation in a community, using linguistic means to mediate community activities, rather than in terms of increasing individual internalisation of knowledge. The focus here becomes one of structuring the discursive practices of the classroom to best allow sharing of the community linguistic resources in constructive activities for learners. Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) note that in Western intellectual traditions, language is usually seen in terms of either rules (or systems of rules) or as a resource and the latter, communal 'resource', captures well the way that the role of language figures in participative perspectives on language learning.

Toohey and Day's (1999) discussion of the curriculum of ESL learners in Canadian primary schools evaluates a number of classroom activities in terms of the possibilities they afford for children to participate in classroom talk. By aligning themselves against the notion of learning in terms of increasing abstract knowledge on behalf of passive students, Toohey and Day have much in common with pedagogic constructivism (Brooks and Brooks, 1993) in mainstream education. Brooks and Brooks contrast 'constructivist' with 'traditional' classrooms (1993: 17) and claim that in the former case, teachers try to mediate the environment for students while in the latter, teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to learners.

In a later paper Rogoff (1995) coins the term *participatory appropriation*, referring to how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity and in the process become prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities. She terms this a process of *becoming*, rather than acquisition, and we can make linkages here with the 'dialogical' idea of the self as being in continuous production (Harré and Gillet, 1994) as the individual participates in discursive activity with others. Learning in this sense means developing a participant status in an L2 discursive community: an idea that connects logically with the insight from linguistic anthropology (Malinowski 1923) of the individual's role in human interaction as being negotiated and emergent across mediated activity with others.

The term *socialisation to use language* (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986), extended by Poole (1992) to recast the L2 classroom as site of language socialisation, has "...as its goal the understanding of how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in the process" (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986: 167). This captures succinctly the central goal of the Kanda Curriculum, which is for learners to practice and develop in terms of collaborative problem-solving in various situations and activities in L2. This means pragmatic behaviour that is organised around regularities in recurring exposure and participation in significant interactive practices. Hall (1997) identifies the mechanisms of such practices as

"...the typical trajectories of speech acts, the patterned ways in which turns are taken, and the linguistic and other interactional means by which typical opening, transitional, and closing turns are accomplished." (Hall, 1997: 303)

The importance lies in the *routinisation* of these communicative practices and the means by which they are achieved (Hall, 1997). They provide recurring and stable frameworks, upon which novice participants are able to create prototypes for action.

In Matusov's terms (section 1.4.2), these may provide for the development of more competent and creative participation in the future through transformation of the individual.

The perspectives summarised above, which foreground learning as necessarily collaborative, interdependent and dialogical, and which focus on participation rather than acquisition, are generally more recent and have not met with uncritical acceptance in the canon of applied linguistic research. There has been a broad divide in approaches which take a sociocultural orientation and those which argue for basing L2 language pedagogy on the results of experimental studies. An early and influential 'position statement' of a sociocultural orientation was that of Breen, who in 1985, (see also Breen and Candlin 1980) published a seminal paper arguing for greater attention to the 'social context' of language learning. He discussed L2 learning in the classroom in terms of the metaphors of 'classroom as experimental laboratory' and the 'classroom as discourse', claiming that a preoccupation with the former in mainstream SLA had led to an undervaluing of the actual social processes of the classroom group and by implication, the individual psychological processes of L2 development. Breen (1985) did not attack the validity of laboratory studies in their own terms but pointed out that if we take account of the particulars of sociocultural context, we cannot assume (asocial) transfer of findings from the laboratory to the classroom.

This point is born out in an empirical study by Foster (1998) where she found that, contrary to much SLA theorising, 'negotiation for meaning' was not a strategy that a certain group of language learners were predisposed to employ; she further argued, after Willis (1996) that ensuring learners approach a task in a particular way with particular strategies is not possible.¹ With relevance to Breen's point, Foster's conclusion was that in her study, it was important to explore why so many of the

students were disinclined to initiate or pursue negotiation for meaning; in other words, it was necessary to approach the class in question as a *culture* (Breen, 1985, 1996; van Lier, 1988, 1996; Legutke and Thomas, 1991). Breen (1985) claimed that mainstream SLA asserts comprehension as central, whilst the 'classroom as culture' embeds comprehension within *intersubjective* construction of meaningfulness and the subjective reinterpretation of utterances that have been comprehended.

In a later paper Breen (1996) focuses on the nature of classroom discourse and summarises evidence that most often, learners are positioned in a responsive role by the dominance of teachers in classroom talk. He then (*ibid.*) points out that if language learning is embedded in the discourse of the classroom, the constraints of this discourse are crucial in the extent to which learners can become members of a new language community. With this problem in mind, Breen (*ibid.*) puts forward the term 'learner as discursive practitioner' and suggests that

“...any adequate account of the reasons why learners succeed or fail in language learning needs to locate the learner as an active discursive practitioner within context.”

(1996: 100)

This position seems to be taken up by Ellis (1998) who discusses patterns of discursive participation in L2 classrooms and proposes that control of discourse gives learners the chance to make the classroom acquisition rich. Essentially, he argues that this is so because topic control by learners (rather than teachers) enables them to engage in negotiation for meaning (n.b. Foster's caveat above). However, despite surface appearances, Breen and Ellis are not talking about the same things. Breen's discussion of *becoming a member of a new language community* carries sociocultural connotations, while Ellis' use of the term *acquisition* implies a focus on cognitive

processing of grammar (and lexis and phonology - but usually grammar), in the human brain: the domain of mainstream SLA.

Scholars in SLA do not of course contend that language learning is *asocial* as such, but Ellis' discussion of negotiation of *meaning* is revealing in that it posits 'repair' as being concerned with comprehension (presumably to simplify input and make it comprehensible) but does not consider the development or instantiation of interpersonal relationships in talk. My purpose is not to trivialise studies which take information processing as their focus, I do however contend that that they tend to *reduce* and so misrepresent certain aspects of linguistic interaction. It is not enough to define classroom talk in terms of semantic and syntactic simplicity - and use of simple discourse features such as comprehension checks and clarification requests - there are different discursive frames, structures and functions to talk (see Chapter 5.4, later).

Van Lier (1998) has taken up this issue and critiqued work by Pica (1987, 1992), Pica and Doughty (1985) and Pica *et al.* (1987) as representative of studies of repair following communication problems. To summarise very briefly, van Lier (1998) argues that focusing on repair in the form of interactional modifications does not make sense when we consider how the achievement of shared understandings depends on much more: a wide array of pragmatic and linguistic resources. These points are foundational for this study and I address them in more detail in Chapter 5, in terms of shift of con/textual configuration (Chapter 5.4.1); strategic aspects of discourse (Chapter 5.4.2) and social practice (Chapter 5.4.3).

Returning to Breen and Ellis; these two authors offer two accounts of the learner as discursive practitioner and interestingly they provide an instance of Breen's (1985) two metaphors discussed earlier (see also Breen and Candlin 1980), of the classroom

as culture, and the classroom as laboratory. This is not a coincidence and as I will argue in Chapter 5, it may well be a consequence of the legacy of Saussure's (1978) distinction between *parole* and *langue*.

In this section I have used the organising metaphor of a 'community of learners' (Rogoff 1994) to foreground the fundamentally collaborative and interdependent nature of the context of activity in L2 learning settings, from within a sociocultural framework. However I have so far omitted a dimension of analysis that is essential to any consideration of language as social praxis: that of power. I now turn to this in the following section.

2.2 POWER AND DISCURSIVE INTERACTION

If we regard discourse primarily in terms of social action (Atkinson and Heritage 1994, Drew and Heritage 1992), social *relations* between interlocutors, that construct and are constructed by talk-in-interaction, must be integral to any discursive analysis. Particularly in institutional settings, this implies a consideration of relative status of participants that may be attended to as *a priori* by participants, or may be negotiated, re-negotiated or even resisted, in on-line conversation. Whatever the circumstances, interaction between participants of differential role/status generally involves asymmetrical relations of power, with strong implications for the structuring of discourse, the conduit of social action.

Taking a stronger and more fundamental position: Swartz (1997: 6), commenting on Bourdieu, claims that power cannot be a separate domain of study (see also Foucault's 1969 'capillary power') but stands at the heart of all social life. This is a position with which, following evidence from the work of scholars cited in this

section, I broadly agree. I now take a more sociological perspective than before and focus on the constitutive role of social differentiation and hence power in discursive praxis, especially referring to the work of Bourdieu and Foucault. I wish to establish a general theoretical foundation focusing on the notion of power before narrowing the scope and addressing issues of pedagogic discourse in section 2.3. The role of power is a key theoretical construct in the study and one which relates fundamentally to the design of the Kanda Curriculum.

Bourdieu's work concerning issues of power in society is canonical in mainstream sociology and has recently been cited in applied linguistic texts (especially Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 1997; Norton 2000). Bourdieu (1977) strongly attacks the traditions of Saussure and Chomsky in linguistics which construct linguistic theory in socially neutral terms. Instead of focusing on the ideal speaker-listener in a homogenous speech community, and treating language as an autonomous object, Bourdieu (*ibid.*), from his perspective as a sociologist, argues that language should be examined in terms of the *relationships* from which it is generated. Therefore, no one acquires a language without acquiring a *relation* to a language and these relationships are differential according to the principles generating social hierarchies. According to Bourdieu linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power between speakers and as a result it is impossible to interpret acts of communication from within a purely linguistic analysis. "A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished." (Bourdieu 1977: 648)

Bourdieu (1991) stresses that social relationships are structured by, and in turn contribute to the structuring of social relationships within a given 'field' (very simply: the social setting, structured in terms of relations within it, in which a habitus operates). The metaphor he uses here is an economic one where there is a linguistic market, with structures of specific sanctions and censorships (see Candlin 2001b, for

further discussion). Therefore linguistic or discursive 'products' have value in a particular field in the same way that market products have value (Grenfell 1998). The value of a discourse or utterance is set against *legitimate* norms. In formal linguistics, a Chomskyan notion of competence does not indicate when one may speak and to whom, or when one must keep silent, etc.

Bourdieu's work on the genetic theory of groups (1990) examines critically how power relations are culturally reproduced in society. The notion of habitus is central to understanding the reproduction of culture and this refers to embodied cultural dispositions that are accumulated along the trajectory of interactions in a community (Bourdieu 1972, 1990) and has a macro or structural component and an individuated and more dynamic micro component. Habitus therefore mediates between the macro or structural and the micro or practice levels of society (Swartz 1997) and it is the macro level that concerns Bourdieu more.

Bourdieu's ideas of power and discourse in general, his notion of habitus and his metaphor of a linguistic market are important for an analysis of institutional discursive practice. As noted earlier, while habitus unites macro and micro levels through social action, Bourdieu is more inclined to view social circumstances from the perspective of 'objective' structures and institutions than from the perspective of the human agent. In this respect his work has some parallels with that of Foucault.

Foucault's work (for example 1972, 1977, 1980) is complex and cuts across several disciplinary boundaries and is therefore difficult to summarise in a short space. However, of particular relevance here in the discussion of structuralism/agency issues, Foucault takes an anti-humanist position by rejecting subjectivism, the position where the individual is the natural focus of social analysis, as exemplified in the work of Sartre (1968). Foucault is therefore similar to the structuralists working

within functionalist or Marxist schools in so far as he steers away from the 'error' of subjectivism.²

Instead, Foucault believes that the human subject is coerced by social determinations and is far from being inherently free; the human subject is instead a social construction, *produced* through language practices, thought and symbolic representations which position human subjects in a field of power relations and within particular sets of practices (Layder 1994).

Language practices, thought and symbolic representations are termed 'discourses', a move away from the idea of the primacy of the motivations of individuals. Discourses (in this case, as opposed to my earlier use of the term in Chapter 1) are expressions of power relations and reflect the practices and positions that are connected with them. The self is therefore constituted within language praxis and the field of practices and power relations that define daily life for people. This contradicts the humanist idea of the individual as a consistent, coherent and rational being. These ideas are laid out in the *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969) and we can say that statements tend to be used together in certain typical patterns (discursive practices) forming systems (discursive formations). A discursive formation is defined by four types of relations:

- *those that determine what kind of topics, entities, processes the discourse can construct;
- *those that specify who can say these things to whom and in what contexts;
- *those that define the relations of meaning among statements;
- *those that tell us what the alternative kinds of discourse are that can be formed in these ways.

(Lemke 1995)

Since 'discourse' is social practice, changes in the discursive order amount to cultural and systemic change. It is limiting to recognise change only at the individual level, although this is often where it starts (Foucault 1969).

Foucault's position on power in human life is the key to his work in general (Layder 1994) and he traces the development of modern forms of power, especially disciplinary power, from medieval to modern times in Western Europe (Foucault 1977). According to Foucault (1977) a modern, more efficient and profitable form of power, disciplinary power, emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, replacing the monarchical power that had preceded it. This 'disciplinary' mode placed people under constant surveillance instead of inflicting physical punishment on them. This was applied in prisons, army barracks, asylums and monasteries and then extended to other institutional forms including hospitals, schools and the factory system (Layder 1994). The important point to underscore here is that this all-pervasive and impersonal system concentrates attention on the psychology of the individual. By understanding that they are under surveillance, individuals begin to regulate their own behaviour as they are highly visible to others.

Foucault's ideas about disciplinary power were largely exemplified by the Panopticon, a building developed by the Utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham (examples include the prisons at Port Arthur, Tasmania, Australia; and Pentonville, London). The Panopticon is a tower around which radiate a number of cells illuminated from inside: those inside the cells are at all times visible to a single warder while the observer remains unseen. The inmates are aware of the possible gaze of the observer and by regulating their behaviour accordingly, they internalise the principal of surveillance. In this way the functioning of power becomes automatic rather than a conscious exercise by an external agency.

The control and regimentation of large bodies of people in institutions such as prisons, factories, army barracks and, of more relevance here; schools, is achieved by increasing the predictability of their behaviour in such settings. Individuals are subject to training and correction in a routine where they are treated in a uniform manner and there is pressure on the individual to conform to standard practice within a regime of surveillance. The purpose is to achieve 'normalisation' and the individual's self-monitoring is an important part of this process. From Nietzsche, Foucault derives the idea of the interdependence between knowledge and power (Layder 1994) and the connection lies in the creation of new capacities and types of activities for individuals. The docile subjects created by disciplinary routines represent the productive effects of such power. Foucault's notion of power then is substantially more complex than that which I discussed at the beginning of this section: it does not operate through the repression or limitation of existing capacities and forms of activity, but through the construction of new identities, knowledge and practices (Layder 1994).

Power, in Foucault's terms, has the character of a network or capillary, rather than a commodity which may be acquired or seized, and its threads extend everywhere (Sarup 1988). In line with Foucault's decentring away from the human subject as the focus of volunteerist action, power mechanisms operate independently of people and as 'subjects', people are both conduits through which power operates while also being 'produced' by that power. Hence individual subjectivity is an effect of power relations as the individual is necessarily enveloped in webs of discourse and practice, and power is an essential component of both. According to Best and Kellner (1991), Foucault retreated to a weaker version later in his career and gave a greater emphasis on the potential for creative agency in the individual and the possibility of overcoming imposed limitations, while not abandoning his objections to the

humanist subject. However the value of Foucault's work for this study is the importance that he attaches in his earlier work to the way in which power operates as a structural phenomenon regardless of the intentions of individuals.

Layder (1994) believes, following Best and Kellner (1991) that Foucault never adequately theorises both sides of the agency/structure issue. While discussing a decentred society and a decentred individual, his analysis remains trapped at the structuralist level. His emphasis on the role of discourse in the production and establishment of meanings are valuable in that they enable one to establish general social parameters of meaning but his work tends to assume that this is the only valid level of analysis (see Layder 1994: 112 for discussion). This criticism is not problematic here since, following Giddens (1976, 1984), I later supplement macro considerations of the social/institutional order with situated interaction/ethnographic data at the micro level of analysis. For my purposes, the importance of Foucault lies in the way he draws attention to the variegated nature of power and its effects on and within social practice/discourse. Layder (1994) does not believe that Foucault's ideas about power analysis are adequate to completely displace other conceptions since Foucault pays little attention to the structural conditions under which power effects are produced in people. Instead, the significance of his work is that he reveals important new dimensions of power and alternative ways of tracing its effects (Layder, *ibid.*).

According to Lemke (1995) the element of Foucault's work that is rather weak is the problem of how to relate discourse formations with the actual lives of people who enact these discourses. Lemke (*ibid.*) suggests that the fullest account of this is, as described earlier in this section, the work of Bourdieu: particularly his notion of a *discourse habitus*. Drawing on the ideas of Bourdieu and Foucault concerning the integral role of power in the social order/discursive practice in this section, I now

build on this rather abstract train of thought and examine the more specific context of pedagogic discourse and the construction of the *pedagogic subject*. The most authoritative contemporary scholar for this purpose is probably the sociologist Basil Bernstein and his ideas form the core of the following section.

2.3 FRAMING THE DISCOURSE

Bernstein's sociology of pedagogy (1990, 1996, 1999) examines educational discourse/practice in terms of a social division of labour which defines the limits and possibilities for social identities and relations within the classroom and classroom settings. His work is very compatible with the Foucaultian approach, since he stresses the need for accounts of both interactional and structural relations in research, with a focus on how the latter drives or generates the former (Bernstein, 1996: 93). The pedagogic subject is therefore not an unfettered individual but is constructed through the situated practice of education, involving hierarchical social relationships that s/he experiences and enacts. Bernstein's work is wide-ranging and complex and I am not attempting here to provide a broad summary of all his ideas concerning the possibilities and limitations of different forms of pedagogic practice. Instead I wish to draw on and elaborate his core ideas concerning discourse and education that I use to theorise the design and implementation of the Kanda Curriculum.

Bernstein (1996) examines the structural conditions and discursive rules that generate practices of participation and exclusion in (principally secondary/high school) educational settings. His central preoccupation is with how power and control are systematically achieved through local organisation of discourse and how these differentially regulate consciousness (1996: 18). This might appear at first glance to

be a hopelessly relativistic enterprise: Bernstein's career has been British-based and his particular sources of reference are British. However, he (1990: 169) believes that there is a remarkable similarity in the operation of educational systems around the world and his claim may well be valid to a great degree, at least in terms of the institutional structuring of pedagogic communication. It should be mentioned that Bernstein's work deals with general education; he is not concerned with second/foreign language learning as such. However this does not limit the usefulness or range of application of his ideas. The settings discussed in this study are classrooms in educational institutions and therefore we are looking at examples of 'pedagogic discourse' rather than more 'naturalistic' settings of L2 development, as in the case of Bremer *et al.* (1996), for instance.

Central to Bernstein's account (1996) of the officially constructed pedagogic subject are the notions of 'classification' and 'framing'. He borrows these terms from Durkheim and the early symbolic interactionists respectively, but defines them differently. Classification essentially refers to power and indicates 'relations between categories' (1996: 101). In terms of communication, strong classification means that the rules whereby legitimate messages may be constructed are clearly defined, leading to development of a specialised identity; weak classification implies a less strictly defined identity or one that is more flexible in nature. Classification deals with *what* may be talked about (Bernstein, 1996: 101). For example, in conservative institutional contexts with very clear definitions of role, we would expect to find strong classification: what can be talked about and the manner in which it may be discussed are clearly delineated. More obvious examples of this might include formal or ritual situations involving the military, more traditional branches of organised religion, conservative educational settings, higher levels of corporate culture, etc.

‘Framing’, on the other hand, refers to ‘control over the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of knowledge to be acquired’ (Bernstein, 1996: 101).³ So with strong framing, control lies with the teacher and weak framing implies a redistribution of control to the locus of learners.

Framing then refers to the social relations of the social division of labour and establishes different *legitimate forms* of communication. However, as I show later in the study, framing is not necessarily consistent at all times. Some elements of the curriculum might show strong framing, others might show weak framing, or these same elements might show varying strengths at different times.

Bernstein actually employs two systems of rules regulated by framing: the rules of the social order and the rules of the discursive order (1996: 27). The rules of the social order refer to hierarchical relations in educational settings and indicate expectations about conduct, character and manner. Where framing is strong, we might expect learners to be ‘conscientious, attentive, industrious, careful, receptive.’ (1996: 27) Where framing is weak, we might expect learners to be creative and interactive.

Secondly, Bernstein (*ibid.*) discusses the rules of the discursive order which refer to selection, sequence, pacing and criteria of knowledge. He terms these (1996: 28) *regulative discourse*, in the case of the social order and *instructional discourse*, in the case of the discursive order. Essentially, the regulative discourse refers to the management of classroom learning: the direction and maintaining of the various activities that make up the experience of schooling; the instructional discourse refers to the content of instruction. Taken together, the regulative and instructional discourse comprise the pedagogic discourse and whoever (usually a teacher)

controls the pedagogic discourse may be seen as the agent of 'symbolic control'. Control relations are achieved through the structuring of pedagogic communication.

It is important to understand that the control relations outlined above are not established solely by coercion or the threat of coercion. In a Foucaultian sense, subjects are inducted into the routines and norms of pedagogic practice and a developing capacity for *self-regulation* is necessary for this to happen. Christie (1997, 2000) has conducted a discursive/ethnographic analysis of several early childhood classes in Australian elementary schools and concludes that some of the most significant lessons concern what it means to be a pedagogic subject for the purposes of formal schooling. Christie concludes that in the classes observed the regulative discourse (she actually prefers the term 'register' to discourse, borrowing this from systemic functional linguistics) is always dominant, especially in the opening stages of classroom activities (1997: 158). This shapes learners' engagement with the instructional discourse and establishes procedural norms for young people who are novices in the practice of schooling. As the activities of the curriculum develop, the regulative discourse is no longer expressed and the instructional discourse is foregrounded. Once the pedagogic subjects have been *apprenticed* into doing new things, the regulative discourse no longer needs explicit expression. If for whatever reason, the appropriate procedural behaviours do not happen, the teacher will usually deploy the regulative discourse again and in this way the two discourses are embedded in each other at different stages of the learning cycle.

The concepts of classification and framing, especially the latter in terms of regulative and instructional discourses, are resources that are central to theorising interaction in the Kanda Curriculum, in the following chapter. However, there is still one more element of Bernstein's work (1996) that must be discussed in general terms: the contrasting models of 'competence' and 'performance' practices.

Bernstein diametrically opposes his models of 'competence' and 'performance' pedagogy (1996: 58) in order to highlight contrastive features of both. Basically, 'competence' pedagogy has much in common with constructivist modes of learning, from the early work of John Dewey (1938) through Brooks and Brooks (1993) and discussed by Barnes (1975), while 'performance' models broadly approximate to what are often termed 'transmission' models of education (see Barnes 1975; Stenhouse 1975; Wells 1999; van Lier 1996 for accounts of 'transmission' learning). Bernstein's theorising, especially of competence models, is particularly suited to considerations of relating symbolic control and learner development, so I will use his sometimes complicated terminology throughout this study.

Bernstein's account of the origins and philosophical implications of competence and performative models is highly developed but I will restrict my account to educational settings (Bernstein's work actually has broader applicability) and outline it as simply as I can. Competence models of education are generally found in primary/elementary and pre-school (Bernstein 1996: 57) and are sometimes associated with liberal/progressive education. Perhaps most significantly, the subject is active and creative in the construction of a creative world of meanings and practice. There is a "focus on procedural commonalities shared within a group" (Bernstein 1996: 63) and social relations (between learners) are built on cooperative relations. In contrast, performance models emphasise specialised skills of the individual learner and the production, for purposes of evaluation, of specific texts or products. Bernstein has discussed the two models with reference to several sets of criteria (1996: 58 – 63) and I will briefly summarise the main points that are relevant to this study, combining elements in some places:

Discourse

*Competence models: Pedagogic discourse occurs in the context of projects, themes, ranges of experience where learners have a large degree of control over selection, sequence and pace. There are few explicit guidelines about what should be said and the point is to realise competences (i.e. discourse/interactional competences) that learners supposedly already possess. We can expect little instructional discourse but some regulative discourse from the teacher to coordinate the class as a whole at certain intervals. Classification is weak.

*Performance models: discourse is clearly marked with respect to form and function and legitimate texts are clearly defined. Learners have little control over selection, pacing and sequence and performance is graded, often in terms of individual normative testing. The teacher may be expected to show expert control of instructional discourse and manage learners through regulative discourse. Classification is strong.

Space

*Competence models: there are few specially defined spaces, such as mandatory seating order for learners, though facilitating sites, such as sandpits, computer stations, may be clearly bounded. Classification is weak.

*Performance models: space is clearly marked out and for example, learners seating may be fixed and not negotiable. Sanctions restricting movement and access are explicit. Classification is strong.

Time

*Competence models: time is not finely measured or regulated in terms of pacing and sequence. The focus is on the present engagement in practice rather than a future orientation.

*Performance models: pacing and sequencing are carefully calculated and executed, usually by a teacher. There are usually a finite number of curricular items that must be 'covered' within a given time. Classification is strong.

Evaluation

*Competence models: criteria are likely to be varied and subjective, with perhaps input from learners, in the case of older or mature learners. Competence models are less susceptible to public scrutiny relative to performance models and their products are more difficult to evaluate objectively.

*Performance models: criteria are likely to construct the learner in a deficit mode, against a clearly defined ideal. Evaluation will indicate weaknesses and strengths against clear criteria since pedagogic practice and learner's performance are subordinate to external curriculum regulation.

Control

*Competence models: there are few explicit structures in time, space and discourse so it is difficult to coordinate and order whole classes. Direct ordering also contradicts the notion of self-regulation on behalf of the learner. Control (regulative discourse) is likely to be expressed in individualised terms which vary with each learner. Imperative modes may occur but will not be the favoured modality.

*Performance models: control relations are likely to be explicit since the classification and structures are resources for positional control. We can expect clear regulative control aimed at coordinating activities of whole-class groups. The regulative discourse will be explicit, perhaps using imperative modalities, depending on the age and maturity of learners.

It is apparent that competence models are aimed at cognitive 'empowerment' of learners while performance models construct the learner from the perspective of deficit, making explicit the texts or skills that they must acquire. Two claims of Bernstein's (1996: 68) have particular significance for this study: competence models are *directly linked to symbolic control* and *all competence models share a preoccupation with a change of consciousness*. In addition, I would align competence models of pedagogy with the construction of Bernstein's 'prospective' (1996: 79) identity which is future-orientated and, in the case of classrooms, seeks to empower subjects to become active agents in the construction of learning. By way of contrast, we can expect that performance models will tend to construct subjects with 'retrospective' identities (1996: 78), linked to texts and practices modelled on the past which learners are expected to 'acquire'.

In this section I have discussed, mostly in relation to Bernstein's work, the way that power, in terms of the locus of control of structuring legitimate communication, works to construct the role/consciousness of the pedagogic subject. Performative models of pedagogy construct the acquirer very much in terms of the recipient of a transmitted pedagogy: classification is strong across several criteria and the we would expect the locus of control to rest firmly with teachers, in terms of both instructional and regulative discourse. Competence models on the other hand assign symbolic control to the subject and this is the defining characteristic of these models; the locus of control rests with learners, usually in cooperative groups, and

learners must 'frame' or initiate, construct and manage discourse themselves. We would no longer expect the teacher to appropriate a 'whole class' instructional register and learners must manage (regulative discourse) the procedural management of activities themselves. This is very close to Rogoff's (1994) notion of learning as a transformation of participation, discussed in section 2.1.

In the following section, I narrow the focus from general educational contexts to that of L2 learning and I shift the discussion from the notions of power and relations of control down to one of agency and investment in learning. I begin too, to refer specifically to the context of my own study: that of young adults learning/studying English in Japanese universities.

2.4 AGENCY AND INVESTMENT IN INTERACTION

Bourdieu's (1977) economic metaphor, that of a 'linguistic market', which I have generally discussed in section 2.2, foregrounds social relations of interlocutors in the context of L2 use, in a way that mainstream SLA does not. If we look at L2 learning from the point of view of social practice, relational factors come into play between learners and their relationship to the target language: who is a legitimate speaker of the target language and what is the social relationship between learners and native speakers? What is the historical and current economic relationship to the target language? In Bourdieu's terms, "no one acquires a language without acquiring a *relation* to a language (my emphasis)." (1977: 646).

Norton (1997, 2000) and Norton Peirce (same author, 1995) argue for a reconceptualisation of the relationship between the 'identity' of the language learner

and the target language (2000: 5), drawing on Bourdieu's ideas (1997) of symbolic power relations. She casts doubt on the usefulness of SLA researchers asking to what extent a learner is 'motivated' to learn a target language, or making predictions based on long term success based on notions such as 'personality type'. These approaches ignore the cultural and historical background of the individual and cast the learner as an ahistorical and unidimensional entity who desires to become like target language speakers. Instead, Norton uses the term 'investment', following Bourdieu (1977) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) to signify the 'socially and historically constructed relationship of the learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it.' (2000: 10). She points out that investment does not equate with instrumental motivation as the latter does not capture the complex social history and multiple desires of the learner. Norton maintains that the language learner develops a social identity through the target language, in a way which is changing and constantly reorganising; in this way we can say that her account avoids the reductionisms of 'motivation'. [nb: motivation is discussed later in section 2.6, under the rubric of 'autonomy']

The context of Norton's work is very different to mine, in that she has conducted research on immigrant women in Canada who were living and, in most cases, working as well as studying in the L2 community. However, Norton's emphasis on power and sociocultural factors in terms of learners' relationship to the language in question and speakers of that language: the notions of 'investment' and the linguistic 'market', have considerable explanatory power in theorising discursive interaction in foreign language classroom settings, too. This raises issues of the classroom as a linguistic 'market', where learners' 'investment' in communication and achieving communicative competence must be understood in terms of power/control over the framing of discourse. In discussing communication we must consider how control relations determine who counts as a legitimate speaker and what counts as a

legitimate message. The structure of sanctions and censorships of the linguistic market drives relations between learners and other learners and between learners and teachers.

Working within this framework teachers need to understand that learners have social needs and aspirations that may be inseparable from linguistic ones: this is a clear finding in the learner testimonials in this study, in Chapter 4.3, later. If 'classification' is strong with teachers assuming control of most of the classroom talk, learners will not be constructed as legitimate speakers of the language, except perhaps in the narrow sense of short answers to questions from the teacher. In cases such as this, learners will have minimal investment in the discourse of the classroom. Especially if they are living in a relatively monolingual community where English does not have much use in daily life, this will probably restrict opportunities to ever achieve communicative competence, especially for those who lack social opportunities for significant social interaction outside the classroom.

However, if we attempt to design the curriculum from the position of competence models, with weak classification, there are more likely to be opportunities for learners to enact roles as 'legitimate speakers' with an investment in interaction. "The discourse that results from learning a language in terms of rules is very different from that which results from learning to communicate" (Ellis 1995: 580) and we may associate performance models with the former and competence models with the latter. With competence models, the locus of symbolic control lies with the learner and it now becomes possible for learners to collaboratively work towards goals together. This is not just a matter of "creating, conveying and exchanging signs" (Kramsch 2000: 139) in a cognitive sense but also involves *strategic* use (or deployment of 'power') of the target language: assuming a discursive identity in the L2. If learners engage in collaborative activity together, without discursive control

from the teacher, they must work out or negotiate discursive roles together, bearing out the Foucaultian notion that power is something that is created *with* others rather than being imposed or exercised over others.

The principles of communication that I am beginning to outline, involving horizontal (peer orientated) discourse (Bernstein 1996: 172) with some teleological purpose, within an intersubjective and pragmatic framework, are articulated to a high degree of sophistication in the work of Habermas (1970, 1984). In the following section I propose Habermas' theory of communicative action as the conceptual structure around which I model the design of the Kanda Curriculum.

2.5 COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

Habermas' work (1970, 1984, 1987; McCarthy 1984) has its roots in the neo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School which is characterised by its emphasis on sociocultural concerns in general and socio-psychological issues in particular. Habermas sees the development of interactive competence as being concerned with ego development, or in other words, the development of a social identity (McCarthy 1984). This is very much in accord with the work of Vygotsky, Wertsch *et al.*, who locate the cognitive development of the individual as following from interaction in the social environment, and ultimately, implicated in the social activities of which the individual is a part.

Habermas' theory of communicative action (1984) establishes a connection between discursive interaction and objectivist structures and systems. He objects to Weber's analysis of modernity where *instrumental* reason and instrumental action were the characteristic features. He also believes that Marx was mistaken in this view of

action and reason, as reflected in his emphasis on the role of human labour in social development (Layder 1994: 189). In both of these views the dominance of instrumental reason is asserted as people act in and upon the world of physical objects.

According to Habermas (1984), foregrounding the role of labour is limited as it ignores the way in which people in interaction are preoccupied with reaching understanding. He believes that any adequate social theory must take account of 'communicative rationality': the fact that action is also based on the achievement of shared understanding. A theory of human labour is inadequate unless supplemented by a notion of interaction which recognises procedural understanding and consensus between communicating individuals (Habermas 1971). Put simply, when people meet, they are engaged in achieving understanding, *on the basis of which further interaction may proceed*. Obviously, it is discourse that mediates this understanding or intersubjectivity, and 'further interaction' implicates the *emergent* character of talk-in-interaction, whereby participants co-construct understanding through sequential moves in talk. One of the central elements of Habermas' work is that he assumes that there is a primary case of language-use where genuine communication to attain common goals is driven by the 'inherent telos of human speech' (1984: 287). This point is developed further in section 2.7.3.

In theorising action, Habermas generates a set of categories based on the relationship between the actor and the environment. This classification is meant to enable us to analyse the constituent elements in instances of communication; we can say that people make 'validity claims' or justify the appropriateness of their views in three ways:

*teleological/strategic models.

These relate to the best way of achieving some desired state of affairs in the objective, external and factual world.

*normatively regulated action.

This is the social world of interpersonal relations, regulated by social norms and they correspond to the normative rightness of what is being argued.

*dramaturgical action.

This is the world of subjective experience based on the sincerity and authenticity of one person's advice to another.

Habermas proposes a fourth category: 'communicative action', which is simultaneously orientated to all three of the above categories. Discourse is given prominence in this model where at least two subjects capable of speech and action establish interpersonal relations and seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. 'The central concept of interpretation refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit of consensus.' (Habermas 1984: 86).

In 'communicative action' the resulting action should be motivated through reason; all participants harmonise their individual plans of action with one another and so pursue their illocutionary aims without reservation. Where on the other hand, at least one participant wants to produce perlocutionary effects on the opposite number, Habermas terms this 'strategic action' (1984). Both of these actions comprise communicative events but the point is that there is a qualitative difference

between them. Strategic action implies that at least one actor is orientating to personal success and so this does not qualify as rational action.

The assumption of communicative action is that genuine consensus is possible and that it can be distinguished from false consensus; we would then suppose (in ideal terms) that the outcome will be the result simply of the better argument and not of accidental or systemic constraints on communication. The process can only be free from constraint when for all participants there is a symmetrical distribution of chances to select and employ speech acts, when there is an effective equality of opportunity for assuming roles in dialogue with others.

Communicative action is differentiated from what Habermas (1984) terms 'communicative pathologies' (strategic action) where the former aims at reaching understanding and the latter at success. *Concealed* strategic action may take two forms: conscious deceptions which Habermas equates with manipulation and unconscious deception which is usually referred to as *systematically distorted communication*. In cases such as this at least one of the parties is deceiving him/herself about the act that s/he is acting with an attitude orientated to success, and is only keeping up the appearance of communicative action.

Like Bourdieu, Habermas has critiqued Chomsky's (1965) notion of an autonomous cognitive linguistic competence, in contrast with which he discusses a *communicative competence* (McCarthy 1984). Linguists in the Chomskyan tradition have asserted that a distinction between linguistic competence and performance are necessary since performance does not admit of the same type of theoretical reconstruction as does competence. Habermas asserts that communicative competence must have just as universal a core as linguistic competence; he conceives of a *universal pragmatics* (McCarthy 1984), where certain features of utterances, discourse, can be rationally

reconstructed in universal terms. Following Searle (1969), he designates the speech act as the elementary unit of linguistic communication (McCarthy 1984). Here is a powerful argument for foregrounding the pragmatic and action-orientated aspect of language in human life. Whereas Chomsky has argued from (his reading of) Saussure that speech (parole / discourse) does not admit of reconstruction in *linguistic* terms, Habermas asserts that reconstruction, and hence the claim of universality, is valid in *pragmatic* terms. Utterances can, in general, be analysed into a propositional content and an illocutionary force and accordingly speech acts can be said to consist in the deep structure of two parts: the propositional content and the performative. The dominating or performative utterance establishes the illocutionary force of the utterance and therefore the pragmatic situation of the dependent part.

As the medium for achieving understanding, speech acts serve to:

- *establish and renew interpersonal relations

- *represent (or presuppose) states and events

- *manifest experiences – the speaker takes up a relation to something in the subjective world,

and these functions together comprise a *universal pragmatics* of language.

With direct relevance to pedagogic contexts (see 2.3, earlier) Habermas elaborates (1970) on the construct of communicative competence, with the twin terms of *Handeln* and *Diskurs* (cited in Candlin 1984: 130). *Handeln* implies conformity with the principles and values *transmitted* through learning and is logically aligned with Bernstein's (1996) model of performance pedagogy (2.3, earlier), where classification

and framing of discourse are strong. *Diskurs*, on the other hand, implies creative or critical negotiation of value on behalf of the learner (Habermas 1970) and is logically aligned with Bernstein's (1996) competence model of pedagogy where both classification and framing of discourse are weak. This is a useful way of distinguishing the pragmatic value of utterances in the classroom, according to the control relations associated with such utterances, and I draw on this later in Chapter 6 to characterise and interpret classroom discourse in these terms.

Returning to the notion of communicative action, Rommetveit (1979: 148) has critiqued 'Habermas' promised land of pure intersubjectivity' (see also Turner, 1988) which focuses on the rationalist ideal of "complete symmetry in the distribution of assertion and disputation, revelation and hiding, prescription and following, among the partners of communication". However, according to Outhwaite (1994), Habermas himself never intended the ideal speech situation to be understood in these terms, turning the world into a 'gigantic seminar' (*ibid.*: 45) and McCarthy (1984: 309) believes that actual situations rarely, if ever, even approximate to this purity. In this way the notion of a 'pure intersubjectivity' is a kind of necessary fiction to underpin the assumptions of an idealised structure and concept of interaction.

In discussing the notion of a universal pragmatics, Outhwaite (1994: 44) believes that there is a tension between a normative understanding of the four validity claims described above, and of the ideal speech situation, and the notion that they are in some way 'latent' in actual speech. He therefore (*ibid.*) suggests that in actual contexts of discussion, precise specifications of modelling the speech situation are not possible: actual instances will involve approximate translations. In a similar way, there is something unrealistic about a literal 'generative grammar' of social action and it is doubtful that Habermas ever had this in mind, in literal terms (Outhwaite

1994: 44). However, these objections do not make Habermas' ideas irrelevant; his concept of communicative action serves as a yardstick against which we can measure actual instances; its importance lies in its heuristic value.

In Chapter 3, I use the notion of communicative action as a heuristic around which to engineer the interactive conditions of the Kanda Curriculum. I attempt to structure the conditions of interaction between learners in terms that require negotiated decision making between (theoretically equal) social peers, about *procedural* aspects of their own learning. In this way, I try to validate the curriculum in the terms that I have laid out so far. This concept is developed in more depth in Chapter 3 but I now turn to the subject of 'autonomy' in L2 language learning and its significance for this study. The notion of autonomy, in the sense of 'interdependence' among participants, and collaborative decision-making (Kohonen 1992), is closely connected with the above discussion of communicative action.

2.6 AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

'Autonomy' is really a conglomerate of disparate but related notions, with origins in education, especially in the USA. This includes self-directed learning, self-access (usually computer mediated access to pedagogic materials), self assessment, strategy training and (of greatest relevance for this study) a shift in control of classroom discourse away from teachers to learners. While people have, of course, been learning other/foreign languages for centuries, theories of autonomy in language learning are generally concerned with the organisation of institutionalised learning and this has a history of about three decades (Benson 2001: 7).

According to Benson (1997) 'autonomy' was the buzz word of the nineties in L2 pedagogy and we can say that it has the same generalised *de rigueur* currency as did the term 'communicative' in the 1980's. As used in foreign language teaching, we may broadly discern two strands. Reflecting the academic traditions of monologism and intramentalism that have been discussed earlier in the study, the North American strand has been largely concerned with identifying the learning behaviours of successful learners, e.g. Rubin (1975), Naiman *et al.* (1978), with a view to enabling others to enhance their learning. More recent work by Wenden and Rubin (1987), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) has related these earlier observations to cognitive models, and Oxford (1990) has made the results of these earlier works available to teachers.

The second strand, the European approach, which is more in accord with this study, has focused more on developing learner autonomy with the teacher in a facilitative rather than an 'expert' role. This kind of work is typified by practitioners who have experimented with the idea of autonomy in classroom settings (Benson 2001: 13) and such work has been influenced, at least in part, by developments in the notion of the 'social context' of classrooms (Breen and Candlin 1980; Breen 1986). The central idea here is that 'autonomy' involves a shift in control relations from the teacher to the learner (discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3, following) with a pedagogic focus on *interdependence* between learners, working in collaborative groups.

In reviewing the literature in both the North American and European areas, I agree with Little (1995: 177) where he states that while research into learning styles and learning strategies are undoubtedly useful,

"Knowledge of them cannot be guaranteed to translate without further ado into learner autonomy" and (*ibid*: 175) the "...decisive factor must always be the nature of the pedagogical dialogue." (my emphasis)

As discussed earlier, evidence from the work of Bernstein (1996) suggests that where the locus of control of discourse lies with teachers, the discursive roles of learners are highly restricted. Interpreting Little's remarks in this light makes a lot of sense. The control relations established through pedagogic discourse generate social relations which afford or constrain 'autonomy'. Boud (1993) defines autonomy as a characteristic of learning where students take significant responsibility for their own learning over and above *responding* to instruction. This implies an active and initiating role where classification is weak, the locus of discursive control lies with learners and the discourse is mostly of a horizontal (between peers) nature.

There is often an implicit assumption that the notion of motivation lies at the heart of discussions concerning autonomy (Ushioda 1996). The range of theories of motivation in psychology, general education, and L2 learning is immense and Dörnyei (2001) has conducted a comprehensive review of studies that concern motivation in L2 learning. Of particular relevance here, Dörnyei (1998, 2001) has focused on work exploring the (mainly) intrinsic aspect of the Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and has re-articulated this as the *self-determination theory* in L2 research. This he claims (1998: 124) - citing Dickinson - provides evidence that L2 motivation and learner autonomy go hand in hand:

"enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning...and perceiving that their learning successes and failures are to be attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control." (Dickinson 1995: 173-4)

Work by Deci (1978) and Deci *et al.* (1991) suggests that intrinsic motivation leads to more effective learning and is promoted by events that are ‘informational’ rather than controlling, and by situations where the locus of control lies with the learner (Benson 2001: 69). In this way, control of discourse by learners themselves, discussed earlier in section 2.3, resonates with theories of intrinsic motivation, with a direct link between learner control and motivational thinking.

While extrinsic motivation has traditionally been seen as something that can potentially undermine intrinsic motivation (see Dörnyei 2001: 28, for discussion), according to ‘self-determination theory’ (Deci and Ryan 1985), various types of regulation exist and can be placed on a continuum between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic) forms of motivation. The point on this continuum depends on how much the regulation has been internalised by the individual. If extrinsic rewards are sufficiently self-determined and internalised, extrinsic rewards can become intertwined with, or lead to, intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei 2001: 29). This point is important, as the self-assessment procedure used in the syllabus (Chapter 3.4, later) is tied to issues of accountability (van Lier 1996) that connect very much with extrinsic motivation.

Norton (2000) has indicated some limitations of applying motivational theories to contexts of L2 learning, as discussed in section 2.4 earlier, and throughout the study I foreground instead the notion of ‘investment’ since this is more consistent with a sociocultural approach. Investment has the advantage that it logically connects with issues of power and control and it is understood as being contingent on these. Investment and motivation are not the same thing: learners may be highly motivated while having little actual investment in interaction. I feel that investment connects the individual with social practice in a more satisfactory sense than

motivation, which tends to be interpreted in more static terms and constructs the learner in a more inflexible way.

Finally, returning to the idea of 'autonomy', rather than motivation-in-autonomy, curriculum-based approaches (of which this study is a case in point) to autonomy extend the principle of learner control of learning to the curriculum as a whole (Benson 2001: 163). The issue at stake is whether or not minute-by-minute classroom practice fosters or discourages autonomy (Crabbe 1993: 208) and whether or not such autonomy pervades the curriculum or whether it is an occasional part of it. This principle of learner control in the curriculum (in the case of this study, actually *discursive* control) is the subject of Chapter 3 and is set out in detail in discussion of the process syllabus (Chapter 3.1).

2.7 STRUCTURING THE FIELD OF ACTION

I started this chapter by discussing the classroom as a community of practice and the goal of this 'practice' as being the transformation of learners' participation from their prior experience of institutional L2 learning. The role of social practice in the construction/constitution of the pedagogic subject is central. The subject has traditionally been construed *monologically*, from the traditions of Locke and Descartes, primarily in terms of representations (Taylor 1991). According to this line of reasoning, the subject is in contact with an 'outside' world and other subjects, mediated through representations held 'within'.

A major challenge to this idea has emerged in the twentieth century with the work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein in philosophy and Foucault in

history, who all in some way see the subject not in terms of representations, but as engaged in practice. The same idea arises in 'discursive psychology': through our discursive interactions the self is in continuous production (Harré and Gillet 1994). Of course, prior to this, no one denied that people act; the difference is that these scholars mentioned above situate the *primary locus* of the subject's consciousness in social practice. We do frame representations but much of our intelligent action in the world, sensitive to our situation and goals, is carried out unformulated (Taylor 1991). It is largely inarticulate.

The way we interact with others and the way we move (in a physical sense) encodes components of our understanding of self and world. We may call this understanding, in the sociocultural tradition, *consciousness*, after Vygotsky who defined consciousness as "the objectively observable organisation of behaviour that is imposed on humans through participation in sociocultural practices" (Wertsch 1985: 187). Our sense of self and the footing we are on with others is thus *embodied* and may be not carried, or only imperfectly carried, in terms of representations. It is patterns of action that embody consciousness and action, or more correctly *interaction*, that form the locus of consciousness.

I now turn to some common participation structures for ordering pedagogic/discursive relations in L2 classes (what van Lier terms 'interactional engineering' 1996: 165) and I discuss the implications, for constructing the consciousness of the pedagogic subject, of these structures. In order to do this, I draw on the notions discussed so far in Chapters 1 and 2 and evaluate the pedagogical structures in the light of these criteria. In this way, I provide yardsticks with which to compare, contrast and evaluate the Kanda Curriculum, the subject of the next chapter.

2.7.1 THE THREE PART EXCHANGE

One point on which most students of classroom discourse generally agree is that of the ubiquity of the three part exchange structure identified as the IRF (Initiate, Respond, Follow-up) by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Originally noted by Bellack et al (1966) and often termed the IRE sequence in North America (Initiate, Response, Evaluation) after Mehan (1979), this consists in its fundamental form of three moves: an 'initiation', usually a question by the teacher; a 'response' to the question, generally from a learner; and a 'follow-up' move where the teacher provides some kind of feedback on the learner's response. In secondary classes, Wells (1999) has estimated that as much as 70 per cent of all discourse takes place in this format and Mehan (1979) estimated between 50 and 60 per cent for his data from primary schools.

The participatory structure of IRF has strong consequences for the roles of teachers and learners. The first and third turns are produced by the teacher and the second turn by the learner. This means that the exchange is started and terminated by the teacher and the learner is cast in a responsive role. The more usual form of the exchange structure is actually more complex than this simple nuclear exchange and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) list three different kinds of 'act' that can occur in the third move, including: accept/reject, evaluate and comment. The category of 'comment' can include the more delicate subcategories of exemplify, expand and justify, each of which is realised through the initiation of a further, *dependent* exchange. This goes to show that there are several possible permutations around the basic structure and Wells has argued for a re-evaluation of the IRF exchange, away from an assumption of uniform practice, pointing out that it is best seen as a

'tool' which can be deployed by the teacher in her role as classroom manager, to achieve a number of quite different goals (1999: 199).

Van Lier (1998: 164) also takes up this point and outlines a variety of pedagogical practices that are permitted by the IRF format, demonstrating that the precise nature of the IRF being employed is revealed in the third turn, since it is here that the purpose of the question or sequence of questions is typically revealed. Van Lier (*ibid.*) then provides some examples to demonstrate that depending on the third turn, the teacher can 'frame' the exchange in terms of a recitation (repeat the sentence), a display question (where the question tests learners' understanding or attentiveness), a cognitive problem to be solved by learners, or a request for more explicit information. These examples reinforce Wells' point above, that IRF cannot be regarded as one type of pedagogical activity.

By exploiting the 'prospectiveness' inherent in the third turn, a teacher may encourage a dependent exchange to be added on to the nuclear exchange in the follow-up turn, for example in the case of relating the current sequence to the personal experience of one of the participants, or s/he may appeal to some further knowledge which has been built up in the class community (Wells: 1999). According to Newman *et al.* (1989) this kind of strategic action on the teacher's behalf amounts to a *collaborative construction of knowledge* by teacher and learners. This is a point argued by Edwards and Mercer (1987), and Mercer (2000) too, where they discuss the joint construction, between teacher and learners, of what they call 'common knowledge'.

Mercer (1992,) argues that the IRF structure is justified in terms of monitoring children's knowledge and understanding and similarly, Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989) claim that the structure is well designed to achieve the 'goals of education'.

These claims are very reasonable in one sense; Wells (1999: 168) asserts that there exists in sociocultural theory, a tension between the 'two prime goals of education', which we may describe respectively as cultural reproduction (discussed extensively in Bernstein 1996, especially in terms of 'transmission pedagogies') and individual development of the individual. Where classroom talk is concerned principally with cultural reproduction by ensuring that students acquire specified roles and mandated texts, using IRF is an effective method. It can be argued too that IRF, when moving beyond the purposes of recitation and display, affords the scaffolding of instruction between teacher and learner by developing cognitive structures in the zone of proximal development. However to be effective, scaffolding must be temporary and control handed over to the learner when s/he shows signs of being able to operate autonomously. Van Lier (1998: 166) believes that the structure of IRF lacks the necessary flexibility for handover to actually happen and instead suggests that some more 'autonomous' mode of discourse, for example group discussion between peers, should replace IRF at this point.

Using Bernstein's (1996) framework, we would expect settings where the IRF predominates to conform to the notion of a performative model. The participation structure constructs the learner as the recipient of a transmitted pedagogy with the locus of control of both instructional and regulative discourses lying with the teacher. The control relations are usually explicit and especially with younger learners, imperative modes of regulative control may well be used. We might also expect that space in the classroom will reflect the discursive control of the teacher, with learners facing the teacher in some or other format, with sanctions restricting movement during class.

In a Foucaultian sense, the IRF is admirably suited to the surveillance of learners in a group, and the rules of the exchange structure, vesting the right to control and direct

participation with the teacher (i.e. strong 'framing': Bernstein 1996), serve to construct a compliant and disciplined group of learners. We need not expect the disciplinary order to be maintained by explicit sanctions and threats, though this may occur if the teacher's authority is threatened or 'order' breaks down; rather, the hierarchical/role arrangement relies on the consciousness of learners. Especially in the case of high school learners, their understanding of appropriate behaviour and participation rights in classroom interaction will have been acquired in their accumulated histories of classroom interaction over several years. This does not mean that all participants like this idea or that challenges to the *status quo* will not occur; it does however mean that most learners will have appropriated certain notions of how roles in pedagogic settings tend to operate, within their own culture or subculture (for specific discussion of Japanese contexts, see Chapter 4.1, later).

On the evidence above, the IRF exchange is a tool of pedagogic discourse that serves performative or transmission models of education well. As Wells (1999) points out, the structure is neither functionally good nor bad, only well suited to some purposes and not to others. IRF would not be suitable in cases where progressive education addresses issues of cultural renewal or where individual learners are to be empowered to deal effectively with future problems (1999: 168); in other words, in cases of (Bernstein's) competence models of education.

Van Lier summarises the limits of IRF (1998) and makes a very important observation. While several authors above have discussed the collaborative/co-constructed nature of knowledge using this participation structure, the *plan* is not co-constructed. So long as the teacher initiates and terminates exchanges, the direction of discourse is out of the hands of learners and will be revealed only gradually by the teacher (1998: 165). In a discursive sense, learners' opportunities to exercise initiative or control are severely restricted; it is the teacher who directs the patterns

of exchange on an ongoing basis in the 'dialogues' of the classroom. From the learners' perspective such control-by-another is not conducive to participation; needs arising from 'intrinsic motivation' (Deci and Ryan 1985) are not addressed and the learner may feel that s/he has little involvement or investment in proceedings. Furthermore, student utterances are not only cast in a responsive role but are also often highly elliptical and syntactically reduced.

If used sparingly in L2 classes, as one of a number of participation formats, IRF can be a valuable resource, even in competence models of education. For example it can be used to ascertain levels of understanding of structural or textual points or it can be used as a managerial ploy to subdue or isolate disruptive or uncooperative individuals. It may also be used by the 'charismatic teacher' to call whole class groups to attention to establish rapport with the class as a whole by, for example, constructing joking exchanges. However if consistently used in class, IRF is only really appropriate for transmission pedagogies such as that we might expect to find in instances of grammar translation. The strong 'framing' (Bernstein 1996) of IRF is especially suitable for the disciplinary surveillance of large groups of learners who are expected to 'acquire' grammar or lexis or knowledge of texts, guided by an expert teacher, where pacing is crucial in covering a mandated curriculum. Despite the limitations it imposes, it is an improvement on the 'magisterial discourse' described by Bourdieu (1991) which would consist mostly of monologues by a teacher, directed at learners with virtually no discursive rights at all.

Despite evidence above from several scholars concerning claims about the role of IRF in co-constructing the curriculum or affording collaborative learning with teachers and learners, I believe, along with van Lier (1996: 151), that IRF does not represent true joint construction of discourse, particularly in the case of L2 discourse. The participation structure prevents learners from assuming control of the discourse

in terms of initiation, topic switch, elaboration of message, negotiation of meaning, among other features and most seriously of all, learners have no role in the 'negotiation of the direction of instruction' (van Lier 1998: 165). This implies a pragmatic modality of *Handeln*, in Habermas' (1970) terms, where value is regulated and transmitted by the teacher and the appropriate learner role is one of conformity. Learners are not concerned with resolving transition and distribution problems, as in more 'conversational' talk in small groups, but instead with observing rules. In a situation of rigid turn control learners will not be able to explore ways in which speaker change is effected through turn taking in the target language. Therefore the IRF structure, as a resource to be exploited in generating classroom discourse, generally has a *constraining* effect on learner talk. We can say that, in general, it engenders the antithesis of the goals of the Kanda Curriculum though it may be useful for the teacher to employ sparingly at strategic points in the learning cycle.

In the following section I discuss a range of structures and formats of participation in the L2 classroom which afford greater possibilities for control of discourse by learners. This is a generalised review and provides a background for discussion of the Kanda Curriculum, the subject of Chapter 3.

2.7.2 TASK BASED LEARNING AND GROUPWORK

In the early 1980s, leading on from speculation going back at least ten years, there emerged a major paradigm shift in British, continental European and North American debates concerning the institutional teaching and learning of foreign languages. The development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), while actually covering a multitude of practices and theories, advocated the central importance of *communication* in language teaching and learning. This was first and foremost a 'post-method' approach (Brumfit and Johnson 1979; Brumfit 1988) in

which the principles underlying classroom procedures were of primary importance, rather than pre-designed packages of materials.⁴

The fundamental element was an emphasis on the role of 'authentic' communication in pedagogic discourse and it became important to use language accurately and appropriately in *communicative contexts*. This had the effect of shifting attention from the impact of whole methods or courses, to the impact on learning of particular activities or interactions (Bygate, Skehan *et al.* 2001: 2). Significant contributions in earlier work to theorise and delineate CLT included articles by Canale and Swain (1980) and Breen and Candlin (1980), both in the first volume of the journal *Applied Linguistics*. Canale and Swain (*ibid*) presented a framework for modelling 'communicative competence', which provided a yardstick with which to critically evaluate 'communicative approaches' of the time; Breen and Candlin (1980) discussed the potential characteristics of CLT from the perspective of a curriculum framework.

The notion of 'task' has developed as a way of describing different activities associated with such communicative practice. While relatively recent in L2 pedagogy and SLA, the concept has a long history in curriculum theory in general education, dating back to the work of Dewey (1933, 1938) in the USA and Stenhouse (1975) in the UK, *inter alia* (Candlin 2001a). In this way, the construct of task has tended to supersede the term 'communicative language teaching' so that both terms are now understood to mean essentially the same thing (Bygate, Skehan *et al.* 2001).

One problem of discussing tasks in connection with L2 pedagogy is defining the terms of reference; there are a very large number of definitions in the L2 pedagogy/SLA literature and Bygate, Skehan *et al.* (2001: 9) give a comprehensive review of these. Skehan (1998: 95) integrates and discusses the ideas of three of the

earlier scholars: Candlin (1987), Nunan (1989) and Long (1989), and proposes a useful synthesis of their ideas, where a task is an activity in which:

- *meaning is primary;
- *there is some communication problem to solve;
- *there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities,
- *task completion has some priority;
- *the assessment of the task is in terms of its outcome.

For the purposes of this study the most apt and succinct single definition is probably that of Nunan (1989):

“a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language, while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.”

However, the caveat should be added that the above definitions generally have as their goal, the acquisition/learning of a language (in the sense of a system), whereas the context of this study is that of tasks as enabling devices for co-construction of the curriculum, in terms of learner discursive strategies and pragmatic behaviour. This point is discussed in more depth in Chapter 3, following.

Candlin (2001a: 230) has summarised some of the different ways in which tasks function in language pedagogy and cites the following scholars, *inter alia*, as significant examples. Candlin and Edelhoff (1982) use tasks to structure thematic content and learner activity in the design of curriculum materials; tasks are a means of facilitating learner-learner and learner-teacher interaction in the classroom, emphasising both interactional and affective dimensions of communication (Legutke and Thomas 1991); tasks are the basis for classroom-level curriculum planning

(Prabhu 1987); as a means for enabling experiential learning (Kohonen *et al.* 2000); and as a stimulus for exploring 'contingency' in learners' and teachers' actions (van Lier 1996). Candlin (*ibid.*, 2001a: 230) further states that the construct of task has now been used by writers and publishers of L2 learning textbooks as a principle for the internal organisation of pedagogic content (Nunan 1989). In this way, the notion of 'task' has become elevated to the status of a methodology, that of 'task-based learning', which is really a more recent sub-variant of the communicative curriculum of Breen and Candlin (1980), but with an emphasis on learners *actions* and *processes* in the classroom (Candlin 2001a: 230).

It is important to bear in mind that generalisations about methods and approaches are only abstractions, away from the reality of classrooms, since what actually occurs in classes and the prescribed features of the models concerned, are often two very different things. For example, this was a strong conclusion emerging from evaluation (Beretta 1990) of the implementation of the Procedural Syllabus in the Bangalore Project (Prabhu 1987). In this case it transpired that there were a number of teachers involved who had not been clear about the goals and methodology of the project and there were also several who did not feel that they had had any stake in 'ownership of the innovation'. This made it difficult in several instances, to evaluate the project from the assumption that the diversity of practices that had taken place in classrooms, necessarily had much connection with the guidelines of the project. This is a classic case of a wide gulf between minutiae of localised practice and the assumptions of researchers.

Skehan (1996: 39) makes a useful distinction between *strong* and *weak* versions of task-based approaches (see also Legutke and Thomas 1991: 12). He claims (*ibid.*) that in weak forms, tasks are embedded in a more 'complex pedagogic context'; they are necessary, but for example, may be preceded and/or followed by focused

instruction. Skehan believes that this latter version is close to general CLT (1996: 39) practice and this weak form can be compatible with a traditional presentation, practice, production (PPP) sequence, where production (the final stage of the PPP sequence) is based on tasks, rather than more controlled and guided activities (Skehan 1996: 39).

In contexts of 'weak' versions of task-based learning (TBL) using the three part (PPP) sequence discussed in the previous paragraph, we can expect to find the two 'discursive worlds' (Ellis 1994: 581) of pedagogic and more naturalistic discourse, co-occurring. Typically, the teacher can be expected to control the discourse in the 'presentation' and 'practice' stages, using a monologic 'instructional' discourse (see section 2. 3, earlier) and the three-part IRF exchange (see 2. 7.1, in the previous section) to test understanding, with some degree of free or guided production in the final 'production' stage. While some autonomy and less restricted speech roles are implicated in the final stage (the degree of which will very much depend on individual circumstances), control relations are clearly vested in the teacher in the first two stages.

Taken as a whole therefore, we would expect the teacher to dominate the discourse, even if only by 'regulating' (Bernstein 1996) classroom interaction and transition between activities, thus effectively restricting learners to responsive roles, except in the final of the three stages. Skehan (1998: 94) claims that the so-called '3Ps approach' is probably still the most common teaching approach and hence format of learner participation, when judged on a world scale, despite having been largely discredited in terms of CLT (Brumfit and Johnson 1979) and acquisition theorists (Long and Crookes 1991). Skehan (*ibid.*) believes that the approach persists because it places the teacher firmly in charge of proceedings, i.e. holding prominence in discourse, and it demonstrates power relations in the classroom. This last point

implicates strong 'classification' (Bernstein 1996) of discursive roles, with specialised (and restricted) pedagogic identities for learners.

Depending on the particular goals of the curriculum and the proficiency of the learners in question however, a restricted range of discursive roles need not necessarily be understood as a negative point. However, typical learner participation formats of 'weaker' versions of TBL, including the PPP approach, are generally highly incompatible with the notion of the 'participatory appropriation' that forms the pedagogic goal of the curriculum in this study. Essentially, control relations will tend to foreground the teachers' voice in a prominent and evaluative mode for much of the time and thus inhibit effective participation by learners, in terms of the pragmatic involvement and discursive strategies implied in Habermas' notion of *Diskurs* discussed earlier.

It is also doubtful whether learners have opportunities to negotiate the context of discourse and transition from one activity (see Hasan 1999, Chapter 4, later) to another, as in the ongoing flow that typifies more 'naturalistic' discourse. Weaker versions of TBL, while an improvement on the 'magisterial' discourse and three-part exchange discussed earlier in this chapter, are still variants of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1996), positioning learners in basically 'responsive' roles, and are therefore not helpful as participatory formats in the context of the Kanda Curriculum. In the following section I begin to sketch an interactive blueprint that is more in line with naturalistic and 'conversational' discourse.

2.7.3 TRANSFORMING THE PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE

In contrast with weaker versions of TBL as discussed above, in *strong* versions, tasks are the *units* of the curriculum (Skehan 1996: 39) and these are collaboratively transacted by learners in small groups, without monitoring and regulation by the teacher. In effect, the locus of control rests with learners as articulated in Bernstein's (1996) model of competence pedagogies and this has strong implications for the micro-structures of interaction.

In order to participate in more 'fluid', naturalistic discourse where context is emergent and co-constructed on line by participants (as discussed in Chapter 1.4.3), learners must 'manage' talk or exercise *control* over the discursive situation (Hasan 2000). Effectively, this means adopting a more proactive and *strategic* role in talk than that of a responsive, pedagogic subject. In natural conversational interaction, personal goals and strategy are intrinsic, otherwise discourse would be 'a game with no consequences' (Bourdieu 1992: 34). Therefore, stronger versions of TBL in the classroom imply a different kind of 'speech exchange system' (Sacks, *et al.* 1974: 729) to that of weaker versions, and discursive 'products' are subject to fewer sanctions and censorships than in pedagogic discourse. Instead, the value of learner discourse can now be measured against the creativity, agency and 'investment' of participants: Habermas' (1970) *Diskurs*.

Power, in the sense of Foucault (1977), discussed earlier in Chapter 2.2) now operates not as an evaluative modality vested with a teacher, with sanctions and censorships, but as something that is deployed by participants as they compete in talk for turns, assuming and relinquishing the floor. Perhaps 'control' is a more useful concept than power here since, according to Mercer (2000: 95), the former is more recognisable in actual situations of interaction and therefore more concrete.

Equality of status among interactants is significant with regard to the quality of talk. Where interlocutors are differentiated in terms of social status, control or power, we may expect a tendency for participation in discourse to be asymmetrical: 'unequal participants tend to have asymmetrical interactions' (van Lier 1998: 169)*. In a related vein, Piaget (1932: 409) emphasised the importance of peer, rather than adult-child interaction in connection with social cognitive development, noting that 'discussion is only possible among equals.' Van Lier (1998) discusses equality and symmetry in learner-learner discourse and relates these to the idea of 'contingency'.⁵

Contingency is a cognitive quality that captures succinctly the structural significance of a person's utterance in relation to the flow of discourse. Therefore, contingency, which I take to include the 'sequential implicativeness' of Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 296), relates to the dynamic co-construction of context in interaction and implies (relatively) equal rights to negotiate the direction and outcomes of talk.

According to van Lier (1998: 169) there are two distinct characteristics of contingency in interaction. Firstly, 'contingency' refers to relations between a current utterance and the previous one and secondly, an initiating utterance raises expectations and provides a base for sequential contributions. It is through the mechanisms of such turn taking that we contextualise talk-in-interaction (Gumperz 1992), not in the sense of enacting prepared scripts, but by responding on-line to prior utterances and initiating new ones, in a creative (and sometimes unpredictable) manner (see also Chapter 1.4.3, earlier). Such turn taking is the mechanism through which we establish intersubjectivity with others (see Rommetveit, Schegloff, Chapter 1.4 and 1.4.1, earlier) in the sense of a dynamic, distributed cognition.

Schegloff's (1984) work strongly articulates the notion of the structural relatedness of contributions/turns in developing context in talk. Schegloff (*ibid*) has stressed that it is *sequences* and turns *within* sequences, and not isolated sentences or utterances, that are the basis of talk-in-interaction.⁶

This refutes the monologism of early speech act theory and expresses the 'dialogical principle' that I articulated earlier in the study. In a strong form, the projection of a relevant next action may be achieved by the production of the first utterance of an 'adjacency pair' structure (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), for example: greeting-greeting, question-answer and invitation-acceptance/rejection (Heritage and Atkinson, 1992). Adjacency pairs place especially strong constraints on permissible moves by interlocutors. In a weaker form, especially in episodes of talk where utterances are not formulaic or highly conventionalised, there are much lower constraints on possible subsequent moves by interlocutors.

Contingent features in interaction increase the more the interaction approximates to 'conversation' (van Lier 1998: 170). Conversation is a difficult concept to define but van Lier (*ibid.*) discusses it in terms of utterances that are constructed on the spot rather than planned, and also in terms of equal rights and duties of participation (see also Eggins and Slade 1998). Interactants' mutual attention is engaged and maintained across episodes of talk as participants formulate and develop goals during the process of interaction and orientate to the dynamic context of the talk. Where talk has the quality of contingency, it is useful to think of goals as 'milestones' in the course of interaction, rather than the purpose or ultimate motive; the latter has an artificial and monolithic quality that ignores the complex and changing motivations that people bring to and also construct in interaction with others.

Control of discourse by learners themselves, as outlined here in stronger versions of TBL, is consistent with the philosophy of educational constructivism and Bernstein's competence pedagogies (see Chapter 2.3). Where learners co-construct tasks in collaborative groups, rather than acting in responsive roles (*Handeln*) there is more possibility of their intrinsic motivation and personal investment being engaged (Chapter 2.4), and such interaction is then more likely to approach Habermas' concept of *Diskurs* in communicative competence (Chapter 2.5). This is important in the context of EFL learners in Japan, the majority of whom lack opportunities for social interaction outside the class (van Lier 1988: xv), and for whom the chances of ever achieving some degree of 'communicative competence' are very slim.

In conclusion, in this section I have summarised ways in which different modes of pedagogic control translate into principles of communication, and I have discussed implications of this for the consciousness of the (idealised) pedagogic subject. This is a very unspecified and generalised account since, as stressed throughout this study, any actual research site is *situated* (Lave and Wenger 1991) and can only be adequately understood in ways that are sensitive to the particular context of the study. Moving from the general to the specific, this section lays the foundations for Chapter 3, where the Kanda Curriculum itself is discussed in more concrete terms, as an instantiation of the principles that have been presented here.

2.8 CODA

In Chapter 2, I have provided a conceptual base for understanding the (idealised) classroom discursive practitioner from the related perspectives of social relations, the fundamental importance of power/control relations and the ways in which these tend to construct the pedagogic subject. In order to do this, I have interwoven interpretations of scholars' work from such diverse areas as: L2 pedagogy, SLA, sociology, critical theory, philosophy of history, sociology of education, narrative

studies of motivation and investment, and philosophy of communication. From these diverse but related strands, viewing language as social interaction, a broadly 'social' orientation is apparent. This is appropriate since, in line with the conceptual stance discussed in Chapter 1, a concern with social interaction (in the sense of parole or discourse) necessarily entails an engagement with social theory (Habermas 1972).

Together, Chapters 1 and 2 form the conceptual basis of the study and in Chapter 3 following, I discuss the Kanda Curriculum in specific terms, integrating and building on the ideas discussed so far.

¹ Foster did not actually use the term 'culture' in her paper and this is usually attributed to Breen (1985) and later, other scholars cited in this study.

² Foucault himself however regarded his work as incompatible with structuralism in that he followed Nietzsche by opposing the idea of 'great narratives': in this way he is something of an 'anti-structuralist structuralist'.

³ Bernstein's use of the term 'framing' differs markedly from that of Goffman (1974, 1981) and Tannen (1986). The latter two authors see this as a contextualisation device, providing a 'tacit point of orientation for participants as they make sense of the ongoing interaction: for instance, pitch contour and/or facial expression may represent a frame for an utterance that is understood to be serious or ironic.' (Bussman, 1996).

⁴ There is no space here to conduct a comprehensive review of methods in foreign language teaching; Richards and Rogers (1986) and Markee (1997) are particularly useful for this purpose.

⁵ Van Lier (1998) also discussed the issue of asymmetry of interaction in cases between learners of different proficiency levels. This is an issue that arises in data of interaction in the Kanda Curriculum, see Chapter 6.

⁶ 'Talk-in-interaction' rather than 'conversation' has tended to be used to refer to the object of Conversation Analysis. This is done to avoid confusion because CA is often used in the study of institutional discourse, which may be presumed by some to be 'non-conversational'. (Drew and Heritage 1992: 4).