7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I draw the main points of the study together. Section 7.1 is an evaluation of the curriculum from a broader ('bird's eye view') set of perspectives than in Chapter 6, including a summary of the main points emerging from data analysis of learner interaction (section 7.1.1); a summary of learner testimonials (section 7.1.2) and a summary of teacher perspectives (section 7.1.3). Section 7.2 closes the study with a discussion, including the limitations of the data and the reasons for the somewhat 'thin' data component of the study (section 7.2.1); the overall significance of the study (section 7.2.2) and finally, suggestions for further research (section 7.2.3).

7.1 EVALUATING THE CURRICULUM

The following sections (as far as 7.2) summarise and bring closure to the data analysis parts of the study.

7.1.1 SUMMARY OF INTERACTION

Following Halliday's (1978) modelling of language as social semiosis, the essential aim of the curriculum was to engender the collaborative co-construction of *meaning* in the L2 by the learners, rather than conceiving of the classroom primarily as a site for the 'learning/acquisition' of aspects of L2 phonology and lexico-grammar (although this doubtless occurs), as SLA-based approaches would assume. It is the 'discursive identity' (Chapter 2) of the learner in the innovative curriculum that is at stake here and the research component of the study (Chapter 6) empirically explores how the different stages of the syllabus cycle differentially afford and constrain

'participatory appropriation' (Rogoff 1995) and hence available discursive identities for the learners, under the conditions engineered in the syllabus (Chapter 3).

The discourse types and discursive practices described in Chapter 6 were driven by a dynamic and dialectical relationship between the activities that learners constructed from task instructions and outlines, and the discourse that the learners deployed to mediate the completion of the activities. This relationship or dialectic between activity and discourse is a central element of Wittgenstein's (1958) later work and more recently has been re-articulated by Sarangi (2000) as 'interactional hybridity'. It is the empirical description and interpretation (according to the multi-methodology outlined in Chapter 5.4) of this situated discourse that makes up the *culture* of the Kanda classroom in the sense of Breen's (1985) metaphor; though Breen's usage of the term was admittedly much broader than the way I have used it.

Given the fact that the interpretation of classroom discourse in Chapter 6 was complex, involving (at once) aspects of text, process and social practice; it is difficult to assign precedence to any one of these perspectives. However, I feel that from the participants' point of view, the most salient would have been 'process' (Chapter 5.4.2) since the largely 'thin syllabus' (van Lier 1996) required considerable interactional initiative from the learners in most of the stages, particularly Stage 2 of the syllabus cycle (project work, preparation for presentations). In this way, the discourse of the classroom and indeed the curriculum itself, *cohered* through the strategic resources available to learners.

The demands placed on discursive strategy, in the sense of managing and shifting (Hasan 2000) the development of the on-line context (of situation, or 'register'; Halliday 1985) of talk, were greatest when learners were confronted with complex activities, as in section 2, that had not been pre-analysed into short and clearly

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defined pedagogic tasks (in contrast with the self-assessment 'tasks' in Chapter 6.4, which were of a more 'pedagogic' nature). As the textual analysis showed, for example in the 'Yumiko' transcript in 6.2.1, the learners had to break down the 'piece of work' into three main contexts/activities, when only general guidelines were given for the preparation of project work. In order to successfully complete the activities (such as agreeing on a script for interviewing Yumiko, or deciding on the allocation of roles within the group for the interview), each main context/activity needed to be facilitated by sub-con/texts including: clarification, instructing peers, negotiating procedural action, etc. In cases like this, the interactional achievement by learners lay in the deployment and management of contextual shift across such 'complex' activities. By 'complex', I do not mean a cognitive level of difficulty in the on-line processing of information; rather, I mean the collaborative solving of a problem which must be analysed into smaller component (discursive contexts) parts.

Stage 2 was the 'loosest' (and definitely the longest) of the stages of the syllabus cycle and so placed the greatest demands on learners' discursive initiative, but this does not mean that the other stages were less significant. The earlier chapters (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) of the study have theorised discourse in multi-layered and complex ways, implying a concomitant interdisciplinary and multi-methodological approach to the interpretation of data. I believe that the three-part interpretive framework (Chapter 5.4) that I have adopted from Candlin and Plum (1999) captures the complexity of three related yet distinct perspectives on data of interaction, very effectively. According to Candlin and Plum's analytic scheme, the three co-constructed stages of the syllabus cycle (excluding Stage 3: public performance, which is scripted), each differentially contributed to the curriculum in significant ways (discussed at length in Chapter 6). This affirms the pedagogic goal set out in Chapter 1.2 at the start of the study, that the syllabus should not prioritise one mode of interaction, but rather engender a *range* of discourse/activity types and hence modalities of participation

for learners. The three-part analysis of data at the end of each section (6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4) comprises the research summary of interaction in the curriculum: namely the describing and interpreting of each stage of the syllabus in terms of its efficacy for discursive interaction and hence pedagogic identity, for participants.

I summarise the findings of the three-part analysis of data from Chapter 6 as follows.

*Stage 1: re-construction of dictated text.

Text	Many short turns with ellipsis and tendency towards modality reduction; fast transition of turns with some degree of overlapping and latched speech. Primary texts construe main contexts of guessing lexical items and negotiating a re-constructed text; sub-texts construe dependent contexts of instructing other learners and resolving disagreements.
Process	Restricted range of speech functions, largely concerned with re-constructing a dictated text.
Practice	Activities were generally restrictive in terms of affording opportunities for critical negotiation of value, like scope for creativity. With more difficult dictated texts, tendency for learners of lower L2 proficiency to be restricted to marginal and responsive discourse roles.

*Stage 2: preparation for project work.

This actually consisted of a much wider range of potential activities and hence associated 'discourse games' than other stages of the syllabus.

Text	Tendency for longer turns and less latching/overlap than in Stages 1 and 3 of the syllabus. The main contexts/activities in which

	learners were engaged, tended to be abandoned or suspended and then re-visited at a later time: seemingly a function of learners struggling to cope with multiple demands where pre-analysed 'tasks' are not provided for them. Apart from main contexts of planning and preparing elements of project work, facilitating sub-texts included 'clarifying', 'instruction', 'procedural negotiation' and 'personal narrative'.
Process	This stage was the least structured in terms of scaffolding through task instructions; learners had to co-construct discourse in a bottom-up sense, setting and responding to the context of the talk with minimal external parameters on the context of the talk itself. This stage is potentially the most confusing but also the most useful in terms of affordances for learner 'control' of discourse, in the sense of strategic action.
Practice	The most 'open' stage for the critical negotiation of value by learners implicating greater scope for intrinsic motivation and 'control' of discourse in a Foucaultian sense. Given the less pedagogical nature of the activities (less text-based), less proficient learners were able to participate more symmetrically than in Stage 1, above.

*Stage 3: presenting work to peers.

In this stage, there was no formal analysis of discourse as learner 'talk' consisted of scripted presentations. This obviates the need to discuss 'text' and 'process' but Stage 3 is significant in terms of social practice.

Practice	The presentation acts as a public record of the

	group's work in the earlier stage and in this sense serves as an agent of extrinsic motivation, providing public accountability and opportunities for audience reaction/feedback on performance.

*Stage 4: self-assessment with peers.

Text	Many short turns showing ellipsis and overlap/latching, as a result of many local agreements. Significantly, a glaring absence of the con/textual integration, evident in Stages 1 and 2. The learner's single-mindedly attended to the main business of of negotiating scores for the self-assessment, without diversions into 'facilitating' sub-contexts. This was doubtless in part due to the 'tight' task instructions but may well have also been connected to the (low) time and effort that learners were prepared to invest. Hence, a need to consider affective reactions by learners and not only cognitive factors associated with tasks.
Process	Little need for much 'procedural negotiation' as the task instructions are 'tight'. 'Negotiating' for the group generates simple speech functions as long as there is little controversy or disagreement. Differences of opinion or misunderstandings generate more complex speech functions, in the few instances where these occur.
Practice	The accountability engendered by self-assessment is a very valuable part of the curriculum and a radical change to the educational experience of most of the Kanda learners. Of perhaps lesser

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	importance, self-assessment served as the basis of counselling and discussion with the teacher (not recorded) to provide support and feedback.

The data in Chapter 6 is consistent with Ellis' (2000) 'fundamental correlation' between task type and resulting activity/discourse but focusing only on learners' cognitive resources is misguided; data from Chapter 6 demonstrates that much depends on the extent to which learners are prepared to 'invest' in classroom activities and there is evidence (both positive and negative; the latter concerning F3) that the history of shared interactions (Mercer, 2000) shapes the group dynamics of participants, too. Breen's (2001c: 172) rhetorical question: asking how 'research on social and affective contributions of language learners might relate to research concerning psycholinguistic contributions' is certainly very difficult to answer. However, the differential treatment by learners of similar activities (especially in Chapter 6.4) and the testimonials by learners in Chapter 4.3, demonstrate clearly that social and affective factors are integral to institutional L2 learning, at least in the case of this study. This vindicates the way that I have modelled the classroom as a 'culture' (Breen 1985) rather than a laboratory (discussed in Chapter 2) throughout this study.

Finally in this section, the curriculum aimed at a transformation of pedagogic identities for participants, through radical changes to the speech exchange system (Sacks *et al.* 1974) compared with their previous experience, and we can model such change using Bourdieu's (1991) metaphor of an economy, where participant contributions are measured against the values of a particular speech exchange system. As I have argued in Chapter 6.4 earlier, more than anything else, it was the new assessment procedures that were responsible for instigating cooperation from

learners by making explicit the norms of the new speech exchange system and, probably more importantly, an enhanced degree of accountability through self-assessment was a key factor.

7.1.2 LEARNER PERSPECTIVES

In Chapter 4.3 earlier, I gave short biographical sketches of each of the focus learners and also reported on their initial reactions (through reflection worksheet and interview) to the curriculum. In all, there were five occasions from early 1997 to January 1998 when learners were given worksheets with focus questions to answer in writing, and these were brought to a group (three persons plus myself as interviewer) interview a few days later, for (hopefully) further discussion. In this way, my intention was to triangulate data of classroom interaction by gaining insights into the reactions of the different learners to the curriculum.

One year earlier, I had used learner diaries with a group of students with whom I trialled a prototype of what would become the Kanda Curriculum and the results were disappointing. Despite my requests for learners to write about their feelings, what they liked and did not like, what was more and what was less useful, how they would change activities, etc.; the result was little or no critical comment but merely a log of the activities undertaken. Accordingly, I modified my approach with the focus learners in this study and, following Bray and Harsch (1996) I set specific questions on reflection sheets that I wanted to raise learners' awareness about (such as: 'what was the most useful activity this last month, why?'). However, for the most part (excepting F1), written responses throughout the data collection period remained mostly single sentence and the focus learners usually had little to say in the subsequent interview.

A possible problem is that my questions and interviews were in English; using L1 would have been much easier for the learners (except perhaps F1) but my intention was to follow the way that the self-assessment interviews were conducted between teachers and learners, in English, thus giving the learners a significant L2 speech role. While the use of English may have inhibited the learners in this case, more generally, the data arising from the worksheets and interviews was somewhat disappointing, probably for reasons that have been documented by other authors. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4.3, learners can only access factors of which they are consciously aware and the reflections of sophisticated learners, especially self-reporting applied linguists, will tend to yield the highest-quality data (Ellis 1985). The focus learners in this study are mostly younger than, for example, the subjects in Norton's (2000) study which yielded rich insights into L2 immigrants struggling dealing with sociocultural issues of identity as language learners; there are other more profound differences, too.

Norton's subjects were living the daily reality of coping with a new social environment mediated through L2 and being positioned by others around them as 'foreign' and 'other', while the learners in this study were in a fairly 'monocultural' institutional setting in their 'own' society. Lantolf and Pavlenko's (2001: 148) point that not all L2 students in classrooms necessarily share the same goal of 'learning the language' is very apt here. My own observation over working at the research site for five years was that the primary goal of most learners was to graduate successfully from the institution and then seek employment, in a general clerical role, in Japan. Issues of learning a language were generally subordinate to this and most learners also assigned high priority to the socialisation process (especially participating actively in a range of clubs and circles) of attending university in Japan, as discussed earlier in Chapter 4.2. Whatever the reasons, with the exception of F1, several of the

learners expressed mild annoyance at being repeatedly asked the same questions and could apparently, like Lor's (1998) study, see little point in these kinds of questions (see M1's comments in section 7.2).

At the final interview session, the members of Group 1 presented me with a cassette recording of a Japanese musician in whom I had earlier expressed interest, while F1 apologised for the group's minimal engagement with the reflection worksheets and interviews over the course of the year. The three teenagers felt they had disappointed me but, their attitude throughout the year was instructive in showing me the (limited) significance for them of my attempts to gauge a developing self-awareness and critical reaction to the course.

The reflection/interview process was certainly not a total failure and it did afford useful insights into the learners' reactions, even if (especially in one case: F3) only to highlight the apparent lack of critical engagement of the individual with her course of study. Accordingly, in a similar format to Chapter 4.3, I have compiled comments from the focus learners over the course of the data collection period, using especially those from the final set of data and these are accompanied by my own interpretive remarks. For reasons of space, I have not included copies of the reflection worksheets given out to learners: I altered the format slightly when particular questions failed to elicit much comment and so there is no one prototype. In the data below, I use written comments (from the reflection worksheets) by learners since these tended to be more detailed than spoken remarks in the 'interviews' and there was very little additional material from the recorded data of the interviews, anyway. The comments below complement the data in Chapter 4.3, taken after completing the first syllabus cycle, some nine months earlier.

*GROUP 1

F1 was the most useful informant in that she provided more information than the others, both positive and negative, and her comments were generally more elaborate than those of the other five teenagers. Throughout the data collection period she indicated that her personal goals were closely aligned with those of the Kanda Curriculum and she repeatedly reported her happiness at being able to express her 'opinions'. For F1, the class was clearly a social site and not merely a kind of cognitive laboratory; as borne out by the data of classroom interaction in Chapter 6, earlier.

> '...at the beginning of the course I wanted to be able to speak out my opinions exactly and fluently to other person.'

> 'In my first class, I still remember that Mark [teacher] said, "this class is a class to help each other, to improve each others' English" and I remember that I felt very happy and I was moved. This class was a fantastic class for me, because we always could help each other. I spent a very precious time during this freshman year and one more amazing thing was that I NEVER felt sleepy... my most big goal is to be good at speaking out my opinion in front of everyone.'

F1's comments give voice to the ideas of learner-agency and creative self-determination that underpin Bernstein's (1996) competence models of pedagogy but not all the learners shared her enthusiasm. F1 wrote and (in interview) discussed her classmate (not one of the focus learners) who:

> '...says the freshman English class makes no use. She wants to be a diplomat in future, and she always felt very awful; I was very shocked and sad to hear it, because I like this class very much... she says she is going to another university.'

When asked to elaborate on her friend's opinion, F1 indicated that the other learner had expected smaller classes (very unusual in Japanese universities) and more direct

interaction with the teacher who could be used for grammatical re-casts and as a source of native speaker 'input'. This is an interesting example of someone who expresses preferences that are diametrically opposed to the design of the curriculum. It is possible that the learner in question did not 'understand' the goals of the curriculum; however it is also possible that she did understand, but did not accept this agenda.

Not all of F1's comments were positive. She was generally very pleased with the curriculum but when pushed for negative points:

> 'Sometimes, when we talked to each other, we use wrong way of English and both of us don't realise. I think is no use.'

However, this concern with a focus on structure was not something that seemed to be a priority for her. F1 was the only one of the six teenagers who (several times) commented on the problems of 'time' (see Bernstein's account of issues of 'time' in Chapter 2.3) or the weak and implicit sequencing of activities in competence-based curricula such as this (Bernstein 1996: 59).

> 'we often finished it [activities] and talked, chat other things.'

In tightly-paced classrooms based on 'transmission' or 'performance' models, there are far fewer problems of learners starting and finishing activities at different times and 'pacing and time' were the main problems encountered by teachers in the innovative curriculum, as discussed in section 7.1.3, following.

F1 appeared to have the clearest ideas of the focus learners as to what she wanted from the class and she expressed satisfaction:

> 'I lived in a foreign country so I can speak English a little, but 7 years has passed since I came back to Japan and I was always worrying that my speaking skill has been low. I didn't want to think in Japanese and then talk in English. I wanted to think in English and speak in

English. So I could practice a lot in this freshman class.'

F2

The data of interaction in Chapter 6 show F2 in a generally responsive role to F1 (and to a lesser extent, M1), restricted to fairly simple speech functions, with a very warm tenor between herself and her two peers. F2 seemed to be one of the less sophisticated of the six focus learners and generally expressed contentment with the curriculum while having little to say about specific points. On one occasion, in a focus interview, when pushed to define her personal goals for the year, she became visibly irritated and replied "I don't care." The question had been put to her on several previous occasions and it seemed to be an issue that was not overly significant to her.

The views that F2 did express remained consistent over the period of data collection, from the beginning (see Chapter 4.3) to the end.

> 'I think that presentation and role-play were most useful because I had to prepare the
> script, visual aids and so on, and to co-operate with other people... presentation was very
> hard to prepare or announce but presentation had many good aspects, for example write
> script, discuss, presentate and so on.'

She enjoyed and derived a sense of achievement from 'co-constructing' the curriculum and identified the collaborative planning, creation and completion of project work as the most significant part. When asked on several occasions for negative feedback, F2 replied that there was nothing in particular. In her final reflection worksheet, she only commented that thirty students in one class (actually not so large by the standards of Japanese universities) was too many and she did not make any negative evaluations about the curriculum itself.

As in his initial reactions to the curriculum (Chapter 4.3), M1 was positive about the course and specifically stated that social interaction in the classroom was a priority for him. His comments throughout the course showed little if any change, though he did become weary when asked repeatedly about his personal goals for the year, writing that he had '...answered this question many times.' The following best summarises the position that he consistently put forward:

> 'One [most important activity] is presentation. Because we had many time to speak English
> for preparation or something... I want to have a chance communicate and interact each
> other.'

The last point above is interesting; M1 stated that he wanted to interact with the other students. Again, this bears out Breen's point (2001c) that learners generally have social needs that cannot be divorced from the cognitive. M1's comments contrast strongly with F3 (below), who seemed to underplay social factors, and understood L2 communication as something that should occur between herself and native speakers.

M1 had no strong criticisms of the course but when asked about anything negative on his worksheet, he wrote:

> 'We cant learn some new thing. That means the thing which we have done in this course can
> be done by high school student.'

His comments here (as it turned out, in the subsequent interview) referred to the cognitive complexity of the structure and vocabulary that the learners encountered in the text-based materials on the course. Traditionally and still to a great extent, English courses in Japanese universities tend to be more focused on literature and

linguistics (Koike and Tanaka 1995) and proficiency components of courses generally foreground reading (this is less true at the research site than most other comparable institutions). Achievement in the latter case would usually mean learning or acquiring complex vocabulary and/or structure and this could well be the context of M1's remarks.

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*GROUP 2

M2

After the initial reflection worksheet and interview (Chapter 4.3) M2 proved to be the second most taciturn subject, after F3 (below). As shown by the data of interaction in Chapter 6, his 'communicative proficiency' was fair although his speech tended to be grammatically simple, but his responses to questions on the worksheet generally amounted to a few words and sometimes simple sentences; in interviews he tended to remain quiet unless directly questioned. He was not resentful or particularly uncooperative; the problem seemed to be that the type of questions and the process of revealing 'reflections' to the researcher had little interest or meaning for him. He cooperated to what he saw as a minimal degree and did not 'invest' anything of himself in the activity, unlike F1, above. An important factor in M2's disinterest in dwelling on the first year English proficiency course could have been that he was (according to several accounts) always deeply tired as he had a punishing schedule of part-time work outside of the university.

M2 expressed satisfaction with the high level of 'group discussion' but when asked about negative and positive points of the course, would typically respond with less-than-revealing comments such as 'I don't know' or 'I'm not sure.' In his final

reflection worksheet, M2 was asked what his goals in English were for the future and his reply had nothing to do with the philosophy of the Kanda Curriculum:

> 'To get certification as much as possible'.

He seemed to mean the accumulation of high scores in prestige tests of English proficiency (such as the TOEFL) and this was an interesting response in the light of the way that L2 learning in Japan has traditionally been evaluated largely in view of scores on normative tests (Chapter 4.2), creating a large industry around the marketing of tests and the sale of preparation materials. This of course does not mean that M2 was necessarily 'misguided' by seemingly taking a contrary position to that articulated by F1 above; if employment opportunities and corporate assessment of potential employees does indeed focus on test scores, then this is a fact that young people would be foolish to ignore. M2's comment here demonstrates well that in any classroom there will be a wide array of agendas: as Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) put it, learners approach the classroom differently and are not all involved in the same cognitive activities and in many cases, the term 'learner' may even be a misnomer.

M3

Unlike his friend M2, above, M3 was a good source of feedback and reactions to the curriculum. As an overall final statement, he wrote:

> 'This class was very difficult and hard class, but it was more effective, useful
> and interesting.'

His comments were often original and his choice of the most useful activity was different to the other focus learners:

> 'I think the best activity is dictogloss. It is difficult but its very useful and effective because
> we have to concentrate on listening the tape, discussing with the partner, and making it
> correct in grammar.'

Like F3 (following), he seemed to understand ideal 'communication' in terms of interaction with native speakers:

> 'I became a better English speaker than before, because I talked and communicated with native speakers... I noticed that the best way to learn English is to communicate with native speakers.'

Apparently this referred to the 'conversation lounge' at the research site where learners could go for advice on studying or conversation with native speakers of English. This service was mostly shunned by students who (being teenagers or early twenties) were mostly concerned with building peer relationships, outside of class. However, M3 was not dismissive of peer collaboration in group work and wrote that one of the best points of the class was:

> '...that most topics or works are done by students themselves. It can brush
> up our ability of cooperating or group work.'

M3's comments on assessment and his own goals showed some degree of meta-cognition and the realisation that there is more to learning a learning a language than being the recipient of 'teaching':

> '...if we make great efforts in our own time, it isn't assessable by teachers... students should
> assess whether they are making an effort for their own goal or not. .. as I wrote before, I had
> a lot of opportunities to communicate with native speakers and I made an effort to try to
> speak English as much as possible during the class.'

M3 had no particular negative evaluation of the curriculum.

F3

Finally, F3's feedback was the least sophisticated of the six learners and this was consistent with her participation in the class, which was discussed earlier in Chapter

4.3. F3 did not speak in the group interviews unless directly addressed and her responses on her reflection worksheets were generally restricted to a few words per item (unlike F1 who usually wrote a paragraph) and a simple sentence at most. In a similar way to M2, F3 did not appear particularly resentful about participating in the study; it seemed instead that the persistent questions were aimed at things of which she was not particularly 'conscious' (Ellis 1985). In short, the researcher's agenda had very little connection with her own 'lifeworld'.

The minimal responses that F3 did make however, indicate a contrary position to the goals of the curriculum. When asked if she thought that working in collaborative groups with her peers was useful:

> 'It wasn't useful compared with talking to ELI [conversation lounge: native speakers]
> teachers because sometimes our grammar was not correct.'

When asked to write some negative point about the curriculum, her response was the opposite of F1:

> 'It was bad that communication among students was too much.'

On other occasions, F3 wrote that she was happy with the class in general and had no particular complaints; neither were there any activities which she felt were not useful. Her class teacher felt that F3 was indifferent rather than negative about the course and like a lot of her peers, was focused on the immediate goal of graduating successfully from the institution, rather than developing critical reflection on her learning of English.

The above accounts show a diversity of attitudes and reactions to the course, ranging from the expressive and highly positive (F1) to the curt and more negative (F3). This

bears out Breen's 1985 point that (among other things) the culture of the classroom is always 'differentiated': although the classroom appears as one social unit it is actually made up of many social realities with often conflicting views of language and of learning [see also similar comments by Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001), cited above]. The obvious implications of this are that firstly, it is important that the learners be made explicitly aware of the goals of the curriculum design, in so far as they are obliged to conform with these when in class. The second point is that even if learners are aware of the philosophy and goals underpinning the syllabus design, they may not 'buy into' them.

Finally, all the learners at some point (comments not necessarily re-produced above) stated that compared with the beginning of the year, they felt that their ability to function in English had increased dramatically since starting the course. Interestingly, the student who reported greatest gains was the one who had the highest starting proficiency and who had used some English when living outside Japan as a child for several years: F1.

7.1.3   TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

Bernstein (1996) discusses the relative demands of 'performance' and 'competence' models of pedagogy (Chapter 2.3) on teachers and institutional resources, using an 'economic' metaphor. This is a useful framework with which to discuss the teachers' perspectives on the curriculum and so I adopt it here.

As discussed earlier, the two teachers who participated in the trialling of the Kanda Curriculum were chosen for a variety of reasons. Both were experienced and generally rated above average by their peers but the most important quality was that

both were judged to be highly *flexible*. Unlike 'performance' models which are 'received', competence models such as the Kanda Curriculum must be constructed on an *ad hoc* basis and the transmission costs of these models are likely to be much higher than those of performance models. According to (Bernstein 1996: 62), teachers generally need to be trained in the theoretical base of competence models and this was so in the case of the Kanda Curriculum. There was a constant need for meetings, discussions with other teachers who were supposed to be involved with writing classroom materials and to complicate matters further, in the absence of the explicit guidelines of what is supposed to be acquired in transmission models, there were differences of opinion concerning what the outcomes should be for the learners: this point is alluded to in Candlin's (1984) differentiation between the 'provisional' and the 'emergent' process syllabus.

As Bernstein (1996) points out, the hidden 'costs' of developing a competence model are time based. Extensive meetings between myself and the teachers, the teachers and senior levels of the institution (for reasons of explanation and justification), the two teachers between themselves to plan and monitor, were exhausting and both teachers estimated that involvement in the project nearly doubled their work load at the institution. In both cases, they were career teachers and what sustained them was interest in developing their range of experience and knowledge through involvement in an innovation like this.

Apart from planning, monitoring and making changes to classroom materials after using them in class, a further cost on time was imposed by the new assessment procedures for learners. Competence modes of assessment require that teachers establish profiles of each learner and this is a time consuming process. Apart from the self-assessment in peer groups that was the subject of Chapter 6.4, teachers made individual appointments with learners (to discuss their development) throughout the

year and these were usually conducted during lunch time or 'office hours' when the teachers were at the institution but not in class.

Besides all these demands outside of the class, there were other time-based issues that arose inside the class, too. As mentioned in F1's reflections on the curriculum in section 7.1.2 above, there were several occasions during the preparation of project work (presentations) when some groups completed their activities and sat chatting 'off-task' for extended periods of time. Also (recounted by F1 on another occasion) some groups completed a lot of their preparation outside of class, using L1. These problems arise when the classification of pacing and time are weak: a paradox exists since the teacher does not lead the learners in lockstep fashion and control pacing; yet the class must cohere to some extent along a time continuum, in order for the various groups to be ready to present their work in Stage 3 (public peformance) at the same time in the syllabus cycle. These are some of the complications that arise with the implementation of competence models.

By way of comparison, Bernstein notes (1996: 63) that the transmission costs of performance models are relatively less than those of competence models, involving a less elaborate theoretical base and accountability procedures that are made simple by the 'objectivity' of the performance. Performance models are more susceptible to external control and the economies of such control; planning and monitoring tend to be simpler than competence models because of the explicit structures of the transmission. Despite the difficulties mentioned above in implementing the Kanda Curriculum, both participating teachers were generally positive about the experience as they felt that the involvement was a learning experience for themselves and they generally received positive feedback from the learners. Not only the syllabus itself but also the theorising of the curriculum has been an 'emergent' process and hopefully this study will contribute to greater clarity in similar projects.

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7.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.2.1 LIMITATIONS OF DATA

The process of data collection (discussed briefly in Chapter 5.5.2, earlier), especially parts involving recordings of classroom interaction, was dogged by certain difficulties from the beginning. I had planned with the participating teachers to record classroom periods with the focus learners, in each stage of the syllabus cycle (Diagram 3.1) for a total of at least three complete cycles, stretching over a period of about six months. It was felt that this would provide a comprehensive picture of the focus learners in various kinds of interaction in the curriculum. However, as discussed earlier in Chapter 5.5.2, I was not working at the research site for most of the time and the result of this 'loose' arrangement was several instances of miscommunication with the teachers concerned, leading to crucial recordings being missed; this was compounded by some technical problems with recording equipment, also leading to loss of data. As a result, it was not possible to trace each group of learners through each and every stage of the syllabus cycle, across a common theme of work, since recorded data of some stages of the syllabus were always missing. This was a pity and gave a fragmented quality to the number of transcripts that were available for analysis in Chapter 6.

The second disappointment concerned the interviews and worksheet reflections of learners, that I had originally hoped would provide a lot (I had estimated about 30%, see Chapter 5.5.2) of the data which could be used to evaluate the curriculum. Here, the problem was more one of methodology and also (as became apparent) certain naïve assumptions that I held about the capacity for, and interest in, critical reaction to the syllabus (elaborated in section 7.1.2, below) on behalf of the learners.

Under ideal conditions, higher quality data using more comprehensive feedback and comments from both teachers and learners would have enhanced the findings of the study. However, at the time of data collection, a research culture had not yet been firmly established at the research site and management support for the project was not as effective as had been hoped, once data collection was underway. As a result, it was difficult to coordinate responses to unforeseen problems, between management, focus teachers and learners and myself; this was exacerbated by the fact that I was working mostly at another site.

However, despite the shortfalls in the way that the data collection unfolded, I believe that the data is still very adequate for the purpose of evaluating the 'emergent curriculum' (Candlin 1984) in terms of a contextualised and situated case study of discursive practice (Chapter 5.3, earlier) in an innovative curriculum. The data of classroom interaction (Chapter 6) is comprehensive enough to allow for the researcher to discern clear recurrent themes and patterning in the interaction, and the interview/reflection worksheet data do, to a fair extent, afford insights into the learners' (in most cases rather unsophisticated) reflections and critical reactions to the curriculum.

7.2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A concern with discourse in the sense of social practice (Candlin 1997b; Fairclough 1992; Sarangi and Coulthard 2000) lies at the core of the study and this focus on social interaction, rather than language *per se*, necessarily entails an engagement with social theory (Habermas 1972). This social theoretical orientation is consistent throughout the thesis, from the conceptualisation of the object of study (Chapter 1); the theorising of the discursive practitioner (Chapter 2); the theorising of the

curriculum (Chapter 3); a sociocultural and sociohistorical account of L2 language learning in Japan (Chapter 4); the research philosophy, approach and methodology (Chapter 5); to the interpretation of interaction in the curriculum (Chapters 6 and 7).

Following Layder's (1993) 'realist approach', the study reconciles macro and micro levels of analysis: the macro level concentrates on overarching general features of society such as organizations, institutions and culture, while the micro analysis on the other hand addresses more immediate face-to-face encounters and the situated contexts in which they occur. Cicourel's (1992) metaphor of an 'ecology' is helpful in modelling the linkage between these two layers by showing how subject behaviours are constrained not only by factors in the immediate interaction order but also by forces external to it. I have adopted Cicourel's perspective and the study moves between accounts of the overarching social order and institutional experiences of the learners, and an ethnographic and situated interpretation of interaction at the research site.

The conceptualisation of interaction in terms of discourse (social practice) implies the foregrounding *of social relations* of interaction (Bourdieu 1997). The crucial issue then becomes the translation of control into principles of communication, which become their carriers (Bernstein 1996: 93). An understanding of these control relations is fundamental to the interpretation of the organization and rules of institutional discourse: the *framing of discourse* that I have used in the title of the study. The Kanda Curriculum aims for change in the institutional experience of participation in L2 education for the learners and this process involves radical change to the *economy* of the interaction order of the classroom (Bourdieu 1991): the governing rules of the speech exchange system (Sacks *et al.* 1974), with a shift of the locus of control of discourse away from teachers to learners.

Following Hasan (1999b, 2000) I have theorised 'learner control of discourse' in terms of the management, development and shift of the *'context of situation'* (systemic functional linguistics, Halliday 1985) by learners in classroom interaction. The analysis of data of interaction (Chapter 6) focuses on the ways, subject to empirical description using Candlin and Hyland's (1999) three-part framework, that the main activities in the syllabus *differentially* afford and constrain the discursive activity of the learners. In this way, discourse in the classroom is modelled as a series of 'language games' (Wittgenstein 1958), foregrounding a dialectic between activity and language (Sarangi 2000) with a non-arbitrary link between the two. 'Context' is a metaphor that is integral to the study and besides a linguistic analysis of learner control of context (Hasan 1999b, 2000) in on-line interaction, the sociocultural (situated, institutional) and sociohistorical (norms of the wider society) also involve considerations of 'context', in different ways.

Finally, this thesis serves as a case record of the 'emergent syllabus' (Candlin 1984) and more generally, an innovative curriculum in L2 pedagogy. I have earlier (Chapter 5.5.1) situated the study within the interpretive tradition (van Lier 1988: 2) of educational research and as discussed earlier (Chapter 5.2) the centrality of 'context' in the study means that it is not possible to claim generalisability to larger populations. However, this is not a negative point and the evidence here may contribute to accumulated knowledge gathered by researchers across sites and contexts. As Stenhouse (1979) argues, applying the results of experimental research in classrooms is always difficult, since teachers must deal with 'cases' and not samples. A study such as this can provide documentary reference for the discussion of practice, providing points of comparison with the teacher's own particular case.

In this way, the study is best understood in terms of a 'science of the particular' rather than a 'science of the general' and perhaps its value lies precisely in the details

of its situation and context. While an interpretative study of this nature can never be replicated, I believe that in its entirety it has internal consistency and provides sufficient information that others reading it may draw informed conclusions. Writing in 1993 of a crisis of representation of the 'other' in qualitative research, Lincoln predicted that the search for grand narratives would be replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations. It is in this spirit that I submit the thesis.

7.2.3   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The original inspiration for the research project came from van Lier's study of educational micro-ethnography (1988) and his theoretical discussion of L2 learning curricula (1996) and these ideas very frame the current study. Leading on from my own work and looking to the future, I see two broad directions for further research that might be profitable for other novice researchers interested in the evaluation of educational curricula.

The first concerns a primary analytical focus on micro-ethnography. It might be useful to conduct a similar study in another context, hopefully with tighter controls on data gathering than was possible in my case, where the data was relatively 'thin' and disappointing in some respects. Such a study would not constitute a 'replication' in a positivistic sense, since for reasons discussed in Chapter 5, the 'context' of a study, in terms of broad culture, institutional and even classroom culture, along with biographies and value systems of both teachers and learners, would necessarily be quite different to my own.

While the focus of my own research methodology is the three-part frame of text/process/practice, as a way of interpreting interaction in the emergent

curriculum, at least two alternative perspectives suggest themselves. I have referred throughout the study to the Foucaultian notion of 'power' and the way that this is con-constructed with others. However, the development of this notion in my own study is rather weak. It would be interesting to track the interaction between learners in small groups in a longitudinal study and explore the dynamics of intra-group identity in terms of dominance, resistance and shifting alliance. This could be captured through the lens of constructs such as gender, age, ethnicity and relative proficiency.

Another perspective is a Vygotskyan exploration of Private Speech (Lantolf and Appel 1994) by learners in a curriculum similar to this. However, a study of this kind would perhaps be situated more under the banner of educational psychology, rather than educational linguistics. The two perspectives mentioned so far both constitute a genre of SLA, very different to the mainly laboratory-based studies of cognition that constitute mainstream SLA (see earlier discussion in Chapter 5) and I would assume that 'situated' studies of this nature would implicate an interpretive approach, similar to the kind outlined in Chapter 5, earlier.

Concerning the second possible direction of future research, a similar study could be conducted but with a research emphasis on the acceptance or otherwise of an innovative curriculum in cultural/institutional terms. Here, Holliday's (1994) 'appropriate methodology' might be useful to explore how particularisation of innovations could be approached in specific settings. This would presumably involve a longitudinal study of the *eventual* outcomes of such an innovation.

I have glossed these two broad directions, the micro-ethnographic and the managerial, as being essentially different but this is of course simplistic and there is

no reason why the two cannot be combined in the sense of micro and macro aspects of context, as discussed in Chapter 2, earlier.

APPENDIX 1A

DIANA DEAD IN PARIS (full text)

31ˢᵗ August 1997, Paris.

Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales, died in hospital early this morning, four hours after a car crash in Paris, after leaving the Ritz Hotel. Also killed were her companion, Dodi al Fayed and the driver of the car, Henri Paul. Diana's bodyguard, Trevor Rees-Jones, lies seriously injured in hospital. The French police are not sure exactly what caused the driver Paul to smash into the wall of the tunnel at a speed of about 160 kph, killing himself and Mr al Fayed instantly; but angry people all around the world are blaming the *paparazzi*, photographers who sell photos of celebrities to newspapers and gossip magazines. However blood tests show that Paul had drunk an illegal amount of alcohol that night, and he had also taken medicine usually used for depression, which might have increased the effects of the alcohol.

The rented Mercedez carrying the princess and others had left the Ritz soon after midnight , pursued by the *paparazzi*. About ten paparazzi were following the car on motor cycles. There is some confusion about what happened next.

A French motorist who was driving with his family that night, says he entered the tunnel two cars ahead of Diana and Dodi. He says that the motor cycles were just

behind the car and then one cut in front of the Mercedez and there was a large white flash. However, when questioned by police, the photographers say they were at least a hundred metres behind the fast moving car.

It is also reported that Fayed often commanded drivers to speed up or move unexpectedly, to avoid photographers. Other reports indicate that police found cocaine in the car. Is it likely that Fayed pushed the driver to go at such high speed?

So who is responsible for the deaths? Did the paparazzi chase the Princess to her death? One person who may be able to give some explanation of what really happened is Rees-Jones, the only survivor and the only person who was wearing a seat belt. However, he is too weak to respond to questions at the moment; and if he survives, doctors believe that he may remember little or nothing about the crash.

1   *First read the newspaper report and try to guess the missing swords. When you*

    have done this, discuss your answers with the others in your group, and change your

    answer if someone else has a better idea.

DIANA DEAD IN PARIS

31st August 1997, Paris.

Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales, died in hospital early this morning, four hours

after a car _____ in Paris, after leaving the Ritz Hotel.   Also killed were her -

_____, Dodi al Fayed and the driver of the car, Henri Paul. Diana's bodyguard,

Trevor Rees-Jones, lies seriously injured in hospital. The French police are not sure

exactly _____ caused the driver Paul to smash into the wall of the tunnel at a

speed of about 160 kph, killing himself and Mr al Fayed instantly; but angry people

all around the world are blaming the *paparazzi*, photographers who sell photos of

_____ to newspapers and gossip magazines. However, blood tests show that

Paul had drunk an _____ amount of alcohol that night, and he had also taken

_____ usually used for depression, which might have _____ the effects of

the alcohol.

2   *Now listen to the report, were you right? If you have used different words that make*

    sense, your answer is fine.

3   *Now listen to the rest of the report. You will hear the tape played twice at normal*

speed.   On a piece of paper, take notes and write down the important words.

   *[important: you will **not** have time to write down everything you hear - only write the*

'key' words] When the tape stops, share your answers with others in your group and

write out the rest of the report. It does not matter if you use different words to th

e tape, so long as the facts are the same and your report makes sense.

   Before you begin, look at the following words and, with the   others in your group,

circle the words you expect to hear:

motor cycle	airplane	Mercedez Benz
tunnel police suicide	cocaine	suitcase

   Now listen and remember, you must be very fast when you   take notes.

Living in Tokyo   Student's copy

A teacher who used to work in the ELI is talking about his experiences when he first came to Japan.

1 Read the first paragraph carefully and, in your groups,

   a discuss what you think are suitable words for each blank

   and

   b fill in the blanks.

My happiest _____ are of Tokyo in summer. I was very surprised to find there were lots of parks and trees, I had thought that Tokyo was all _____ ...and I used to go to Kamakura with friends, walk around and go to the beach...Kamakura is still my _____ place. This was the 'bubble' time and there was this great _____ of confidence, it was easy to find work and no one worried about the _____. Although I couldn't speak Japanese, it was easy to make _____ and I often went to Shinjuku to play, after work.

Now listen to the tape. Did you use the same words as the speaker? If you used different words which make sense, that is OK.

2 You will now hear the second part where the speaker talks about some probems that he had. Look at the following words and circle the ones you expect to hear.

disease	communication style	apartment
neurotic	fight	money frustration

Now listen to the second part of the tape and make notes. There will only be time to write down key words. When the tape stops, with the others in your group, write out your version in full sentences. Do not worry if your version is a little different to the tape, the important point is that it should make sense.

Living in Tokyo   Teacher's copy

1   Have the students do the gap fill in groups. Allow time for conferencing and then play the tape (only this first paragraph) one or two times.

2   After predicting what words they will hear in the remainder (schema building), play the tape, normal speed, two or three times. Stress that all in the same group must write the same version (therefore need to conference).

3   Suggestion: give deadline for final edited version (maybe one draft is enough?) and have groups exchange and critique each other's for grammatical errors.

This is the full text:

My happiest **memories** are of Tokyo in summer. I was very surprised to find that there were lots of parks and trees, I had thought that Tokyo was all **concrete**...and I used to go to Kamakura with friends, walk around and go to the beach...Kamakura is still my **favourite** place. This was the 'bubble' time and and there this great **feeling** of confidence, it was easy to find work and no one worried about the **future**. Although I couldn't speak Japanese, it was easy to make **friends** and I often went to Shinjuku to play, after work.

My early experiences were mostly positive but after two years, I started feeling neurotic in my small apartment. The other problem was communicating with my Japanese co-workers. I had difficulty understanding the Japanese communication style where people hide their real feelings, and this was causing me a lot of frustration. So...after three years, I went back to Sydney.

Looking back, there were some problems, but I was lucky to be able to live in another society, and those three years were some of the happiest times of my life.

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