

CHAPTER EIGHT

Interpretations

8.1 Introduction

To this point in the study it has been possible to show that interaction in joint book-reading varies systematically in this data across the two social groups. Since the participants were selected on explicit criteria contrasting locations in social class practices, it is also possible to claim that the variation is correlated with speakers' locations in social class relations.

The study has also produced descriptions of interaction in Kindergarten joint book-reading which exhibit two important characteristics. One is that the school interaction does not vary systematically across socio-geographical locations with respect to the semantic features implicated in variation in the family data. The other is that typical K class interaction most closely resembles the HAP variant of joint book-reading with respect to these same features.

The complex interpretive problem is to build an account of relations between the variable semantic features, the contextual features of joint book-reading, speakers' locations in social class relations and the privileging of one variant of joint book-reading interaction in school contexts.

Essentially what one is seeking at this point is a set of integrative theoretical principles through which to make sense of results of the semantic analysis. One of the problems most strikingly evident in previous joint book-reading research has been a cleft between analyses of social formations and their relations, and the analyses of linguistic interaction in families. The procedures adopted in this study so far have provided an explicit basis for theorizing the selection of participants from within contrasted social class locations, and an explicit basis through which to analyse variable

features in linguistic interaction. What is now needed is some further theoretical resource which will enable me to build an account of relations between speakers' positions in social class relations, the selection of the semantic features, and of reasons for the HAP variant closely approximating typical Kindergarten interaction.

To develop this analysis I will deploy some further aspects of Bernstein's theory of cultural transmission. In Chapter Three, Section 3.5 aspects of his theory concerning relations in the social division of labour were presented. However, beyond these the theory also claims to enable an analyst to move, using the same theoretical and descriptive concepts, from the structure of relations in the social division of labour to typical selection of certain meanings in social interaction. In fact the theory claims to offer a means of predicting how relations in the social division of labour can, in complex ways, be predicted to affect the relevance of different kinds of meanings in the more specific contexts, and therefore the development of various forms of consciousness. In more general terms it is a means of addressing the problem of how and why different forms of higher mental functioning might evolve within the one speech community as both an effect and an effector of the structure of social relations.

These interpretive moves are complex, requiring a good deal of theoretical exposition before a specific interpretation of the relations *between* the significantly different semantic features, and between these sets of variants and the social class locations of the mothers can be presented. However, the length of the exposition is necessary because there has been no previous attempt to provide a similarly integrated account of semantic variation in joint book-reading.

Since the account is unusual in the research fields I will also discuss relations between the findings of this study and those of Hasan, and advance a re-reading of Heath's findings concerning practices in Roadville in the final movement.

8.2 Coding orientation and social class relations

The formal concept of coding orientation provides a means for describing and analysing the constitutive relevance of meanings in a context. Both the definition and theoretical status of code have evolved in Bernstein's theory, indicating continuous work over 30 years to understand its nature, forms of realization, distribution in social class relations and effects on acquirers (Bernstein, 1974:237-57; 1990:14). In passing it is interesting to note that Bernstein has actually been criticised for evolving the concept, in what Halliday labelled 'the particularly moronic accusation that he was not consistent' (Halliday, 1988a:1).

Central to the concept of coding orientation are issues of the legitimacy of meaning, which are a function both of relations *between* and relations *within* contexts. A code is an implicit principle which regulates social interaction by integrating three aspects of meaning: recognition of contexts, the meanings which are relevant to the context, and appropriate forms of realization of meanings in a context. Recognition does *not* imply conscious recognition. Very frequently, and also very importantly, code regulates interaction through tacit recognition of context and the appropriateness of meanings in that context. Bernstein's most recent formulation of the definition of code is:

a regulative principle, tacitly acquired, which selects and integrates:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| (a) relevant meanings | meanings |
| (b) forms of their realization | realizations |
| (c) evoking contexts | contexts |

(Bernstein, 1990:14)

Since code regulates the legitimacy and appropriateness of meanings, it also creates the principle for classifying certain meanings as illegitimate and inappropriate in certain contexts. Differences in coding orientation arise in, and are realized through, differences between social contexts. They are not matters of either individual linguistic or cognitive deficit, though this is still a frequent interpretation given in educational theory. Bernstein's argument is not a

'mentalist' one about difficulties in cognition which derive from individual functioning.

There is, as the above remarks imply, a further crucial theoretical step, which is to locate the genesis of coding orientations in relation to the social division of labour. This is perhaps the most important, and simultaneously the most controversial, of theoretical claims about code. Without this move, coding orientations may be thought to be distributed in the population in an arbitrary manner, or as a matter of individual preference or tradition amongst families or communities.

In Bernstein's theory, the position of agents with respect to the material base of production gives the most basic (and primitive) condition for interpreting the location and distribution of coding orientations. In an early formulation of the thesis Bernstein argued that:

Without a shadow of doubt the most formative influence upon the procedures of socialization, from a sociological viewpoint, is social class. The class structure influences work and educational roles and brings families into a special relationship with each other and deeply penetrates the structure of life experiences within the family ... It would be a little naive to believe that differences in knowledge, differences in the sense of the possible, combined with invidious insulation, rooted in differential material well-being, would not affect the forms of control and innovation in the socializing procedures of different social classes (Bernstein, 1974:175).

Since social class relations are said to be determined by the social division of labour, they differentially locate and distribute codes. To the extent that categories in the division of labour are strongly classified in a way which maintains a strong asymmetry in power relations, and to the extent that control is maintained through strong framing values, to that extent categories become highly specialised and non-transposable. Interactional practices also tend to become highly specialised, as a direct function of the specialization of categories and the localization of agents within them. Differentiation of forms of consciousness is an effect of the location of categories of agents within the

social division of labour relative to the material base of production.

Differences in proximity of categories of agents to the material base will be likely to result in different interactional practices under conditions of strong category classification. The strength of these classificatory principles is of course not arbitrary, but itself the realization of principles regulating the distribution of power in social relations which attributes 'value' to a category, as though it were some natural quality of the category itself. Bernstein's summary of the general hypothesis about the nature of this relationship is given succinctly in the following formulation:

The simpler the social division of labour, and the more specific and local the relation between an agent and its material base, the more direct the relation between meanings and a specific material base, and the greater the probability of a restricted coding orientation. The more complex the social division of labour, the less specific and local the relation between an agent and its material base, the more indirect the relation between meanings and a specific material base, and the greater the probability of an elaborated coding orientation (Bernstein, 1990:20)¹.

The perspective on the complexity of the social division of labour here is that of 'the specific location of one of its agents' (ibid., 20). It is this perspective, primarily given by the power relations in the social division of labour, which is the primary condition for the emergence of a coding orientation. The necessity for this specific agent-based, rather than a more general, perspective follows from the distinction Bernstein draws between fields, the complex distribution of agencies of symbolic control and production across fields, and the possibility of somewhat different principles determining the social division of labour within fields. There is a strong, but not simple, line of relation between a labour category and coding orientation.

The terms 'restricted' and 'elaborated' have been used to designate general types of coding orientation. 'Restricted'

1 This more probabilistic formulation may be compared with that in Bernstein, 1981:310.

in this environment refers to a restricted access to meanings in a set of contexts from the perspective of a social agent. One has, as it were, to be an 'insider' to the social group before one can make sense of the meanings. Because access is restricted many meanings can be, and are, taken for granted in practice as an unequivocal part of the established order of relevance²: as it were, the oft-used expression 'that's the way things are'. Conversely, 'elaborated' signifies that meanings are elaborated: they cannot be taken for granted because their relevance relations are somewhat more uncertain. The expression of meanings is also affected in consequence. Rather than being expressed as matters of certainty, meanings tend to be expressed probabilistically. As classifiers of coding orientations these two terms denote abstract, generalized tendencies to use different orientations to orders of meaning relations in social practice (ibid., 18-19).

Forms of language use have consistently been regarded by Bernstein and his colleagues as central to the realization of coding orientation, and therefore to its transmission. In local contexts in which interactants can take for granted that they share a common range of meanings, a restricted coding orientation tends to be employed. There is no functional reason to elaborate meanings because they are so well-known. Early morning domestic routines, irrespective of their class locations, are a likely site for restricted coding orientation in many households. However, a restricted coding orientation

2 The term does not mean a restricted production of language though this is, unfortunately, the way it has frequently been interpreted in educational discussions. Consider, for example, the following in a widely used text:

According to Bernstein (1960), children from lower socio-economic backgrounds were being exposed to impoverished language compared with their middle-class counterparts ... The home environment provided by parents, itself related to socio-economic status, influences language development. In general, the uses of language at home vary enormously and opportunities for talking to adults may differ. A child might be growing up in a small, one- or two-roomed house along with five or six siblings and the types of talk most commonly encountered could be squabbles or fights. The television might be on constantly, as well as music being played loudly. Surely this home environment cannot be as conducive to later literacy development as that of the only child growing up with the devoted attention of his mother at all times? (Garton and Pratt, 1989:57).

is not randomly distributed across socially situated subjects. Though in some contexts of interaction all speakers are likely to employ a restricted coding orientation the location of agents in the social division of labour is the primary determinant of a tendency to predominantly employ one or other coding orientation. But in environments where meanings cannot be taken for granted, where there is a potential for ambiguity and difference, meanings have generally to be formulated and exchanged explicitly, most typically in language.

In an elaborated coding orientation individuation of experience is privileged precisely because of the greater distance of social agents from the material base of production. This distance creates conditions for ambiguity to develop, and consequently a need for individual perceptions to be made explicit. Individuated forms of consciousness are also requisite to maintaining the power relations which are the originating conditions for the differentiation of coding orientations.

An individuated form of consciousness is also, and rather obviously, potentially dangerous if it develops in ways which subvert the dominant principles regulating the social order, the order of relations between things. It must therefore be brought under control, and for this to be possible individuated consciousness must be revealed, must be made explicit.

The concept of coding orientation is a descriptive resource for understanding how different forms of consciousness are in a sense functionally required by different positions in social formations deriving basically from the social division of labour. That this is not a simple, linear relation has been the focus of the earlier discussion of Bernstein's modelling of social class in Chapter Three, Section 3.5.

If it is true, as Bernstein and Vygotsky amongst many other scholars have claimed, that forms of consciousness are learnt

in and through social interaction, and if it is also true that the distribution of power and control in social formations substantially determines the ideology of agents within categories, then it is also likely to be true that family position in the intersection of the dimensions of social class relations outlined above will *tend* to result in children learning different orientations to orders of relevance of meanings.

8.3 Coding orientation and schooling

If coding orientations are variable, and they are distributed non-arbitrarily as a function of agents' locations in the social division of labour, it follows that coding orientations selected in families cannot all be in an equivalence relation with the coding orientation typically selected in school discourse. A complex set of relationships between the relevance and recognition of meanings is implicated.

Relations of both similarity and difference between coding orientations are involved. Similarity relations are obviously necessary for a sustained exchange of meanings over time to be possible between speakers oriented to meaning relations through different codes. Bernstein does not argue at any point that coding orientations create orders of relevance of meaning which are completely discrete from another - if they were then social interaction between subjects situated in different social formations would be impossible. To use a metaphor from Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) *misrecognition* requires that things appear to be sufficiently similar for them to be misrecognised as the same. However, Bernstein's theory also predicts that there will be a strong tendency for some meanings to be privileged over others in some contexts according to coding orientation, that the order of relevance of meanings will be different and differentiating because of different locations of agents in power relations in the social division of labour. In summary, there is a cline of relations between coding orientations rather than a categorical distinction between them. The problem is to interpret how

different family 'locations' on the cline are related to the dominant practices of schooling.

Formal educational institutions generally tend to require an elaborated coding orientation, though there are some exceptions to this proposition. Whilst it is readily observable that not all classroom discourse requires such an orientation, the kind of instructional discourse to which Vygotsky draws attention, or the structures of scientific knowledge in pedagogic discourse such as Halliday and Martin (1993) and Lemke (1990b) describe, clearly require an elaborated coding orientation. In contrast, it can be imagined readily that the institutional development of 'Qu'ranic' literacy studied by Scribner and Cole (1981) did not require the use of an elaborated coding orientation. This is, by inference, one of the reasons why these authors described it as a distinct form of literacy. So the argument is not that educational discourses always require this orientation, but that they typically require it.

There are many reasons for this requirement. To exemplify, the problematic central to the work of schools is discourse, which is selectively 'dislocated' from specific, original and often local contexts of use. Discourse must be dislocated from these contexts because educational institutions are oriented to the reproduction of abstract and general, rather than local and particular, meanings (Hasan, 1987). Dislocation implies selection and recontextualization, both of which create a potential for a considerable uncertainty and ambiguity, in turn requiring the use of an elaborated code to explicate relations between possible meanings.

Another reason is that educational institutions function, par excellence, to evaluate and select individuals through their control of discursive relations for differing positions in the social division of labour. They therefore usually require individuated forms of consciousness, even from the earliest phase of formal schooling. The massive apparatus of early

testing of official pedagogic success, with consequent highly stable 'achievement' grouping in school class groups supports this claim (Collins, 1986).

From the discussion in Section 8.3 above it is clear that not all students will have had access to elaborated codes as they enter schooling. Some will be invidiously positioned in relation to a privileged code, and therefore to modes of privileged and privileging communication, in schools. The invidiousness is a matter of the distance between typical interactive practices in the home and those of the school. Those students for whom the order of relevance of meanings in schools is most distant will tend to be those of the lower working class, given the preceding argument about the location and distribution of specific codes. The dominant code acts as a privileging device since it selectively validates only some interpretations of contexts and, consequently, interactional practices legitimate in those contexts.

The set of relations between coding orientation, specific elaborated codes and education is used by Bernstein to develop a general account of the cultural transmission of specific code modalities. This account has been, in fact, the central issue in his theoretical work during the last decade (see also Halliday, 1988a). Bernstein argues that:

Basically, specific elaborated codes, that is, codes with particular classification and framing values, are the means available for institutionalizing and relaying the dominant principles of a social formation in formal education (Bernstein, 1990:40).

The differentiating effect on individual subjects of the use of an elaborated code in schooling results from the distribution of specialized forms of consciousness. This is itself the outcome of the effects of the dominant classificatory and framing principles in the social formation, which lead to the specialization of meanings to particular, strongly classified categories such as that of 'manager' or 'production worker', and 'manual' and 'mental' labour.

The level of abstraction of these theoretical concepts creates a possibility for generating interpretations across very different social formations. It also provides a means of accounting for the effects of change in dominant classificatory and framing principles, principles which affect communicative modes in workplaces and schools.

The last point is not often appreciated by commentators on Bernstein's work. Such writers tend to emphasise the result of the theoretical analysis in terms of social stasis, pessimism and passivity in the face of discriminatory outcomes from formal schooling (Connell, 1988). The generative power of the model, both with respect to change and the explanation of variation, tends to be much less noticed.

8.4 Coding orientation and semantic variants

It is now possible to present an interpretation of relations between coding orientation, contextual features and semantic variants and, on the basis of this analysis, to read the results of the semantic analysis presented in Chapters Six and Seven.

Given that in the systemic functional model context of situation is a descriptive stratum, values of which are realized by options in the semantic stratum, variable semantic realization of some contextual feature can be described. A variable for this purpose is a system in the semantic stratum, and the variants are the options in that system. Hasan represents the position in this way:

If some feature in the context of situation is treated as the content, we can ask what are the variant semantic options for expressing that feature. The system of semantic options available for expressing that content can be thought of as the semantic variable. For example, imagine that a feature in the situation is *speaker issuing a command*, then it is possible to choose a message with the semantic option [EXHORTATIVE] as when Pete's mother says 'Listen, you behave yourself and just cut it out please' or [CONSULTATIVE] as when Steve's mother says, 'Can you get me a tissue please?' or [ASSERTIVE] as when Davie's mother says 'You mustn't hit girls. Being variants, each expresses the same content, i.e. the situational act of *command*; but because these variants are located at the stratum of semantics, it would be absurd to maintain that their meaning is the same (Hasan, 1989:237).

This example discusses a single variable, where the constant is a single contextual feature. In addition, Hasan also proposes the concept of a complex socio-linguistic variable, enabling analysis of clustering of variants from a set of variables, provided always that a motivated account of the clustering of variants can be provided by reference to some attribute of the social group (Hasan, 1989:248). The constant for a complex socio-linguistic variable is a higher-order principle of social structure in the context of culture.

As the preceding discussion has implied, Bernstein's theory predicts probabilistically that choice of variant, or better a complex of variants, will be motivated by coding orientation. Coding orientation cannot be predicted from habitual selection of a single semantic variant in a context, but rather from a complex range of variant features. This is a very complex task since

What we are looking for are bundles of semantic patterns, co-occurring and all relatable to the same integrative (set of) principles(s) (Hasan, 1985a:22).

Coding orientation posits the relevance of certain consistencies in ways of meaning, consistent variant selection as it were, in generalised situation-types. Consistency is an abstraction deriving from the perspective of the social rather than the linguistic theory.

8.5 Coding orientation and variable interaction in joint book-reading

On the basis of the analysis of the social class location and distribution of coding orientations it is possible to read the significance of the correlation between the variant semantic features and speakers' social class locations.

To review the results of the semantic analyses briefly, statistically significant variation was found across semantic features in all four of the linguistic metafunctions: in logical meanings, especially in resources for constructing individual points of view and in explicating causal/

conditional relations; in interpersonal meanings, particularly in demands for information; in textual meanings, most saliently in an option which derives simultaneously from both textual and interpersonal options, the feature [develop]; and in a range of experiential options, including particularly references to the person of the focal child, the mother and to metalanguage.

The various semantic features can be inter-related by reference to a single factor regulating the relevance of meanings and of relations between contexts. This factor is *the differential extent of individuation of experience.*

One visible, though somewhat crude, basis on which to develop this point is the difference in the extent to which referential signification is to the person of the child in the mothers' talk. When Emily and her mother read a book about a visit to the beach, her mother casually asked her 'Have you been under the water with your goggles?' It seems the most everyday and natural of questions, not obviously something implicated in the realization of different orientations to the order of relevance of meanings in different locations in social class relations. From the evidence of this study, however, that is the case. As an individual message it is without much significance, but as part of systematic and differentiating patterning of experience in which the child's personal experience is consistently made visible through talk, it is an element in the realization of a significant, and differentiating social practice.

Beyond this rather obvious difference, the other semantic features selected differentially are also related to the individuation of meanings. Message prefacing, for example, is a resource through which individual points of view are made visible and accessible to an interactant. Two aspects of prefacing were found to be accessed with differential frequency: the focal child's cognition, particularly to do with previous events; and expressions of modality,

particularly modality of possibility, in the metarepresentations of points of view.

Once individuation of experience is a privileged principle in interaction, the explication of relations between events and entities becomes very important because the basis of action and belief in the particular instance cannot be taken as a given. Explanations are therefore required so that 'reasonable' coherence in social relations can be maintained. Things must be negotiated explicitly, so demanding explanations, developing the bases of initial ideas and their implications and explicitly stating causal relations between events is made necessary.

Conversely, where individuation of experience is not the privileged practice, where instead the social similarity of experience forms the basis of action, then there is no need to make experience visible. There is no need, for example, for a child to be asked to say explicitly, as Stephen's mother required him to do, that his brother James has the biggest feet because he's the biggest boy in the family. When it is the shared similarity of experience which is the orienting basis for action then things tend to be recognised as either being, or not being, the case.

Joint book-reading provides a particularly important, though not of course unique, locale for the specialization of individuated literate consciousness. This is because object texts introduce such a potential for the elaboration of meaning relations beyond the specific instance of the linguistic interaction. Object texts can be read as interesting, entertaining and more or less informative specific instances of written text. Or, they can be read as both that and, additionally, a basis for establishing a wide range of intertextual relations between other object texts and the interactive texts of the child's everyday life. Once intertextual relations begin to be elaborated beyond the specific and local environment, meaning relations become

probabilistic and often ambiguous. They must therefore be explicated, clarified, and their significances teased out for contemplation.

The visibility to the caregiver of the child's learning is important in an environment of greater uncertainty, so certain interpersonal meanings such as responses to demands for information of the [apprize:explain] and [apprize:specify:actant:nonspecific] type assume greater significance. In this register they are crucially involved in displaying the fact that meaning relations beyond the specific instance are being established by the child. It is not that such types of demand for information always have such a specific discursive function, but in the environment of joint book-reading in the HAP families these meaning relations have particular significance and they are therefore selected with differential frequency. Different semantic resources tend to be selected within the social groups as variant realizations of contextual variables because the orientations to meaning relations beyond the local instance of object text reading is nonequivalent.

The contextual variable which is primarily responsible for creating a potential for semantic variation in joint book-reading is the institutional social status of the mother. However, this does not mean that differences between the social groups in the institutional social status of the mothers are directly realized in the selection of variant semantic resources in interactive talk. It will be seen that the concept of the permeability of the contextual variables is crucial to this account of context-text relations, and consequently to an interpretation of semantic variation in this situation-type.

Looking first from the children's perspective, the results suggest that in both social groups children contribute actively to the discussion of object text. Most of them frequently comment on and enquire about object text meanings, frequently initiating stretches of interactive talk. Within

the two social groups the children appear to take a similar agentive role. It can be asserted with some confidence that semantic variation between the social groups does not derive from differences in the agentive relation as determined by features of the children's behaviour, contrary to a common assumption made in educational practice.

The type of social activity which dominates joint book-reading is reflection-based activity, though there are some moments of both action-based (facilitating) and relation-based activity. The excerpts of interaction introduced in Chapter Four as Examples 4.2 and 4.3, in the exposition of Hasan's expansion of the contextual variables, are quite representative of relations between the three types in joint book-reading. Action-based and relation-based activity break into the reflection-based activity usually only for brief moments.

Several other contextual variables are virtually the same, and are realized semantically in near-equivalent ways. Mode features, for example, including the obvious selection of spoken medium and the specific form of process sharing, are very similar and could not account for the observed variation. Amongst tenor variables, the social distance is minimal and the agentive relation tends to be asymmetrical, skewed towards the mother as the primary agent in both groups.

For both groups the subject-matter is important insofar as it engages the child's interest and enables the mother to engage the child in discourse. But it is not the subject-matter of the texts which is of *primary* importance, as the comparison of the three occasions of joint book-reading discussed in Chapter Seven indicates.

The institutional social status of the mothers, however, is different within the two social groups. To a large extent this contrast was determined by the design of the study, which sought to differentiate the mothers' positions in social class relations in order to study whether or not this contextual

variable effected semantic variation in joint book-reading. To reiterate briefly a point which has been made several times in the preceding discussion, 'social status' does *not* mean either the social regard in which the mothers might have been held, or their socioeconomic status. It denotes their socially constructed positions as women, as mothers, within the social division of labour and so on.

However, it is not the contrasted institutional social status of the mothers which directly differentiates and which is directly realized in the semantic variants. Rather, it is the *integration* of, particularly, institutional social status with reflection-based social activity and also to some extent supra-local goal orientation which is central to interpreting semantic variation in joint book-reading. Other contextual variables in this situation-type seem largely unaffected.

One could perhaps say that there are therefore different reflection-based activities, but to argue in this way is to draw rather too stark a contrast and to invite the problem of having to categorize a multiplicity of forms of reflection-based activity, thereby risking a loss of perspective on what is contrastive between reflection-based, relation-based and action-based social activity. The concept of permeability of contextual variables provides a means of maintaining an advantageous level of abstraction, while not resulting in a crudely reductive description of subtle contextual differences.

Subtle differences in the reflection-based activity appear to derive from the mothers' particular orientation to literate social practice as this is primarily determined by their position within social relations. Orientations to what is relevant linguistic behaviour in the interpretation of object text is, to a large extent, the realization of positions in social relations.

For most of the HAP mothers joint book-reading is a situation in which meanings of object texts are mediated in a way which gives them a significance beyond the local, specific instance. The strength of the classificatory boundary between object text content and other referential domains in the child's experience is therefore relatively weak. This is shown in a rather direct way in this data by the differential frequency of selection of reference to the child, or to 'other' entities, as the [effecting] element simultaneously with selection of [material]. For both social groups talk about the figures of the object text is relatively extensive, but talk about entities not directly related to the object text is differentially distributed.

There is a particular complexity about the selection of framing values in the HAP group. From one perspective framing values appear to be relatively weak, especially in the pacing of interaction, resulting in quite extensive linguistic interaction around the object text. If a child chooses to engage in an extensive comment it is unlikely that a mother will curtail that interaction. In fact, several mothers show some frustration that their children do not produce even more comments. However, alongside this aspect of framing the HAP mothers consistently work hard to develop children's initial propositions, often by asking further questions in order to encourage them to elaborate a comment. For example, they select the semantic option [develop] much more frequently than do the LAP mothers. It is the mothers who largely determine the framing values in the agentive relation they construct, but this is not done in ways which exclude children from influencing the direction or pacing of the interaction. It is a complex construction of implicit control.

In some contrast, in the LAP social group classification and framing values are strong. What counts as legitimate content to discuss in relation to any particular object text is strongly bounded, and a visible control is exercised over the

extent of the children's contribution to interactive discourse.

A final comment in this interpretation of the general results. Attention has been drawn to the primary structuring effects of the mothers' institutional social status, but of course the children's institutional social status which is in process of development is not without its own influence at the age of four. Coding orientation initially enters the situation-type 'through', as it were, the mothers' institutional social status but as the coding orientation becomes a child's 'inside' world of orders of relevance of meanings her institutional social status may also have an important effect on reflection-based activity. As a child enters schooling this is a crucial feature of her new social status as student.

8.6 Other sociolinguistic evidence of semantic variation as a function of coding orientation

The question of relations between the outcomes of this study and those of cognate work in the semantic variation field is important for this interpretation since it has been a relatively small-scale study. The key question here is: if relations between coding orientation and language use are conceptualised through a systemic functional approach to describing linguistic meaning, is there any further evidence of a strong correlation between semantic variation and coding orientation?

There are two major perspectives from which evidence has come. One is from a high level of abstraction, involving comparison of semiotic (and therefore semantic) style between languages. The evidence for an association between coding orientation and semantic variation is the degree of semantic distance between the contrasted cultures, or subcultural group. This is the perspective used by Hasan in her analysis of the use of implicit and explicit semantic styles in Urdu and 'middle class English' (Hasan, 1984b). The analysis is based on a detailed examination of implicit and explicit coding devices

and different potentials for their situated use in the two languages. Hasan finds that

... there is a significance to the claim that not only does the system of Urdu language permit a much higher degree of implicitness than English does, but also the speakers of the language employ this same degree of implicitness in a wide range of contexts.

We can claim without hesitation that the dominant semantic style in Urdu is the implicit one, because the range of environments in which this style can be used appropriately without raising communicative problems is much wider than that where it could not be used so (ibid., 151).

The perspective provides very interesting evidence of the implication of language with other forms of social semiotic in what Whorf called a 'frame of consistency' (Whorf, 1956:158), though the claims have not yet been examined through analysis of naturally occurring data.

However, such detailed linguistic evidence does come from work using the second perspective, that of comparisons between the language used in everyday environments by members of contrasted social groups. This is the research conducted by Hasan and her colleagues in the project called *The role of everyday talk between mothers and children in establishing ways of learning*, Phase 1 and 2. The participants in Phase 1 were mothers and their young children, aged between 3.6 and 4.2 years), and in Phase 2, Kindergarten children and their teachers.

Since space limitations preclude a comprehensive review of this work, the general type of evidence will be illustrated from a set of findings reported in Hasan (1991b), selected because of their particular pertinence to the current project. These findings concern the role of questions and answers as a mode of learning.

In this aspect of the project Hasan's particular question was: 'what are the children learning by asking and being asked [questions]?' (Hasan, 1991b:4). That is, apart from the children's learning which resulted from the information which was itself exchanged, the research interest was in

characteristics of the general process of information exchange in the two social groups and its significance for school learning. In total 3,358 questions and their answers were examined; of these 2,008 were asked by the mothers and 1,350 by the children. Principal Components and Cluster Analysis procedures were used to determine which semantic features were crucially implicated in explaining the variance in the data.

The features, and in some cases dependent systems, in Hasan's semantic network which are material to this interpretation are those for [demand;information], [prefaced], [related], [responsive] and [adequate]. The first two have been described in some detail in Chapter Four, Section 4.7.2.2 and in Chapter Five Section 5.2 respectively. The feature [related] is very similar to the option [supplementing] described in the network used in this study (see Chapter Five, Section 5.4). Since the features [responsive] and [adequate] have not been exemplified previously I will do so before discussing Hasan's results.

These features are accessible to messages which are answers. They are exemplified in the following exchange taken from the transcript of Rachel's conversation with her mother about *The three little pigs*.

Example 8.1

Mother:	(READING) ... but he had covered himself with a sheep's skin and was curled up in a big basket looking like a little lamb.
	01 Oh ah.
	02 Look!
Rachel:	03 What is it?
Mother:	04 He's pretending to be a sh a sheep.

Here, the mother's answer (04) responds to the child's question, but it does more than that, it also addresses the query point of that question. So the message selects both the semantic features [responsive] and [adequate].

Contrast the answers in this exchange between Simon and his mother while they are reading *Where the wild things are*.

Example 8.2

Mother: 01 Do you think they look wild?
02 Do you think they look wild?
03 Why?
Simon: 04 Because.
Mother: 05 Why don't they look very nice?
Simon: 06 Because they scary.

Message 06 in this exchange also selects both [responsive] and [adequate] since it both maintains the discussion of the appearance of the Wild Things and addresses the query point of the mother's question in 05. Message 04, though, is somewhat different in that while it is a response to the question in 03 it is tautologous. When the ellipsed elements are recovered the message would be something like 'I think they look wild because I think they look wild' (assuming the child's nonverbal response was positive). So though it does select [responsive] the message also selects [inadequate]. The sense of adequacy here is not the veracity of the answer, but its relevance to the query point of the question. (In any case what would count as veracity in the exchange?)

In Hasan's study the main aspects explaining variance on the first principal component were prefaced questions, related questions, related answers, responsive answers, and adequate answers. A strong negative loading was also found for assumptive questions. Interestingly, options for demanding information were not implicated in the principal components.

There is, again, the significant question of whether or not there is some general principle of selection through which these apparently diverse features of the semantic potential might be related. Even though the semantic features appear to be so linguistically diverse Hasan argues that

... the high-scoring mothers' question answer strategies - the set of six semantic features as a whole - can be explained by one powerful principle - the principle of individuation. According to this principle, each of us as an individual is a unique being, and the intentions, beliefs, opinions of each one of us are private to each; they are, in principle, inaccessible to our conversational others without verbal mediation. Unless relatively specific and explicit exchanges occur, the other's subjectivity cannot be assessed: one cannot assume a *reflexive relation*, acting on the presumption that the other is just like us, ourselves. This principle will explain why

the mothers' questions are the way they are; and why their answers have the attributes they have (Hasan, 1991:36).

From the perspective of the current project the particularly interesting further question is: how were the mothers from the two social groups distributed according to the frequency of selection of these features? A significant difference in the distribution between the two social groups was in fact found. Many more mothers in the HAP group were distributed towards the higher frequencies than the mothers in the LAP group ($p < .0003$).

Of further direct interest to this project, when children's questions and answers were analysed a very similar pattern of features explained the variance. The only additional factor to load significantly on the first principal component was questions of the 'confirm' type (formally, questions which selected [demand;information:confirm]). That is to say, the significant factors which explained the variance in the childrens' questions and answers were identical with those which explain the variance in the mothers' questions and answers, except for 'confirm' questions.

This finding is important in itself, but a further finding is even more significant for considering the role of linguistic interaction as semiotic mediation in children's learning. The distribution of the children's scores also significantly differentiated them according to social class group, thus directly paralleling the situation for the mothers. It would appear that by approximately age 4:0 these children have already learned a great deal of differentiating knowledge about question and answer sequences within everyday practices in different social formations. Hasan comments on the educational significance of these findings:

The children are not simply learning what - a matter very much easier to control and change - but they are also being schooled in how to ask and how to tell. And to the extent that their experience of everyday interaction is non-identical, to that extent this aspect of their learning is different (ibid., 45).

In a way remarkably consistent, though of course not identical, with the results for the current study it appears the children are being 'schooled' through these casual conversations in one of the most important aspects of contemporary education, that is the significance of exchanging meanings through explicit verbal formulations in a context of interaction between highly individuated persons.

What, though, of the differences between Hasan's results and those of the present study? An important reason for some differences is that joint book-reading predominantly involves reflection-based activity, whereas in Hasan's study of casual conversation all three forms of social activity were represented. For example, this factor is likely to have been material to Hasan's finding of significant differences in features of answers, in contrast with the results of this study. Since joint book-reading is an environment in which caregivers and children mutually and more or less exclusively attend to an object text's meanings, it is much less likely that a child's question will go unanswered or to be answered 'inadequately' in either social group.

What this study describes are some semantic features likely to be important for the individuation of experience within this situation-type, whereas Hasan's results describe some semantic features most prominent in the individuation of experience across quite a wide range of registers. Nevertheless, there is, generally speaking, a high degree of consistency between the results of these two studies specifically with respect to the differentiating effects of variation in use of the principle of individuation of experience across the social groups.

Of the studies of variation in joint book-reading which I discussed in Chapter Two it is perhaps Heath's (1983) work, with its emphasis on community and on different local oral and written traditions in linguistic interaction, which would appear furthest from the interpretation of variation in joint

book-reading advanced in this chapter. In the final main movement I will therefore present a theoretical re-reading of Heath's description of joint book-reading in Roadville (1983).

8.7 Rereading Roadville reading

Heath does herself actually suggest at one point that the work of Bernstein and Bourdieu is relevant to her analysis. In a footnote she commented:

... these critics argue that the preschool language socialization patterns of the middle class ensure their preparedness in the knowledge and skills of symbolic manipulation of language required for school success ... (Heath, 1983: 398, Note 1).

However, Heath did explicitly exclude an interpretation of variation based on difference in relations in the social division of labour. In the prologue to her 1983 work she noted that

the vast majority of research on child language had not treated the issue of the community or cultural background of the children studied (ibid., 2).

but she went on to say:

To categorize children and their families on the basis of either socioeconomic class or race and then to link these categories to discrete language differences was to ignore the realities of the communicative patterns in the region (ibid., 3).

In taking this position Heath was, of course, resisting a reductive account of language 'difference' by foregrounding the study of the complexity of language in use, of people living through language in real social environments. In this respect this study shares her research interest. The specific difficulty to be considered further here, though, is theorization of the set of originating conditions for the observed differences in communicative practices between Roadville on the one hand, and Gateway and the schools on the other.

It is possible to present a re-reading because Heath gives detailed information both about labour relations and home

literacy practices. To reiterate the description of Roadville joint book-reading practices briefly, as Roadville children approached school entry they were prevented from initiating comments in joint book-reading and tended to be able to talk legitimately only in response to caregivers' questions. Further, what they could talk about was increasingly determined by the specific content of the object text. With approaching entry to school it became 'illegitimate' for children to identify joint book-reading as a context for spontaneous and wide-ranging talk. In contrast, relative silence and responsiveness to caregivers' questions were required.

From the available ethnographic description the change may be interpreted as a move by parents to intensify the degree to which joint book-reading was insulated as a separate instructional context in the home, increasingly separated from other contexts of casual conversation. As well, the principle determining the selection of framing values varied so that caregiver's control, particularly the pacing and organisation of the interaction, increased as the child approached school entry.

This was not an isolated instance of strong classification and framing of contexts for linguistic exchange. Instance, for example, the description of conditions for telling a narrative of personal experience in Roadville.

Children in Roadville are not allowed to tell stories, unless an adult announces that something which happened to a child makes a good story and invites a retelling. When children are asked to retell such events, they are expected to tell non-fictional stories which "stick to the truth." Adults listen carefully and correct children if their facts are not as the adult remembers them. ... Children grow up being taught to tell true stories on themselves (Heath, 1982:158).

Heath's point can be taken to indicate that there was a high degree of commonality in the interactive practices across specific contexts, and that these practices themselves resulted from some non-arbitrary principles or sets of belief. There is evidence for this interpretation, for example, in her

observation that Roadville and Gateway communities could be contrasted in the orientation of members to practices in local or national and international social institutions, respectively.

Two interesting questions arise from the ethnographic description of different interactive and literacy 'traditions':

- i how can the regularity in patterning of linguistic interaction in families in Roadville across different types of context be accounted for; and,
- ii how does this patterning relate to workplace uses of language by family members (apparently in this case generally male)?

Taking the first question, coding orientation theory suggests that, on the basis of the evidence presented, the linguistic patterning is the realization of an implicit coding principle in which the selection of meanings is restricted to those which are close to the local, specific basis of interaction. This is the sense in which Bernstein uses the term restricted code. It is not just the fact that 'facticity' is required in the children's narratives, or that the children's rights to initiate turns are restricted. It is rather that meanings in social interaction are constrained to the local and specific: they are not elaborated and, as well, the principles on which such an elaboration might be developed are themselves not subject to elaboration.

One interesting aspect of these regulating principles, particularly relevant to interpretation of exchanges involving narrative, is the formulation in language of a sense of the unique self and of exploration of inner experience. It was an issue to which Bernstein drew attention in early formulations of coding theory.

The inter-personal and intra-personal, although clearly *perceived* and *felt*, are less verbally differentiated. The concept of self developed through a restricted code does not, itself, become an area of enquiry as in the case of an elaborated code, particularly one whose orientation is towards persons. In the case of an elaborated code, such a code points to the possibilities which inhere in a complex conceptual hierarchy for the organisation and expression of inner experience (Bernstein, 1974:151).

The coding principle, implicitly held, produces a selection of meaning relations and simultaneously orients the child acquirer of the code, through its use, to its reproduction. In this way it becomes a means for developing a specialized form of consciousness, in contrast with other specialized forms of consciousness developed through other coding orientations.

In relation to the second question, it is clear that there was a strong tendency for Roadville workers to be involved in material production, and to be at the end of line management transmission of workplace decisions. That particular orders of relevance of meanings and particular communicative practices were typically selected by Roadville workers is evident in the observation that the Gateway managers were puzzled by the inability of the Roadville workers to interpret written instructions about workplace changes. Such interpretations seemed quite 'natural' from the perspective of management.

From the perspective of the Roadville workers there is a relatively simple social division of the labour of production in the mill: mill workers and managers, with associated other support functionaries. In terms of the economic field dimensions outlined in Chapter Three, Section 3.5.3, the Gateway workers' discursive function is production, their field location is production, and their hierarchical location is 'low'. They are therefore, unequivocally in Bernstein's terms, members of the

working class: those agents who are initially, but not necessarily passively, dominated by production and discursive codes (Bernstein, 1990:141).

In contrast, the cotton mill managers of Gateway have the discursive function of symbolic control, the field location of production and a hierarchical location of 'relatively high'. They are agents of the ruling class, those who

have decisive power over decisions with respect to the means, contexts, and possibilities of physical resources and so ultimately over production codes (ibid., 141).

Describing them as having 'decisive power' in decisions about production codes is possible because of a relative autonomy at the local level, since Heath's account emphasises their decision-making roles as intermediate between physical workers and absent corporate managers.

Abstracting from the description of Roadville workplace arrangements, it appears that strong classificatory principles operate with respect to categories of agents since the emphasis is on transmission of decisions in the mill, rather than their development through the participation of members of various categories. A more precise description would, of course, require further ethnographic detail of actual workplace practices.

Bernstein's hypothesis concerning the location of coding orientations predicts that the families of the mill workers will use a restricted coding orientation, while those of the managers will typically use an elaborated coding orientation. This cannot be a simple, linear prediction because the families may be involved in social practices other than work which would affect their orientation, and the extent to which they are 'embedded' in strictly local practice. Bernstein cites the example of trade union work. For Roadville, given the local importance of fundamentalist Christianity, the involvement of a mill worker in the management of a supra-local religious organisation might be conjectured as an example. So, the principles of the social division of labour of material production give the most primitive, but equally

the most powerful, means for describing the location of coding orientation.

In summary, Bernstein's theory of coding orientation predicts that Roadville workers and their families are likely to adopt precisely the kind of communicative practices in joint book-reading which Heath describes because of the position of the families in social class relations. These practices do not come directly from different literate or narrative traditions within the different communities, but from more abstract coding orientations deriving from the principles regulating the social division of labour.

8.8 Summary

In order to interpret the pattern of results both from the semantic analysis of the whole data set, and from the analysis of the three specific family discussions of *The three little pigs*, I have introduced a theoretical resource very different from those usually employed to explain variation in this situation type. However, a major advantage of coding orientation theory has been to provide a comprehensive and consistent analysis of relations between location in the social division of labour, orientations to orders of relevance of meanings and variable communicative practices in families. To a large extent a problem with previous work in the field has been a somewhat more restricted interpretation of relations between significant factors in the context of culture and in local contexts of situation.

From a small-scale and intensive study such as this it is possible to provide only indications of the relations discussed in this chapter. There is obviously a need for much further work to test the argument. Nevertheless, that these relations are worth examining further is clearly indicated by the striking consistency of the findings with those in Hasan's study and, I have argued, with those in Heath's work.

CHAPTER NINE

Joint Book-reading in the Discourse of Literacy Pedagogy

9.1 The pedagogic significance of joint book-reading
The issue which dominates professional discussion of joint book-reading is the efficacy of the strategy. There are, however, important other issues concerning its use which the results of this study raise, and which require theoretical analysis. The issues concern relations between home practices, research descriptions of those practices and the formation of pedagogic strategy based on those descriptions. In raising them at this point I am, in effect, returning to expand the critique of relations between research texts and the discourse of literacy pedagogy, first problematised in Chapter One, Section 1.2, and in Chapter Two, Section 2.8.

The significance of these relations cannot be read, of course, directly from data about the efficacy of joint book-reading in producing a lot of children who enjoy a measure of official pedagogic success. Instead, it is necessary to examine some specific effects of the phenomenon of discursive recontextualization, which Bernstein (eg, 1990) argues to be a primary characteristic of pedagogic discourse.

Recontextualization is a complex phenomenon. The issues do not just concern the *content* of pedagogic discourse but the functioning of pedagogic discourse as a relay of dominating principles of order and relations. I will begin by considering Bernstein's discussion of pedagogic discourse, focus more specifically on his analysis of the pedagogic device, and conclude by using these analyses to re-read relations between research texts and texts in the discourse of literacy pedagogy.

9.2 Pedagogic discourse

In some recent work Bernstein (1986; 1990) has drawn attention to the importance of two types of analysis of pedagogic discourse. On the one hand there are analyses which consider the differential effects of *what* is relayed, the content of pedagogic discourse and its differential effects on various categories of learner. Here the object of analysis of pedagogic discourse is to reveal a 'double distortion' in communication: first, a privileging of the communication of principles of order and relation, and of specific content and skills associated with dominant social groups; and second, misrepresentation of the cultural practices of the dominated group in pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1990:171).

However, another issue which Bernstein argues has not been considered by theories of cultural reproduction is the nature of pedagogic discourse as a relay. Such an account is required in order to interpret the sets of relations into which a specific form of pedagogic discourse enters, and the processes through which it is constructed out of other discourses. The account is a significant extension of analyses of the ways in which formal schooling participates in the cultural transmission of dominant social principles of order and relation.

Bernstein informally begins his analysis of the pedagogic relay from observations of the major similarities between different education systems. He comments:

... as with others, as I read (but more often when I travelled) it occurred to me that what we have to account for about education systems, educational practices, is not how different they are from one society to another but their overwhelming similarity; the most outstanding feature of educational principles and practices is their overwhelming and staggering uniformity independent of the dominant ideology (Bernstein, 1988:16).

Many factors obviously contribute to this high degree of similarity, factors such as the heavy dependence of education systems on state funds, whether in the private or public education sector, and the historical construction of popular systems in response to the industrial revolution in Western

Europe at the time it was a set national colonizing powers. Within the terms of Bernstein's own theory, the use of elaborated coding orientations in formal schooling is an important contributor to this sense of a 'staggering uniformity'.

However, there is a further question: is pedagogic discourse constituted by a specifiable set of relations, irrespective of the particular contents it relays and the dominant principles of the social formation in which it participates? Bernstein argues, of course, that it is. His analysis is in two major parts, a discussion of the forms of relation of privileging text, and a description of the pedagogic device itself through which specific pedagogic discourses are constructed. It is his description of the pedagogic device, and the potential of this description for interpretation of the significance of variation described in this study, which is the particular focus of interest here.

9.3 The pedagogic device

The analysis of the pedagogic device enables an expanded critique of relationships between home pedagogic practices and those of schools, and an extension of the critique of relationships between joint book-reading research texts and pedagogical texts.

The focus of interest in Bernstein's analysis is the means through which any particular form of pedagogic discourse becomes 'a symbolic ruler of consciousness' (Bernstein, 1990:180). The account of the pedagogic device is developed through a metaphor of a 'grammar', constituted by three types of rules which are hierarchically related: distributive rules, recontextualizing rules and rules of evaluation. As with the grammar of a language, the small number of rules is argued to be capable of producing an enormous variety of specific instances of pedagogic discourse. In the hierarchy, distributive rules regulate the recontextualizing rules, which regulate the rules of evaluation.

Since much of Bernstein's discussion of the distributive rules repeats the earlier consideration of the distribution of forms of consciousness through the distribution and location of coding orientations it will not be repeated here. In brief, elaborated codes are 'the media for thinking the 'unthinkable', the 'impossible'' (ibid., 182), and since they are differentially distributed and located in relation to the social division of labour of material production, their distribution is the primary form of regulation of the specialization of consciousness to different social groups.

Distribution rules regulate who may have access to what knowledge, and therefore who may have access to discursive power. To develop this point Bernstein uses a distinction between mundane and esoteric knowledge, the 'thinkable' and the 'unthinkable', which he claims (ibid., 181) to be common across all societies. In contemporary Western society access to, and controls on, the 'unthinkable' tend to lie in the upper levels of the education system which, par excellence, require the use of an elaborated coding orientation. Since children from families in different locations in the social division of labour have differential access to this coding orientation, the pedagogic device is centrally implicated in distributing access to knowledge which is 'unthinkable' or esoteric.

Recontextualization rules provide a means for understanding the embedding of discourses which are produced in sites outside formal schooling within pedagogic discourse itself. To begin informally, consider the production of new knowledge in the culture about, say, the HIV virus. A significant question for cultural production and reproduction is: in what form should this knowledge be reproduced in pedagogic discourse? The move from the original site of discursive production to reproduction in pedagogic discourse requires selection and ordering of the content according to some set of principles, perhaps implicitly held. Recontextualizing rules are, in part, the rules which regulate the movement of

discursive content from its initial production into pedagogic contexts.

The account of discourse embedding is extended to consider a more general aspect of cultural reproduction: relations between discourses of social order, termed regulative discourse, and those of educational knowledge, termed instructional discourse. The focus is, again, on general relations constituting the pedagogic device, not on any specific relations between content and specific discourses of order. Bernstein's argument is, pursuing the metaphor of grammar one step further, that the general structure of the pedagogic device is to embed instructional discourse in regulative discourse. That is to say, rules of social order selectively transmit contents and skills because pedagogic discourse is not formed independently in relation to a particular content to be relayed.

By the term regulative Bernstein does not mean simply the local regulative practices of management of learners as a function of the moral code, though these are relevant. The larger sense of order is the social regulation of discourse determined by those principles which themselves determine the principles of the social division of labour within a social formation. The general embedding relation between regulative and instructional discourse is derivable, that is, from the fact that distribution of power between categories is the primary determinant of the social order. The regulative must therefore necessarily embed the instructional.

The argument is obvious with respect to the moral order, as Bernstein himself points out, but perhaps rather less obvious with respect to the ways in which 'order, relation and identity' are created in instructional discourse (Bernstein, 1990:184). The latter relation is crucial because it is the specific means through which specialized competencies are created for, and distributed to, specific categories of learners.

There is an apposite example, through which these principles can be informally illustrated, in current discussions of children's development of knowledge about language in primary schools (Carter, 1990). Assume for a moment the production of a set of linguistic descriptions of texts, and also assume that agencies in the pedagogic field determine that these descriptions are 'worth' including in pedagogic texts of some kind, either as handbooks for teachers or perhaps as textbooks for learners. The selection process will itself involve complex relations between existing discourses about language and the discourse produced in research contexts. Further, the form the linguistic descriptions take when they are recontextualized into the pedagogic field will not simply be a function of inherent qualities in the linguistic descriptions themselves. It will be a function of re-ordering, even in extreme cases re-identification of the original texts, and the re-ordering will be a function of the regulative discourses into which the instructional texts are to be embedded. Specifically this may involve an 'unhinging' of the linguistic descriptions from their epistemological bases, or even from their internal theoretical relations. The processes, that is, are not simply ones of reduction and simplification, but functional re-ordering and re-identification as a result of dominant regulative principles.

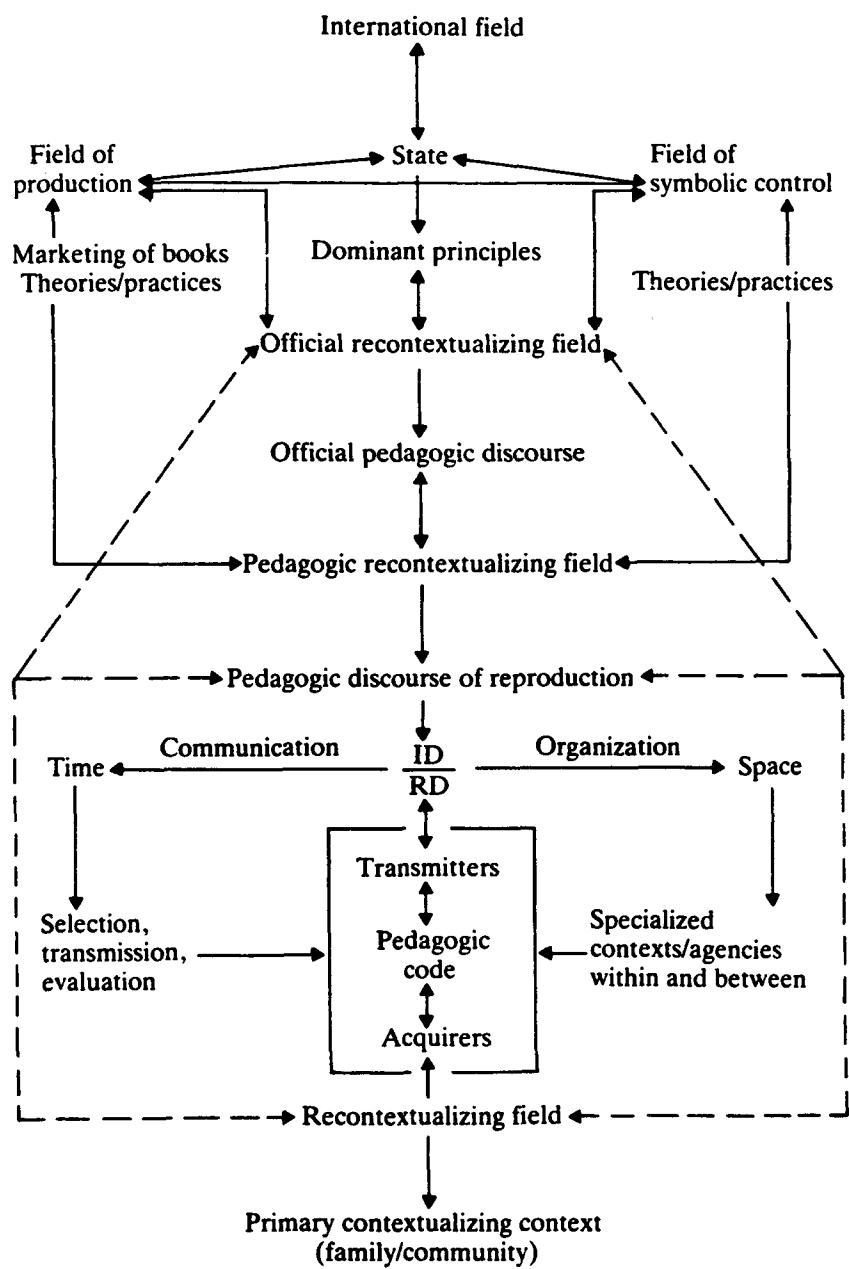
From the nature of this relationship it also follows that specific forms of pedagogic discourse will always be created through the recontextualization of other discourses. This is a much more radical form of the earlier illustrative outline. It is not just a matter of 'controversial' topics being subject to particular scrutiny, regulation and recontextualization. In its most general form the argument is that:

Pedagogic discourse is a principle for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into a special relation with each other for the purposes of their selective transmission and acquisition (ibid., 183-4).

The third set of rules for producing pedagogic discourse are evaluative. These derive from actual pedagogic practice and are the analytic means for interpreting specializations of variables such as time, space, context and age. I will pass over a detailed description of these in order to be able to develop the discussion of aspects of recontextualization which are directly relevant to joint book-reading research and pedagogic practice.

To do so it is economical to present Bernstein's model of the general form of the pedagogic device. It is included as Figure 9.1. Attention will particularly be drawn to the following features: recontextualizing field, the pedagogic recontextualizing field, and the primary contextualizing context.

Figure 9.1 A model of relations of pedagogic discourse
(from Bernstein, 1990:197)



The primary contextualizing context is that of the family and local community, including peer group relations. In its function of providing primary contextualization the family uses a local pedagogic discourse (see the bottom of Figure 9.1), which may of course be in some conflict with local school practices, as well as with official pedagogic discourse. This difference can arise for many reasons, but particularly because of differential access within families to knowledge of how and why schools adopt certain practices. As an aside, it is interesting that joint book-reading is often raised by some families as a specific example of local school pedagogic discursive practice which causes perplexity¹.

In fact Bernstein suggests it is possible to distinguish between families 'with respect to the extent to which the 'local pedagogic practice' is embedded in an 'official pedagogic practice'' (Bernstein, 1990:179). Where local pedagogic discourse dominates the family, where there may even be a complete absence of official pedagogic discourse, then learners will be disadvantageously positioned with respect to privileging texts. The inverse relation is where official pedagogic discourse dominates the family, with a close fit, as it were, between the privileging text and family practice. This effectively gives the condition for two sites of access of discourse.

Relations between family joint book-reading practices and the pedagogy of literacy development in Kindergarten are interesting with respect to these relations. As the discussion in Chapter Two indicated, in the emergent literacy field it is commonly claimed that Kindergarten joint book-reading practices are based on family joint book-reading practices. The question is: how is this relationship constructed? Bernstein's model enables a critical re-reading of this relationship, particularly through the further

1 I am grateful to Ms Sue Doran, Principal of Dulwich Hill Primary School, Sydney for discussions on this point.

concepts noted above: the recontextualizing field and the pedagogic recontextualizing field.

The general recontextualizing field can be considered briefly, given the preceding discussion. It is represented in the figure by the broken line and is the field in which the forms of content and the means of their transmission are determined: for example, both the 'what' and the 'how' of curricula. For the current purpose it is particularly important to note that discourse produced in the primary contextualizing context must be recontextualized to enter the pedagogic recontextualizing field.

The pedagogic recontextualizing field is broad, and includes a range of agencies specializing in normative judgements about 'best practice' in pedagogy, to use the phrase these agencies currently employ in NSW. The pedagogic recontextualizing field is defined by Bernstein in the following way:

- 1 This will include university and polytechnic departments of education, colleges of education together with their research, and private foundations.
- 2 It will include specialized media of education, weeklies, journals, etc., and publishing houses together with their readers and advisers.
- 3 It may extend to fields not specialized in educational discourse and its practices, but which are able to exert influence both on the State and its various arrangements and/or upon special sites, agents and practices within education (ibid., 192).

From the model it can be seen that the pedagogic recontextualizing field is distinguished from official pedagogic discourse through a more direct relationship with the fields of production and symbolic control. This is a double relationship, in which these fields exercise both a direct influence on the discourses to be transmitted, and also more indirectly through the specific requirements of agents who will eventually participate in the primary fields. Various forms of teacher education are an obvious example.

Specific forms of literacy will be one set of those demands, though there may well be considerable internal difference with respect to those demands, given the different ideological orientations of the two fields of primary discursive

production (Luke, 1993). So the model would predict that work in the pedagogic recontextualizing field would select, integrate and re-identify discourse 'about' literacy (in the sense of specific knowledge and competencies). This work may well be accomplished *to some limited extent* independently of official pedagogic discourse. Under these conditions it is virtually certain that discursive re-shaping will be considerable.

But there will be other important influences on this process as well. One complex issue is the relation between the originating field of pedagogic interest in joint book-reading and primary contexts for joint book-reading discourse. The originating field is the pedagogic recontextualizing field though even here there are multiple discursive bases. On the one hand analyses of precocity in reading development and, on the other, interest in specific forms of semiotic mediation in child language development both contributed to the development of emergent literacy discourse. As predicted by the model, selected aspects of local pedagogic practice were (and are) recontextualized directly into the pedagogic recontextualizing field, thus usually by-passing official pedagogic discourse.

The selection occurs through two means. First, much of the research discourse is produced by specific agents in the pedagogic recontextualizing field (usually university staff in schools of education), who have studied their own practices, or those of colleagues (eg, Snow, 1983). There is an unusual circularity here, but it is important to note that it is not a circularity purely internal to the pedagogic recontextualizing field. The research data about instructional practice in the primary contextualizing context of the family, which in these cases is already very likely to be dominated by official pedagogic discourse, is itself *recontextualized*, leading to the creation of the imaginary subjects in pedagogic discourse.

The problem here is not that previous joint book-reading research is fundamentally flawed as research discourse. (The

conduct of the research is quite a separate, though very important issue. Approaches to research are variable.) Rather, the problem is that *the process of recontextualization of research discourse is very likely to produce imaginary subjects in a pedagogic discourse of reproduction who are considerably removed from interactional practices of lower working class families.*

Second, where variable local pedagogic discourse has been the research issue, including research on social class variation in joint book-reading practices itself, various agencies in the pedagogic recontextualizing field have (implicitly) selected from and re-ordered the descriptions of local practice, thus privileging certain of them. In Chapter Two Section 2.8 some highly influential pedagogic handbooks were cited as examples.

To reiterate, the crucial point in this argument is that 'recontextualize' does not mean simply to 'summarize' or 'restate' or even 'treat reductively'. Rather the process of reproducing research texts into a description of valued pedagogic practice reshapes them in relation to dominant and dominating principles of social interaction, principles which are common to only one fraction of the population. (Here the central vertical dimension in Figure 9.1 is crucial.) The process is likely to involve eliding of elements of research texts, reformulation of these texts in relation to other texts, and reorganisation particularly with respect to desired rate of acquisition of skills and competencies.

In the case of joint book-reading the effect of this general feature of recontextualization in the pedagogic device is intensified by specific features of the content to be relayed. The intensification occurs because of the unusual circularity of the relations between specific agents of the pedagogic recontextualizing field and a dominating form of local pedagogic discourse in families derived from one fraction of the field of symbolic control. The intensity of the relations

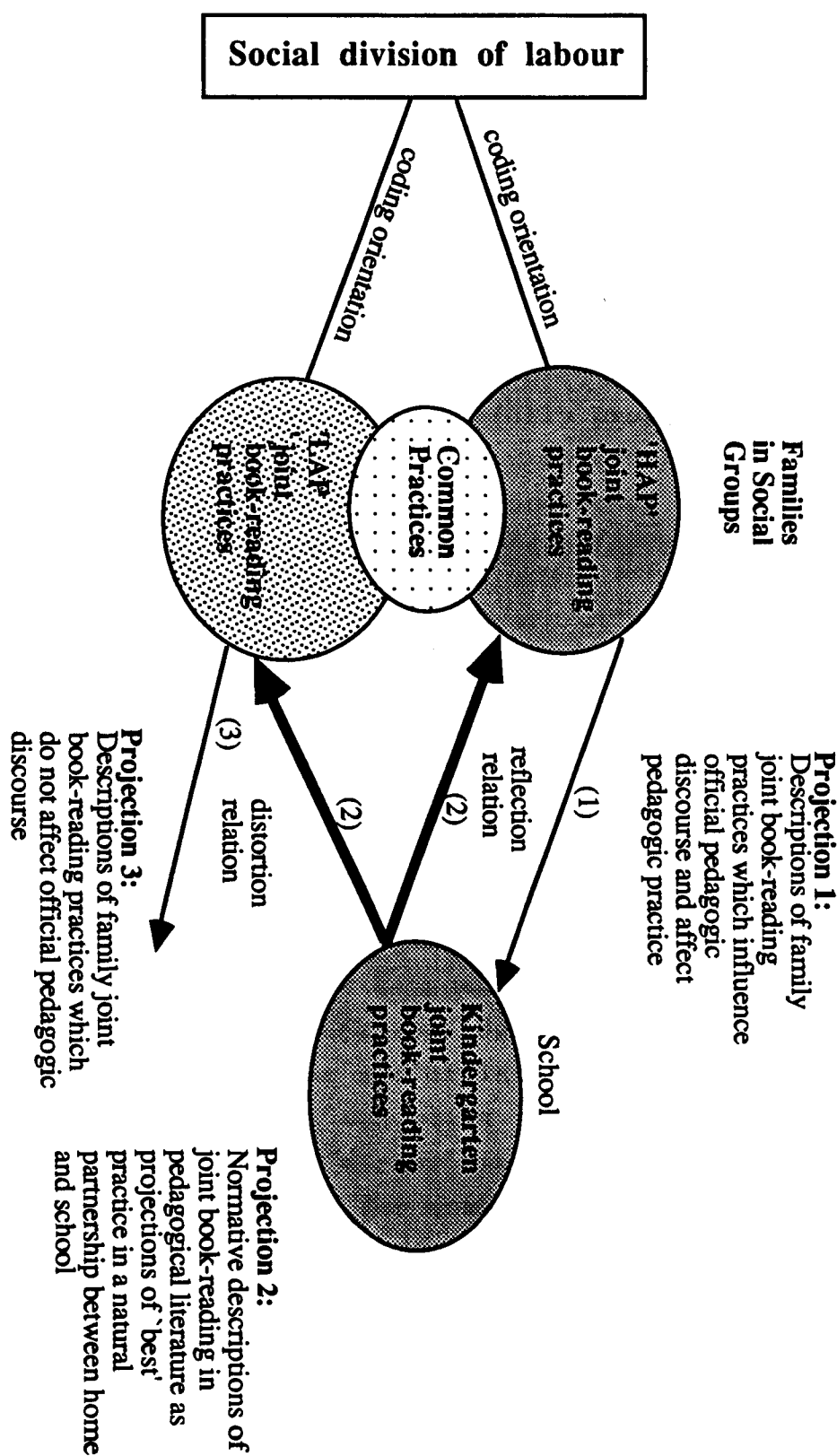
here create conditions approximating the ideal for the development of different forms of consciousness in young children as they commence school.

9.4 A model of pedagogic relations for joint book-reading
Figure 9.2 models some important aspects of relations between descriptions of joint book-reading practices in the two social locations, position of the family in social class relations and schooled literacy practice. The model is introduced in part as a contrast with those presented in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 in Chapter Two, which were advanced by Green and Harker (1984) to draw attention to the pedagogical significance of variation in children's home literacy backgrounds. Their models include a larger range of issues than Figure 9.2, particularly internal relations in classroom discourse.

The most significant contrasts with their models are in the relations described on the left of Figure 9.2. Beginning from the left, the model describes the primary condition for the development of variant forms of joint book-reading as principles regulating the social division of labour. Different coding orientations, deriving from speakers' locations in the social division of labour and the communicative practices associated with them, give the primary condition for the development of variant forms of interaction in joint book-reading.

These features of the model are a key aspect of the interpretation of the findings of this study. They represent a quite different claim about the antecedents of intracultural variation in joint book-reading from any previous work.

Figure 9.2 A model of pedagogic relations for joint book-reading



Variant practices in the two social groups are also shown as related through a region of common practices. This is an important condition for the development of misrecognition. Its inclusion is supported by many of the findings of this study such as, to cite just one specific example, children's frequent initiation of interaction during joint book-reading.

Three projections of joint book-reading practices are critical for the development of pedagogic discourse: projections of 'HAP' practices, labelled (1); projections of 'LAP' practices, labelled (3); and normalising projections of literacy pedagogy deriving from educational institutions, labelled (2).

It is HAP practices which are forcefully projected through the medium of research and pedagogic text into school K practice, and it is these practices which are projected back as regulating discourse to both the HAP and LAP family groups in the discourse of literacy pedagogy.

A 'mirror' relation is created for the HAP group, but a distortion relation for the LAP group. The distortion is not just one of isolated specific aspects of interaction such as frequency of questions, even types of questions, nor of the tenor of relations between mother and child. It rather concerns a difference in the development of literate subjectivities within the social groups through joint book-reading. Where interactive language plays a reasonably prominent part in joint book-reading in the home, the activity looks to be a very similar set of interpretive practices when it is recontextualized in schooling. The evidence of this study suggests that this 'mirror' relation only holds for members of the HAP group. For members of the LAP group the basis for misrecognition is effectively laid.

One interesting aspect of HAP practice is that it appears to be an exaggerated version of school practice. HAP mothers generally foreground the individuation of consciousness through joint book-reading more intensively than do the K

teachers. In this specific respect the findings contrast with results in Hasan's study, where the school practice was an exaggerated form of HAP practice.

A plausible reading of the reason for this difference is that the idealised subjects of pedagogic discourse, projected back to the HAP group, act to magnify crucial aspects of interaction in joint book-reading in this social location. The HAP group appropriates features of official pedagogic discourse to inform family interaction in joint book-reading, but in so doing it is actually re-adopting features which were earlier derived from this region of social class practices for use in literacy pedagogy. This is a particularly intense form of partnership.

9.5 Summary

The analysis of the relations made possible by Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device seriously bring into question the use of metaphors of 'naturalness' and of a 'partnership' between home and school practices in emergent literacy. Certainly there is some form of partnership, but not of the kind represented in the discourse of literacy pedagogy. The sense of 'natural' is, of course, already seriously challenged by Vygotsky's theory of semiotic mediation, but the analysis made possible by the model of the pedagogic device implicates a much wider set of social relations in the construction of specific forms of pedagogic discourse.

CHAPTER TEN

Concluding Comments

10.1 Theoretical points of departure

Some years ago Bernstein posed a question which succinctly represents the problem central to this study:

... how does the outside become the inside and how does the inside reveal itself and shape the outside (Bernstein, 1990:94).

From one perspective, so far as joint book-reading is concerned, what is 'outside' and what is 'inside' may appear rather straightforward. The 'inside' which is 'becoming' is young children's orientation to literacies. The 'outside' is linguistic interaction, the 'qualities' of which are regulated over time by a mother's careful reading of her child's 'stage' of linguistic development. The 'quality' may also, to some extent be determined by her own literacy 'level'.

However, this perspective projects a reductive image of relations between the 'outside' and 'inside'. It is an ahistorical and asocial view of interactive processes in joint book-reading. A crucial additional dimension which this study has attempted to foreground is the effect of structuring social relations which are already socially structured. These at first may appear to lie beyond the intimacy of family relations but they are, in fact, always present in the fabric of interaction through the complex process of realization.

Though in this study there have been shared interests with the many previous writers who have produced accounts of interaction in joint book-reading, the theoretical and empirical approach has been rather different. There has been no previous research in this field which has attempted to examine semiotic mediation in joint book-reading by theorizing joint book-reading as a situation-type, with all that is implied within the SFL analysis of context of situation and context of culture. Nor has there been a systematic

linguistic study of actual utterances, which has examined linguistic interaction over a range of naturally occurring occasions of talk about object texts in families and Kindergarten classes.

Central to this study has been the argument that a theorised account of context is a critical resource for understanding semiotic mediation. The absence of the general type of theorized account of context argued by Hasan (1992b) to be necessary for an understanding of relations between semiotic mediation and meaning potential has serious consequences for research and theory in emergent literacy. One of the most important of these is that relations between linguistic interaction in joint book-reading and children's literacy learning tend to be judged qualitatively. Those who have the 'most' or the 'highest' or the 'most relevant' provide the 'best': those who have the 'least' or 'lowest' or the 'least directly relevant' are the least well-prepared for a proper and symmetrical partnership with the school.

Developing the notion of 'context' for work in the early literacy field has involved some complex theoretical moves. It has not simply been a matter of providing a more detailed description of the general range of environments in which joint book-reading typically occurs in families in different locations in social class relations. Several other scholars have provided richly detailed accounts across a range of significantly contrasting locations, though it is true that this work appears not to have been attempted in Australia so far. There is no study in Australia, for example, which approximates the detail of ethnographic description achieved by Heath (1983).

For this study the task was rather one of reconstructing the sense of context itself for use in early literacy research field. Both the more general sense of social context, interactants' positions in social relations within different social formations, and the more specific sense of contexts of

situation constructed in and through language have been argued to be crucial.

The two general senses of context have been related through resources drawn from Bernstein's theory of cultural transmissions and a systemic functional theory of language. An argument that linguistic interaction in a context of situation is a *realization* of coding orientation, which in turn is primarily given by the location of interactants in social class relations, has been crucial for the study. However, in order to describe and interpret these relations in the situation-type, very recent theoretical developments within systemic functional linguistics have been required, particularly Hasan's expanded account of the contextual variables *field* and *tenor*, and her concept of a complex sociolinguistic variable finding variant linguistic realization in semantic, and consequently lexicogrammatical, features.

These theoretical perspectives have provided important methodological resources. By adapting Hasan's (1983) semantic network for the description of semantic messages to the specific requirements of this study, it has been possible to analyse linguistic interaction in a more detailed and linguistically systematic way than has previously been undertaken in this research field. Another unique aspect of the methodology, so far as research in children's early literacy development is concerned, has been the metafunctional description of meaning, enabling an analysis of patterning of various kinds of linguistic meanings in interaction in the two social groups.

10.2 Interpretations of variation

In this study the interpretation of variation in joint book-reading differs considerably from arguments advanced by authors discussed in Chapter Two. Key elements of this difference can be illustrated economically through a brief critique of contested interpretations of a stretch of everyday

talk in data obtained by Tizard and Hughes (1984). This stretch was recently critically re-interpreted by Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) and is the stretch which I have already introduced in Chapter Four, Section 4.7.2.2 in order to illustrate the use of a semantic network for the analysis of questions. It will be recalled that the child, Rosey, was puzzled by the nature of the wage relation and sustained a discussion about it with her mother for some time. Though the talk occurred during casual conversation rather than specifically in joint book-reading it is very similar in relevant respects to talk between, for example, Rachel and Emily and their respective mothers in the data obtained for this study from the HAP social group.

Tizard and Hughes cite this excerpt as an example of a 'passage of intellectual search' and suggest that it indicates that four-year-old children have much greater capacity for this kind of verbal reasoning than Piaget's theoretical perspective would suggest.

They also notice a class difference in the children's understanding of waged labour.

Confusion about the relationship between work, money and goods seemed to be less common among the working-class children. Perhaps because their fathers' work was more clearly related to money, rather than to the interest of the job, or because with a more limited income the arrival of the weekly pay packet was a more important event, the relationship between money and work was more often discussed in working-class families (Tizard and Hughes, 1984:123).

Their general argument is, first, that class context influences children's understanding of waged labour, which is much clearer amongst working class children, but that the quoted excerpt also illustrates cognitive strategies available to four-year-olds to resolve puzzlement, and these are used much more frequently in middle-class families (ibid., 150). This differential frequency is, in turn, a function of

differences in maternal style of speech¹.

A key problem with Tizard and Hughes' analysis is that it does not indicate *why* such linguistic strategies as 'passages of intellectual search' might occur more frequently amongst middle-class dyads. The difficulty is very similar to the problem in Heath's research (1983) of accounting, through some supra-local principle, for the easy movement of talk between object texts and other aspects of children's experience in Gateway joint book-reading sessions, in comparison particularly with Roadville.

In Tizard and Hughes' interpretation there is no way of relating the significance of the semantic features of 'passages of intellectual search' to social features of speakers. To do so it is necessary to develop some theoretical account of the potential of language as system, the patterning of selection of features from this potential by speakers, and some means of understanding such a patterning as a *function* of speakers' locations within social formations.

Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) re-analysis of this data is a complex interweaving of several arguments. One of these is the nature of women's work as differentially constituted by the (male) breadwinner's work. Though this issue is beyond the focus of this study, in passing it is interesting to note that the metaphor of a partnership between home and school in children's literacy development, so far as it advocates more instructional work being undertaken by caregivers, is likely to intensify women's domestic work.

The specific focus of interest here, though, is the interpretation of class differences in the selection of 'passages of intellectual search'. Walkerdine and Lucey

¹ Tizard and Hughes use the notions of speech genre or social language to develop this argument. The mode and delicacy of argument is very similar to that presented by Wertsch (1991). In order to focus on differences of interpretation I will not pursue these methodological issues further here, since they have in any case been extensively discussed in Chapters Two, Four and Five.

dispute the general interpretation of the Rosey passage made by Tizard and Hughes because the example

tells us not something generic but something very specific about the meanings produced for and by a girl in a specific place in the gender and class division of labour (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989:91).

Rosey, they argue, puzzles over the wage relationship because it has been invisible in her family. The working class children do not have to puzzle over it because it is made so visible to them by the constraints under which their fathers work, in the scarcity of goods for the family, and so on. They argue that Tizard and Hughes are, by implication, using a generic concept of mind, in which all minds have the same qualities and which in turn is used to 'pathologise' minds which don't puzzle. Lack of puzzlement, the story then goes, results from the mother's insensitivity to the child's needs and curiosity (ibid., 92).

However, this argument itself confuses two quite separate issues. One is the invisibility of the wage relationship to the middle-class children and the contextual necessity for them to puzzle over it in contrast with the working class children, an issue which Tizard and Hughes themselves explicitly discuss. The other is the *general* finding of more frequent occurrence of 'passages of intellectual search', assuming that these can be described explicitly, amongst the middle-class dyads. The interpretation of why Rosey puzzles over this specific issue becomes confused with the more general question of the frequency of occurrence of specific categories of interaction, the linguistic nature of this interaction and the social basis for its differential occurrence. One can agree whole-heartedly with Walkerdine and Lucey that

the meanings of work vary according to the conditions that the families are in, the understanding and experience of labour, and the discourses through which the meanings are regulated by external agencies (ibid., 100).

But such a position does nothing to interpret Tizard and Hughes' general finding about the frequency of the 'passages of intellectual search'. It is precisely the relationship between 'the conditions that the families are in' and the occurrence of 'passages of intellectual search' which remains problematic. This is both because the latter remains unspecified linguistically, and because a generic view of mind is not really replaced by a specific account of children's development through the semiotic mediation of linguistic interaction with socially situated speakers.

In this study the general problem of explaining very similar variation was redefined both theoretically and methodologically. As a result an interpretation different from both of these positions, and from other studies of variation, became possible.

The study began, as did Heath (1983:3), from the 'realities of the communicative patterns of the region(s)'. However, region was defined not as socio-geographical location nor as a region of socio-economic status, but as location within contrasted regions of social class relations deriving from the social division of labour. There was a close scrutiny of 'communicative patterns' through explicit linguistic analysis of as large a data set as could reasonably be accommodated in a study of this length. The analytic focus was not so much 'passages' of talk, but configurations of semantic features which tended to be selected differentially across the whole data set by mothers and children in different social class locations.

These resources have enabled me to present indicative evidence of:

- i a significant relation between speakers' social class locations and the variant 'communicative patterns' which are the semiotic means through which children

learn principles regulating orders of relevance of meanings in and through literate practices.

- ii a close relation between the HAP variant and typical K classroom practice, which have been shown to display similar semantic features.

Using Bernstein's theory of coding orientation and of pedagogic discourse it has also been possible to interpret the variants, and their relations, as a realization of principles of power relations in the social division of labour, at least as the primary influence on the evolution of orders of relevance of meanings.

10.3 A review of methodology

The project required complex methodological choices, about which some brief evaluative comments are presented.

Though the initial questionnaire survey was a rather crude research device it was useful in indicating not only that people living in diverse social locations in Sydney read to their four-year-old children reasonably regularly, but also that there may be subtle differences in interaction associated with social location. The survey also clearly, if unsurprisingly, supported the commonsense observation that it was chiefly mothers who mediated literacy practices to children through joint book-reading, so it was their talk with the focal children which was the appropriate object of study. The survey also indicated considerable variability in details such as time for reading, enabling data-gathering to be planned appropriately.

Audiorecording of talk by the mothers seems to have constrained interaction only minimally. There was, of course, some influence on the talk from the audiorecording. The important question is not whether the talk was completely unaffected by the audiorecording but rather whether it was affected in some systematic way material to the interpretation

of the data. This does not appear to have been the case. First, there are many examples of intimate domestic detail in the talk. Further, many of the mothers themselves reported that the conversations were typical. And at no point do the children react as if there existed any difference in their mother's behaviour, as one would expect if they were faced with significantly different interactive practices. Additionally, across all of the recordings there is a high degree of consistency for the individual dyad. The length of interaction may vary within the eight recorded sessions but major qualitative aspects of the talk do not appear to do so. It may be recalled that a selection from the original set of transcripts had to be made to reduce the sample for semantic network analysis to a reasonable size. Nevertheless, since the remaining transcripts were analysed into messages they were an accessible and useful resource for cross-checking on various methodological issues. Audiorecording was certainly a more familiar practice amongst the HAP than the LAP mothers, but careful checking during the data-collection period indicated that the LAP mothers became quite relaxed about making the recordings. The consistency of the transcripts supports the view that the act of recording itself has not systematically influenced the data.

The set of methods used to contact informants and negotiate their participation did probably have one biasing effect with respect to the LAP group. The sample of LAP families did not generally comprise informants who were the least likely to exercise power in the workplace, or who in Bernstein's theoretical terms were closest to the material base of production. Using the ECE centres as a starting point, then contacting parents initially through a questionnaire, then asking parents to volunteer to record family conversation, probably constrained the range of potential participants in the LAP group. A different methodology would be required to negotiate participation of families least likely to exercise power through language in the workplace. In some senses it is this group which is the most interesting theoretically, and it

is the difficulties which children from this group experience in school which are the most urgent to address. It is a region of interactive practice which deserves more research attention.

The framework for analysis of the interactive texts, the adaptation of Hasan's (1983) semantic network, was an illuminating analytic technique through which to study this data. The possibility of considering the data metafunctionally, in terms of four meaning perspectives, was perhaps the most signal advantage of all. The semantic network crucially enabled an investigation of *interrelations* between regions of meaning typically selected by speakers in different social locations. The selection of the feature [prefaced] simultaneously with [demand;information] is a specific example, as is the feature [follow:maintain:respond;demand;information:develop]. The length of the signifier for this feature perhaps helps to make the point.

With a larger data base it would obviously be possible to develop the description and analysis further, for example by probing the simultaneous selection of the child as the referential signification of [effecting] with various speech functions and with [prefaced]. There was no advantage in doing so here because the total number of messages selecting this reference for [effecting] in the LAP data set was (relatively) so small.

The experiential fragment of the network was described to a primary level of delicacy, sufficient to explore major tendencies in the distribution of experiential meanings in the data sets. It would be very interesting in subsequent research to extend it, to probe uses of more delicate semantic resources and distributions of their selection across social class locations. One particularly interesting example is the feature [pertinence]. Most messages selecting [pertinence] in the HAP data, whose referential signification for [element] was the focal child, were realized by [Process:relational:

possessive]. Informally, the pattern suggests that in the HAP group the person of the child is partly defined by what she or he individually possesses, significantly more so than in the LAP data. These possessions are both personal attributes, of appearance ('I have red hair') and material possessions ('I have a bike like that'). A parallel difference was found for references to characters, but not to a statistically significant extent. By describing more delicate options dependent on [pertinence] it would be possible to explore whether or not such a theoretically salient feature as individual possession of objects is associated with other aspects of individuation.

Similarly, it would be useful to explore more delicate options dependent on [material], informally for example activity through which a new entity is made, or some change to existing entities is effected, or a person acts benefactively towards another entity. Janet's conversation with her mother about the lost wedding shoes in a Barby and Ken narrative, Rhonda and her mother's conversation about Louis Pasteur, several of Rachel's conversations, and Emily's discussion of sunburn resulting from a visit to the beach suggest that this is a particularly fruitful area of inquiry. Notice that in these examples it is the girls who most directly appear to be involved in discussing narratives in which benefaction is a prominent feature.

That it was not possible to compare interactive talk by sex of the focal child, nor to analyse the potential for gender by class interactive effects, is a cause for regret. As I have previously pointed out in Chapter Three, Section 3.7.4, the unanticipated visibility of the selection of participants within local communities in a sense forced the abandonment of this plan. To have maintained it would have risked causing unintended hurt to potential participants, particularly amongst mothers in LAP locations where the study's visibility was greatest.

Some related work on gender differences in everyday talk between mothers and children, using message semantic techniques, shows that subsequent investigation of this area is important. Cloran (1989), for example, has described differences in orientations to orders of relevance of meanings in interactive talk between mothers and male and female children. In a small exploratory study De Lellis (1992) was able to show indicative differences in the extent to which mothers of four-year-old male children, compared with those of female children tended to give information during the discussion of object texts. Comparatively, the mothers of the female children tended to require them to answer more questions. Though the number of participants in this study did not allow De Lellis to compare for location in social class relations there was an indication that in a larger study a class by gender comparison of the patterning of semantic features would be useful. This is perhaps the most obvious area for extension of the work reported in this thesis.

Finally, a comment on the scale of the analyses undertaken for this thesis and the use of semantic networks in subsequent research. It will be obvious that extensive analysis of each individual message is time-consuming. In the context of current institutional practices in the funding and control of research the question of the efficacy of the methodology is particularly acute. Is semantic message analysis too resource intensive to justify its use?

A first response, that the selection of methodology depends on the question to be addressed, is obvious. Beyond this, however, if the issue to be investigated is the kind of subtle difference in orientations to orders of meanings in and through everyday talk which have been described in this study, it is difficult to see how a less intensive analysis could be employed with equal effect. Even more delicate analysis may be required.

To use some rather than all aspects of the semantic network for a particular project is feasible, but selectiveness would be at a considerable cost. One relevant aspect of these findings was that the features were drawn from all four metafunctions. To elect to describe differences in use of semantic resources from one metafunction may project just one region as responsible for variance, when it is rather more likely that interaction between the selected feature and others is of particular theoretical significance. So far as joint book-reading itself is concerned, the one semantic region which seems most unlikely to be implicated in variation is options dependent on [demand;goods and services] and [give;goods and services]. This is not a very surprising finding, given that reflection-based social activity is criterial and that joint book-reading is both an intimate activity and relatively far removed from action-based social activities.

Despite being so labour-intensive, semantic message analysis has proved to be a rich framework for analysis, and arguably a basis for a perspective on diversity in literate practices in families which it would be, at the very least, difficult to achieve from other perspectives. It is one thing to say that practices are different in contrasted social locations. It is quite another to say *how* they are linguistically different in consistent ways, and *why* these differences might develop from structuring conditions in social formations, which were the general questions raised in the introductory chapter of the thesis.

10.4 Some implications for the discourse of literacy pedagogy in the Kindergarten year

Finally, attention will be drawn to some implications for current school literacy practices which derive from this study. The suggestions are minimal ones through which some of the crudest effects of differences in coding orientation in relation to the emergent phase of children's literacy development might be alleviated.

Current discourse of literacy pedagogy usually projects an image of desirable practice from observations about HAP practice into discourses about children's development of schooled literacy during Kindergarten. The purpose of the curriculum changes which promote pedagogical uses of joint book-reading is to increase the 'effectiveness' of emergent literacy pedagogy in two ways: by enabling more children to achieve official pedagogic success, but also to enable more children to be successful earlier in schooling. Amongst both teachers and researchers associated with the discourse of literacy pedagogy there is an acute awareness of the problem of different individual rates of acquisition of schooled literacy because these directly affect the possibility of children working individually across different regions of the curriculum. A variety of solutions is offered to this problem.

Despite the obvious progressive intent of the institutions, what results is an intensification of the privileging relation. In complex ways the State sets criteria for measuring children's degree of official pedagogic success and closely associated institutional structures specify criteria for families to meet *before children enter formal schooling* in order for these families to be considered successful partners in children's schooled literacy development. The criteria become preconditions for the expected rate of acquisition of privileged and therefore privileging literacy practices.

That schools and professional associations should inform parents whose children are entering Kindergarten about schooled literacy practices, and the reasons for which these are adopted, is very desirable. That parents could be expected to change patterns of family interaction voluntarily in response to schooled literacy programmes is rather unrealistic in the light of the relations between location in the social division of labour, everyday family talk and joint book-reading practices which have been described in this project. Similar relations across many other situation-types

have been found in Hasan's work, so it is no minor change which many families are asked to make. The suggestion assumes that parents are able to graft such practices onto existing forms of interaction, and that interaction can itself be freed from its moorings to speakers' social positioning. The findings of this research suggest that what is at stake is a change in orientation to whole orders of meaning well beyond the specific situations implicated in the commencement of schooling. It is not simply a matter of 'adding on' some literacy practices.

If a certain orientation to orders of relevance of meaning is required in school, then it is school literacy pedagogy which must attempt to accommodate the learning requirements of those students whose family social class locations, as a function of power relations in the social division of labour, do not 'naturally' furnish this orientation. The metaphor of a partnership between home and school, insofar as it enables school practices to be predicated on the existence of certain types of home literate practices and actually advocates an intensification of these relations, has a potential to increase the already powerful differentiating effects of variation on the development of schooled literacy competences.

School literacy pedagogy must also necessarily be the means through which many children learn to problematize and criticize dominant literate practices. For children from the LAP social group this task will require particularly careful negotiation of contexts for learning by teachers.

The development of critical literacies in and through pedagogic discourse has been advocated by writers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds in recent years (for example, Fairclough, 1992; Hasan, in press (b); Kress, 1985; 1987; Luke, 1993). In Australia the significance of this work was recently brought directly to the attention of policy makers by the report of a project of national significance, *Teaching*

critical social literacy (Christie, 1991a), hereafter the Christie Report.

The authors of the Christie Report comment:

It is our position that critical and informed participation in Australian society requires that students be given equitable access to:

- (1) wide ranging competences to deal with diverse genres, texts and discourses in various social contexts - occupational, academic and community - and various media, including print, electronic and visual;
- (2) the capacity to use text as a means for learning and decision making in periods of education across the different phases of living; and
- (3) the capacity to use text as a means to appraise their positions in changing economic, occupational and social conditions (Christie, 1991a:2).

The provision of such access to all young learners is a very complex educational task.

The findings of this study are highly congruent with critiques of individualist and nativist theories of literacy development by critical literacy and 'genre-based' theorists.

Additionally, the advocacy by these theorists of certain pedagogic strategies, such as providing explicit accounts of required textual practices, is supported by these findings. It is otherwise very difficult to envisage how some of the children from the LAP families might gain access to the desired critical competencies and capacities if their social class locations remained more or less constant. These pedagogic strategies are a necessary, though by no means sufficient, means through which students might gain access.

Additionally, the study underscores the significance of two factors not widely considered in critical literacy discussions. One is the nature of the most basic prior structuring and differentiating conditions for literacy development, realized through interactive practices, which will have to be taken into account in the reorientation of the discourse of literacy pedagogy in early childhood. The other is the pervasiveness of implicitly differentiating and privileging literacy development practices at the very

beginning of schooling. These appear to begin their effects well before most children actually learn to read print.

Of the many changes to pedagogic discourse which are required if the goals established by Christie and her colleagues are to be achieved, three stand out as relatively low cost but useful changes. These are:

- i development of systematic understanding of language variation through teacher education;
- ii redevelopment of criteria for evaluation of the official pedagogic success of emergent readers; and,
- iii explication to young children of the purposes of joint book-reading within schooled literacy.

Research undertaken for the Christie Report shows that study of language variation of any form is the exception rather than the norm in preservice primary teacher education courses in Australia. Unless student teachers happen upon a unit concerning language variation as part of a 'liberal studies' component of coursework, they are unlikely to consider these issues in a preservice degree in any depth.

Under existing arrangements there may be some informal avenues through which primary student teachers can begin to appreciate the importance of dialect and register variation for their professional work. Dialect variation is reasonably widely discussed in the community, if not very systematically, and register variation in one guise or another is fairly commonly discussed as part of curriculum work.

Knowledge of semantic variation in relation to speakers' positions in social class relations is another matter altogether. Semantic variation as realization of differences in coding orientation is likely to be utterly invisible to the majority of primary teachers. A first productive move would

be, therefore, to make the study of language variation of all kinds, but semantic variation in particular, a more prominent and more rigorous part of preservice primary teacher education. This is in fact what the Christie Report recommended (*ibid.*, xvi), though its findings appear to have met marked resistance on this point. The evidence of this thesis suggests that such knowledge is of great importance in primary teacher education courses.

On the basis of this knowledge teachers could be encouraged to elaborate the criteria currently used in the evaluation of children's progress in schooled literacy. This evaluation is often conducted implicitly and informally, but it is no less powerful because it is informal. Evaluation of children's literacy progress in Kindergarten is ongoing and has an important material effect on children's access to different types of literacy learning materials, programs and interaction with other learners (Cook-Gumperz, 1986b). Teachers have the task of making highly complex decisions about children's literacy development, but often simply do not have access to effective theoretical resources for their evaluative decisions and subsequent planning. Enhancing the theoretical resources teachers might use in interpreting the non-idiosyncratic conditions structuring children's official pedagogic progress would transform much current evaluative practice.

A closely related issue is children's understanding of what joint book-reading in school, as contrasted with home, is 'for'. The cultural origins of joint book-reading lie in an impulse to share the contemplation of meanings with children, an impulse at the heart of all reflection-based social activity. However, as joint book-reading has been ascribed a new role in pedagogic discourse its institutional purposes have shifted, both in K classes in schools and probably also in HAP homes.

Only a relatively short time ago joint book-reading was something teachers tended to do with children as a ritual at

the beginning and end of the day, primarily as a relaxing communal activity. It has become something altogether different pedagogically. This in itself is by no means inherently a negative pedagogical development but the shift has intensified the likelihood of misrecognition in an activity which is often the centrepiece of literacy pedagogy in the Kindergarten year. However, if its purposes were to be clarified for children, so that they were helped to understand why they engaged in the activity at school in comparison with reading with their parents at home, at least some of the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding might be reduced. Explicitness about purposes in this set of pedagogic practices, taking due account of the age and experience of the children, would be advantageous. Explicitness is not equivalent to crudely direct teaching. Clarification of school purposes for the activity may also have a useful effect on the way teachers structure interaction around object text - it is not only the children whose expectations might adjust if purposes for the activity were to be clarified.

These proposals are merely examples of some ways in which some of the most visible effects of misrecognition might be ameliorated. Obviously the proposals could be extended at some length, but even that extended discussion of school reform would be insufficient to propose what is really needed, since this is not something which even a much better resourced education system in its current structure could provide.

Bernstein's theory of coding orientation poses a much more complex, intransigent question with which the study ends. The question derives from his comment, basic to the whole theoretical paradigm of coding orientation, and also in fact systemic functional linguistics, that 'between language and speech is social structure' (Bernstein, 1990:95).

The question with respect to the development of emergent literacy competencies is this:

Does the social structure of late capitalism actively produce different literate subjectivities in contrasted social locations because those different literate subjectivities are necessary to the maintenance of current power relations?

If the answer to this question is positive then the joint book-reading in which Paul, Ashley, Rachel, Emily and their peers participate with such enthusiasm and enjoyment is a facet of the social practices which are already preparing them, at four years of age, for different degrees of official pedagogic success. These general practices are also the primary conditions which begin to prepare them to take up differentially privileged locations in the social division of labour.