

JOSEP MARIA COTS CAIMONS

**The pragmatics of communicative competence.
The case of interactions between university professors and
students.**

Volume I

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Ponent del Departament de Filologia: Doctor Jaume Tió i Casacuberta

**Departament de Filologia
Estudi General de Lleida
Universitat de Barcelona
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Here the 'topic requirement' is not the only one involved. Power and Presentation of Self also have their roles in making the speaker decide to stick to the topic.

8.3.3. Information Management

The first aspect of the 'interactional requirement' of Information Management has to do with the way information is linearly structured to distinguish between (i) relevant / non-relevant, and (ii) 'given' / new information. The basic question concerning this first aspect that needs to be asked from the point of view of the language learner is how the competent speaker distinguishes relevant from non-relevant information and given from new information. It has been proved that the mechanisms by which speakers of different languages organize their discourse can be traced in speech at some level of language (prosody, morphology, syntax, discourse) and that these signals are culture-specific (Gumperz *et al.* 1979).

In the present encounter, one of the first examples of speaker's competence in differentiating status of information can be found in lines 6-8. It involves the use of a special prosodic pattern to signal 'givenness' of information which is provided only to serve as foreground, and to convey the speaker's intention to continue speaking. The pattern consists

A sample analysis

basically of raising the intonation at the end of an affirmative sentence as if it were for a yes/no question⁵.

S- It looks like it / Right. This
is the - position in Southwestern
Louisiana'

P- Mhm'

S- *John Gibson'*. - And this was the -

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A second example in which the Information Management 'requirement' appears is line 36. The item in question is the discourse connector "so", which functions prosodically as an independent unit.

The 'interactional requirement' of Information Management is also concerned with the status of information, that is to say the degree of certainty with which the information is conveyed. This is done very often by means of parenthetical verbs (e.g. *it looks like, I believe, etc.*).

Parenthetical verbs, together with other particles such as *probably* or *maybe*, have in many cases another very important function: to reduce the degree of assertiveness of the speaker's utterance. This is what Jucker (1986: 149) qualifies as the parenthetical verb exerting its non-factive influence and thus

⁵ In the transcription this is indicated by means of an apostrophe following the last word in the utterance

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reducing the speaker's commitment. This is the reason why most of the parenthetical verbs have already been studied inside the variable of Presentation of Self.

In relation to the type of speech event in this study, it should be noted that the academic context in general (and especially departments like anthropology) is not one that favours the kind of axiomatic statements people normally use in other contexts. Their function as 'diminishers' of assertiveness makes these lexical items suitable as well in the case of suggestions or requests, where the speaker wants to avoid the impression of imposition on the addressee.

The following are examples of parenthetical expressions:

- a) *it looks like it* ' Right. This (line 4)
- b) Community College. *I don't know if you* (line 10)
- c) *Apparently*, it's a teaching job. (line 13)
- d) but someone who's able to teach *I* (line 16)
guess a four-field uh introduction
- e) anthropology. And uh if you could, *I* (line 19)
guess just mention my teaching
- f) So *I believe* I could do a pretty good (line 30)
- g) course. And - *apparently*, uh it's a (line 32)
small department, they don't have a
- h) enthusiastic about, so *I believe* I. (line 40)
could do a good job there in teaching

8.3.4. Goal

In order to understand how the 'interactional requirement' of Goal is faced in the speech event being analyzed in this chapter, we must be acquainted with the fact that the Professor and the Student have talked about the subject on a previous occasion. This is why, this encounter is exceptional in the sense that the Student does not make his goal explicit. A typical characteristic of this type of speech event is that a Student presents his/her goal at the very beginning of the event. Whenever this does not happen, one or other of the participants may feel uncomfortable.

An analysis of the whole speech event rather than of isolated exchanges allows us to see how the Student's goal (to obtain a letter of recommendation) is divided into three 'sub-goals': (i) to get the Professor to write the letter, (ii) to get the Professor to mention the Student's teaching abilities in the letter, and (iii) to get the Professor to send it off as soon as possible. The order in which the three are introduced, what precedes and follows them, what linguistic structures are used to introduce or to reintroduce them in order to make sure that it is understood, are all part of the domain of this 'interactional requirement'.

In line 54, we have an example of reintroduction of the main goal (to get the Professor to write the letter) by means of

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the expression of gratefulness which includes an anaphoric reference to it (So I'd really appreciate it.). Nevertheless, the main purpose of this reintroduction of the goal is to prepare the Professor for the second goal, namely, to ensure that the letter will be sent before a certain date.

S- *So I'd really appreciate it. And he -*
There's a little bit of urgency,

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In the section on Imposition, the order in which the goals are brought into the conversation and the type of pragmatic structure used (e.g. hedged request, lines 18-19; blaming on other people, lines 55-60) have already been discussed. In order to avoid repetition, the reader is referred to 8.2.3.

8.4. Strategic competence

8.4.1. Human Constraint

The first example in which the presence of the 'interactional requirement' defined as Human Constraint becomes relevant involves the use of the vocalisation *uh* in lines 2, 15, 17, 18, 23, 32.

a) S- Sorry to *uh* take up your time but - *uh*

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- b) S- It's *uh* calls for a bio-archeologist,
but someone who's able to teach I
guess a four-field *uh* introduction 15
- c) P- Mhm.
S- And *uh* I was a teaching assistant 23
for Nuñez, in cultural. And I believe

As Hymes suggests the use of *uh* is not universal and, even if it were, its collocation and frequency of appearance are culturally-specific.

For white middle-class Americans, for example, normal hesitation behavior involves "fillers" at the point of hesitation ('uh', etc.). For many blacks, a normal pattern is to recycle to the beginning of the utterance (perhaps more than once). This black norm may be interpreted by whites not as a different norm but as a defect. (Hymes 1974: 61)

Hesitation is often associated with a role of fear and submission (because of the impression of insecurity it conveys) to a more powerful individual. This means that *uh* is not only an automatic reaction caused by an impasse of the brain (i.e. not being able to articulate the idea) but is also a conscious device to acknowledge the addressee's power. Therefore, from this point of view it should be included in the 'interactional requirement' of Power.

Another instance in which Human Constraint becomes a relevant 'interactional requirement' is line 3, where the Professor uses a general word like *thing* to denote an object for which he has no lexical item readily available. This was

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confirmed later on by the Professor, who reported that he could not think of a better word at that moment to refer to the information he needed about about the teaching position the Student wanted to apply for.

P- Got that *thing*?

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S- | It looks like it / Right. This

The strategy defined as *approximation* also appears in the speech event analyzed in this chapter. It is verbally realized by means of parenthetical verbs or adverbials, through which the Student signals his lack of knowledge about the information conveyed: *it looks like* (line 4), *apparently* (lines 13, 32), *I guess* (line 17).

(S) *Apparently*, it's a teaching job

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P- Mhm. =

S- = It's uh calls for a bio-archeologist,
but someone who's able to teach /
guess a four-field uh introduction

Finally, in line 62, there is an example of the *repair* strategy, in which the Student by means of the connectors *or well* indicates that he is just self-correcting some information he has previously conveyed (the earliest first of next week --> the latest first of next week)⁶.

6 See Quirk *et al* (1985): 1311-1313

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(S) and interview. So he was hoping to be able to get the references by the, you know, the earliest first of next week.

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P- Yeah.

S- |Or well, the latest first of next week, so /

8.4.3. Language Constraint

The two instances in which one of the participants in the speech event analyzed confronts the 'interactional requirement' of Language Constraint involve the strategy defined as *adjusting the literal meaning*. In the first example (line 30) the Student reduces the literal meaning of the adjective **good** by means of the modifier **pretty**. It is interesting to point out that this expression is used by the Student on three occasions, but it is only in this case, where he is almost immediately repeating the expression, that he chooses to reduce the literal meaning of the adjective.

S- So I believe I could do a *pretty* good job in a four-field introductory

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The second instance appears in line 54, where the Student reinforces the meaning of the verb **appreciate** (**I'd appreciate it**) by means of the intensifier **really**. Thereby, reinforcing his expression of gratefulness to the Professor.

> P So I'd really appreciate it. And he / -

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8.5. Schematic summary of the analysis

In the following schematic summary each segment of the conversation fulfilling a specific 'interactional requirement' has been transcribed in the same character type as that of the abbreviation for the 'requirement'. This system also allows for a representation of those items which are part of more than one 'interactional requirement'. For example, **really** and **And** in line 54 must be classified as part of the whole expression intended to introduce another goal in the conversation (and, consequently, they are transcribed in bold face) but they also fulfill the 'requirements' of Language Constraint and Topic, and this is indicated by means of a different underlining.

	Text		Interactional requirement
P-	Hi Dan.		
S-	<i>Sorry to uh take up your time but / - uh</i>		<i>TT-HC</i> (1)
P-	Got that <i>thing</i> ?		<i>HC</i>
S-	<i> It looks like it, Right. This</i>		<i>PS/IM/HC, T</i>
	is the - position in Southwestern	5	<i>T</i>
	Louisiana '.		IM
P-	<i>Mhm'</i>		<i>TT</i> (2)
S-	John Gibson '. <i>And</i> this was the -		IM-T
	letter you've written to Santa Fe		
	Community College. <i>I don't know if you / ></i>	10	<i>PS/IM/TT</i>
P-	<i> Oh I don't need that.</i>		
>S-	- But / - <i>And</i> they called yesterday.		<i>T</i>
	<i>Apparently, it's a teaching job.</i>		<i>PS/IM/HC</i>

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P-	Mhm. =		
S-	= It's <i>uh</i> calls for a bio-archeologist, but someone who's able to teach / <i>guess</i> a four-field <i>uh</i> introductory anthropology. And <i>uh</i> if you could, I <i>guess</i> just mention my teaching abilities, what I've done here.	15	HC PS/IM/HC I (3)-HC-I PS/SD/IM
P-	Sure	20	SD/TT
P-	Mhm.		TT
S-	And <i>uh</i> I was a teaching assistant for Nuñez, in cultural, and <i>I believe</i> >		T-HC PS-PS/IM
P-	Hm mhm	25	TT
> S	I could do a good job teaching cultural anthropology I have a lot of it as a masters student at F.S.U. =		
P-	= Yeah.		TT
S-	So <i>I believe</i> I could do a pretty good job in a four-field introductory course. And - apparently, <i>uh</i> it's a small department, they don't have a graduate program, there are only thirty-five majors, anthropology majors in the department. So the emphasis is on undergraduate teaching, which is I'm really	30	PS-PS/IM-LC PS/IM/HC
		35	
			T- PS/TT
P-	Mhm.		
S	enthusiastic about, so <i>I believe</i> I could do a good job there in teaching.	40	PS-PS/IM
P-	Sounds good. - - It sounds like a >		SD/TT
S- I hope so, >		PS
> P	nice job. Lafayette		
> S	I'm I'm encouraged. Lafayette I've never been there but /	45	PS-TT
P-	It's good Cajun country. You've got to learn to speak <i>ts</i> French.		SD/TT/T
S-	Cajun, really? =		

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P-	= Mhm'	50	
S-	That's / I'm willing to 'o that. [laughter] >		T-PS
P-	Mhm mhm		
>S	So I'd really appreciate it. And he / -		G (4)-LC-I
	There's a little bit of urgency,	55	I
	they're narrowing the list down, to		
	the three people they wanna bring		
	and interview. So he was hoping to be		
	able to get the references by the, you		
	know, the earliest first of next week.	60	
P-	Yeah.		
S-	Or well, the latest first of next		HC
	week, so /		
P-	Ok. I'll send it off		
S-	Ok. Thanks a lot, I appreciate it.	65	I
P-	You're welcome		

- Key to 'interactional requirements':

PS	Presentation of Self
SD	Social Distance
P	Power
I	Imposition
T	Topic
TT	Turn-taking
IM	Information Management
G	Goal
HC	Human Constraint
LC	Language Constraint

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- Notes:

(1) I interpret this example and the ones in lines 38 and 46 as proofs that (i) the speaker counts on the Turn Taking system in which interaction takes place, and that (ii) the listener is capable of grasping meaning beyond what is actually said. As we can see, the speaker actually stops and leaves the utterance unfinished, looking forward to a contribution from the listener.

(2) As Schegloff (1982) argues, this type of contribution cannot be simply defined as backchannel. Its purpose in many cases is not only to show understanding but also to pass on the opportunity to take the floor, because it is understood that the previous speaker has not finished. It is neither an agreement like "yeah" (lines 29, 61) nor an answer to a request like "sure" (line 21). A more or less accurate paraphrase could be "I understand and accept what you say, and I invite you to continue if you need to".

P's task throughout the conversation is limited to provide this type of backchannel. It is worth noticing that as the conversation progresses the backchannel tokens change from the simple "mhm" to longer contributions, which nevertheless have the same function of showing attention and understanding. Schegloff (1982) explain the phenomenon in the following words:

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"(...) the availability of a range of tokens may matter less for the difference of meaning or usage between them than (if any) for the possibility thereby allowed of varying the composition of them. Use in four or five consecutive slots of the same token may then be used to hint incipient disinterest, while varying the tokens across the series, whatever tokens are employed, may mark a baseline of interest."

(3) It is interesting to see that "and" followed by "uh" or pause provides the speaker with a means to shift the action or the subtopic of the discourse. In line 18 there is a shift in action (from telling about the position to suggesting the content of the letter). In line 23 there is a move toward providing more precise personal information. In line 32 the shift is from personal feelings to objective information.

(4) S is clearly 'working on' Imposition and maintaining P's face in this case. He is intent on making P feel as not being imposed by another person. That is why S switches from what would have been a sentence with a personal subject ("he") to an impersonal construction ("there's a little bit of urgency").

CHAPTER IX. CONCLUSIONS

9.1. Towards a theory of linguistic performance

The present research is based on a concept of *language use* which differs radically from that employed by formal grammarians. For linguists working under this paradigm *language use* can be defined as the actual employment of particular utterances, words or sounds by particular speakers at a given time and place, as realizations of a 'type' belonging to a more abstract level of linguistic organization. In spite of a great amount of sociolinguistic research, the *grammatical theory* they are attempting to construct relies on the assumption that it is possible to explain human verbal behaviour by means of context-independent rules.

The alternative proposed in a *theory of linguistic performance* such as the one adopted in this research is based on the premise that the simple structural description of linguistic forms is missing an essential feature of what makes language relevant to the human being: "its ability to function in context as an instrument of both reflection and action upon the world"

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(Duranti 1988 (1989): 212). The main implication of adopting this point of view is that the language to be analyzed can no longer be found in the intuitions of the researcher about how language is used, and this automatically excludes invented samples or language obtained in an artificial setting devised by the researcher. The only reliable data are those obtained from real samples of language use in which there is a negotiation not only of information to be transferred but also of social roles and principles.

The second premise of our *theory of linguistic performance* is the conception of *language use* as involving an integration of different systems of meaning (Halliday 1973), which are to be specified in terms of the function a linguistic item has in each of them. This is the sense in which we could say that the language user faces the same problems as those of the analyst in describing discourse: the same effort that the former devotes towards the accomplishment of a consistent and coherence discourse by means of the use of specific linguistic moves, must be devoted by the latter to describing what makes language use different from random collections of decontextualized units. This effort is in both cases complicated by an almost total absence of rules linking meaning and form in a precise way (Schiffrin 1987).

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The third and last premise of the *theory of linguistic performance* envisaged here is the fact that the only way to gain access to both the necessary knowledge and the ways in which this is implemented by language users is "contextualization based, on-line, discourse level inferencing" of cues at three different levels (Gumperz 1989: 2). The first one would involve the perception and categorization of communicative signals in isolation. The second level is that of the sequential organization of verbal actions. The third level has to do with the language user's definition of the activity or "frame" (Brown and Yule 1982), and his/her expectations about what is normal. The researcher's inferences about the causes as well as the intentions that make a language user adopt a particular cue can only be made through an analysis of the *outcomes* of the verbal interaction.

9.2. The analysis of the data

The qualitative analysis of twenty-five instances of the same type of speech event must be understood as an attempt to come to some reconciliation between, on the one hand, an approach to describing language use based on the interpretations of the analyst and the language user and, on the other hand, a more objective approach in which particular instances of use are categorized in terms of their recurring presence in different environments.

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As Schiffrin (1987) points out, both approaches are not incompatible but complementary. The qualitative analysis of discourse allows both to identify a series of significant discourse items and to understand their function within the different components which underlie language use. It is only once the specific items and the environments in which they appear have been identified that the analyst can attempt a distributional account of the data.

The amount of different types of discourse data that is becoming readily available thanks to the growing interest in natural discourse as well as the increasingly refined techniques of data collection should allow us in a near future to construct a theory of interactional discourse. This theory should be general and flexible enough to include a series of parameters along which descriptions of different types of discourse and different socio-cultural styles could be grounded. The present research should be seen as one more contribution to this goal.

The underlying hypothesis throughout this work has been the existence of a series of 'interactional requirements' which the participants in a verbal interaction have learned to be aware of in their process of socialization. This type of 'interactional requirements' can be considered as part of the whole set of demands that social life imposes on the individual if he/she wants to be accepted as a member of the group. Each 'interactional requirement' is confronted by the individual with

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a series of verbal and non-verbal strategies which are deployed by means of a series of verbal and non-verbal signs whose interpretation is based not on a series of rules establishing one-to-one correlations between form and function/notion but rather on inferential processes (Widdowson 1984, Schiffrin 1988, Gumperz 1989).

Because of the applied perspective with which the present description of verbal interactions has been undertaken, it has been considered necessary to explore the possibility of fitting this hypothesis into a pedagogical framework which has been proved useful in the preparation of second/foreign language curricula built upon the concept of communicative competence. This is the framework proposed in Canale 1980a, 1980b, 1983, and Canale and Swain 1979, 1980. It consists mainly in describing communicative competence as involving a series of different abstract components or "areas of knowledge and skill" (Canale 1983: 6) which seem to be useful for the description and understanding of how communication works: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic. The discrete consideration of each of the components should not be understood as a model of how language is acquired, which is not the same as how language should be described. The modular approach used here responds rather to an analysis of the needs of language learners based on the results of tests of communicative competence

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The analysis of the data as well as the orientations that the language users show when engaging in verbal interaction have proved the feasibility of an approach to describing communicative competence which would combine the explanatory strength in terms of specific strategies triggered off at each 'interactional circumstance' with a dynamic concept of situated meaning, that is to say, meaning as the product of context and negotiation. It has been shown that the speakers have a wide range of different strategies and substrategies to confront each 'interactional requirement'. Most importantly, however, it has been demonstrated that each of these strategic moves can be traced down to specific verbal realizations, and that it is possible to find certain linguistic regularities.

This is possibly where the relevance of the present research lies: through the concepts of 'interactional requirement' and 'strategy' we can incorporate into a systematic description of language use a notion of 'context' not as a fixed set of variables surrounding the production of speech, but as something which is being constantly recreated by the action of the participants in the interactions themselves.

9.3. A contrastive approach to discourse data

The contrastive analysis of different languages at the level of verbal interaction has always been hindered by the problem of the lack of clearly identifiable units which the analyst could use in order to establish the comparison. This is the reason why most of the attempts to analyse from a contrastive point of view sets of data belonging to different languages have concentrated on isolated speech acts, items with specific functions (e.g. discourse markers) or brief conversational routines¹.

Another shortcoming of this type of analysis is that it rarely provides a comprehensive account of the participants' verbal or non-verbal behaviour. In their attempt to explain verbal behaviour they only go as far up as to the level of strategy, without considering the fact that strategies must be defined in terms of the particular tasks or models that every socio-cultural group fixes for the different types of verbal interactions. This is precisely the kind of problem that the present study has tried to confront by postulating the concept of 'interactional requirement'.

1 See, for instance, Blum-Kulka, S. et al. (eds.) *Cross-cultural pragmatics. requests and apologies*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

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The inclusion of five Catalan speech events of the same type as the American ones has been intended to prove the fact that a contrastive analysis of verbal interactions can start at such an abstract level as that of the 'interactional requirement' and then proceed through the concept of strategy down to the actual linguistic manifestations of the participants.

The first step in any contrastive analysis of verbal interactions should be to see the different ways in which the 'interactional requirements' to which the participants orient their actions can be defined, depending on the type of speech event or the socio-cultural context of the interaction. It is also interesting to see how frequently in the course of the encounter they become more or less relevant to the participants' verbal actions. The next step should be to see the particular strategies which are used to meet those requirements. Finally, the analysis should concentrate on the systematic aspects of the linguistic realization of each of the strategies adopted. One could say, for example, that the 'interactional requirement' of Turn Taking should be defined differently if we establish a comparison between story-telling in English or Catalan and Yucatec Mayan. Whereas in English or Catalan this genre calls for a momentary suppression of the turn taking system, in Yucatec Mayan it requires the presence of a respondent or co-narrator who knows the story and whose speech ranges between simple affirmations to questions and comments on the speech of the narrator (Burns 1980).

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The first interesting aspect to be remarked after a contrastive analysis of the two groups of speech events is that there is a great number of common aspects between them. This is not, in fact, a surprising result if we consider that the 'academic subculture' in Western societies is quite uniform. The reason for this may be due to the higher frequency of contacts between members of this 'subculture' belonging to different societies (it is rarely the case in which a university professor has not spent some time in a foreign university). Another reason may be the object of scientific work itself: the search for universal explanations. This goal forces the scientist to abstract himself/herself from his/her own particular circumstances. In my opinion, this creates a tendency in the scientist to claim and display (verbally or non-verbally) a stronger connection with 'the academic subculture' than with other 'subcultures'.

Concentrating on the differential aspects of the twenty-five speech events which have been the object of analysis, we see that in the definition of the 'interactional requirement' of Imposition we need to bear in mind the fact that there appear no direct requests by the Student in the five Catalan encounters. This automatically precludes the presence of a strategy which is very frequent in the American encounters: *mitigating imposition in requests* (Imposition). Another aspect of the definition of the 'interactional requirement' of Imposition affects the strategies of *mitigating imposition in directions* and *acknowledging the addressee's negative face*. In connection with the former the

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substrategy *sharing of ideas* is generally absent from the directions given by the the Catalan Professor. With the latter strategy we find no corresponding substrategy in the Catalan encounters to the *request for permission* or the *apology* of the American encounters.

Another contrastive feature between the Catalan and the American speech events is connected with the definition of the 'interactional requirements' of Presentation of Self and Turn Taking. The different conception of the role of the Professor in Catalan universities, according to which he/she is a 'transmitter' of knowledge rather than an adviser in the process of intellectual growth justifies the high number of students per class and, as a consequence, the tendency to institutionalize the encounter and view the participants simply as representatives of a public role. This could explain the absence in the Catalan encounters of a strategy such as *showing personal attitudes and feelings* (Presentation of Self) or a substrategy like *attitudinal reaction* (Turn Taking). Another fact that confirms the different definition of the 'interactional requirement' of Presentation of Self is the frequent adoption of the strategy *depersonalizing* in the Catalan encounters.

Along the same line of reasoning, the different role of the university as a social institution justifies another aspect of the definition of the 'interactional requirement' of Goal. In the strategy *attending to the ritual* we find the substrategy

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self-introduction, which becomes necessary due to the agglomeration of students in each course as well as the infrequent visits to the Professor.

The same tendency to institutionalize the speech event and detach it from any shade of subjectivity in the five Catalan encounters can be observed in the definition of the 'interactional requirement' of Social Distance. This is the reason for the absence of strategies such as *using first name* (Social Distance).

The definitions of the 'interactional requirements' of Turn Taking and Human Constraint are also affected by the different conceptions of the role of the university. An idea which seems dominant in the Catalan context is that there is a clear gap in social distance and power between the Professor and the Student and that, therefore, the interaction does not allow for an equal contribution of information. This can be seen in the fact that the turns by the Catalan Student are clearly shorter than those by the American counterpart, and also in the different strategies adopted. Thus the absence of cooperation, and feedback in general, is compensated by the Catalan Professor with a more frequent use of the strategy *requesting feedback* (Turn Taking). Another aspect that proves the lack of interactivity in the Catalan encounters is the fact that there is no corresponding substrategy to that of *request for repair* (Human Constraint) which appears in the American encounters,

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and which is mainly adopted by the Student when he/she feels there is a problem in the transfer of information.

After this brief analysis of some contrastive aspects between the American and the Catalan speech events at the level of the definition of 'interactional requirements' in terms of the strategies they call for, the next step consists of pointing out the contrastive linguistic realizations of the different strategies and substrategies.

It should be said, however, that a complete contrastive analysis of the actual linguistic realizations of each strategy/substrategy would require not only an analysis of the way the same task is verbally carried out in the two different languages, but also a study of the frequency with which the item in question as well as its counterpart are used by the subjects belonging to the different socio-cultural groups.

The schematic summary included below is limited to the first aspect of a contrastive analysis: finding the characteristic realizations of a verbal strategy/substrategy in one group of encounters, for which there has not been found a clear equivalent in the other group.

Because of the clear difference in the amount of data collected, we cannot attempt to arrive at some general conclusions reflecting the verbal resources available in the two language. Rather, the contrastive analysis presented here is intended to suggest that thro. h the concept of 'interactional

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requirement' and 'strategy' it is possible to move from the more abstract levels of socio-cultural and rhetorical rules to the level of grammar.

PRESENTATION OF SELF

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Avoiding assertiveness/ non-factual meaning		(i) Question tag <i>no?</i> (ii) Verbal periphrasis (e.g. <i>intentar (de) + verb</i> ; <i>mirar de + verb</i>)
Displaying a positive self/emphasis on positive aspects	(i) Verb of internal state (1st pers sing)	

SOCIAL DISTANCE

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Appealing to the individual	(i) Interrogative clause	
Breaking formality different register	(i) Colloquial voc./exp (ii) Foreign voc./exp	(i) Vocative (<i>home</i> , <i>dona, noia</i>) (ii) Leave-taking (<i>venga</i>)
Denying social distance Agreement	(i) One-word turn (<i>right</i> , <i>yeah, sure</i>)	(i) One-word turn (<i>sí, clar, ja</i>)

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POWER

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Acknowledging authority/ Request for permission	(i) Question with <i>can/could</i>	(i) Question (ii) Question tag <i>no?</i>
Acknowledging authority/ Request for direction	(i) Questions with <i>should</i>	(i) Question tag <i>no?</i>
Acknowledging authority/ Honorifics		(i) <i>vostè</i>

IMPOSITION

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Mitigating imposition in directions/Transferring responsibility to the addressee	(i) <i>You want...</i>	

TURN TAKING

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Supplying feedback Agreement	(i) <i>yeah, no, right</i>	(i) <i>clar, ja</i>
Supplying feedback reception-acceptance	(i) <i>ok, alright, I see, I understand that</i>	(i) <i>d'acord, exacte, vale</i>
Supplying feedback/ Attitudinal reaction	(i) <i>really?</i> , question tag	(i) <i>si?</i>
Demanding feedback	(i) <i>ok?; you see?;</i> question tag (ii) <i>you know</i>	(i) <i>eh?; no?; mm?</i> (ii) rising intonation at the end of tone unit.

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Focusing of information	(i) <i>this/that</i> + copula + wh-pronoun (ii) <i>(you) see</i>	(i) Themmatization of verbal complement (ii) <i>si (que)</i>

GOAL

Strategy/Substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Attending to the ritual acknowledgement of imposition	(i) Apology (<i>sorry to take up your time</i>); request (<i>do you have a minute</i>),	
Attending to the ritual Closing	(i) <i>ok; alright</i>	(i) <i>molt bé; ja està, d'acord;</i> <i>vale</i>

LANGUAGE CONSTRAINT

Strategy/substrategy	Am. English	Catalan
Adjusting the literal meaning(Emphasis	(i) Adverbs (<i>just; really</i>) (ii) Verb <i>do</i>	(i) Re-ctition of monosyllabic token (<i>sí; ja; no</i>)

9.4. Developing the communicative approach to language teaching

One of the main problems with most of the published materials on communicative language teaching is the fact that although there seems to be a clear idea of the need for a

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socio-cultural and discourse orientation², there is never a demonstration of how the framework should be actually applied to describing and explaining real language use. Thus, one is often left with the feeling that a pedagogical model of communicative competence is always limited in scope and that it cannot fully account for the way language users activate their knowledge in particular instances of language behaviour.

The present research is an attempt to show that it is possible to develop a pedagogically oriented communicative approach to language teaching into a valid model for describing any instance of language use. The basis for this model is Hallidayan in that it considers language use as a set of semantic options that derive from the social structure.

The problem that is posed to the applied linguist is how to incorporate both, semantic options and social structure, into a model of language use. This, I find, is the main shortcoming of the communicative approaches to language teaching: whereas the concept of semantic options can be perfectly dealt with thanks to the advances of speech act theory, it has been found impossible to establish a clear connection between this level and the sociological structure. In order to solve this problem, I propose the concept of *interactional requirement* as a means of analysing how social structure translates into verbal behaviour.

2 Munby 1978; Canale 1980a, 1983

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In the same way as each *social requirement* is accomplished by the social member with a series of actions, each *interactional requirement* can be accomplished with a series of verbal actions, which I call *strategies*.

9.5. A suggestion for teaching activities

The final address of these conclusions is for the language educator and for all those professionals whose job is to make the teaching of languages an enjoyable and successful activity but also one which contributes to the full development of the individual. The point I want to make is that the kind of explanatory description of samples of real language use that has been suggested here can and should be implemented as a regular teaching activity.

The assertion made in the previous paragraph may arouse a feeling of scepticism on the part of those language educators who think that what this type of *ad hoc* description is doing is simply telling them what they already know. They are the same people who favour a more abstract view of reality in order that specific usage phenomena be explained in a more comprehensive way. To counter this argument Stubbs (1986: 60) provides a very straightforward answer:

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A general problem with much applied research is that it tells practitioners, in different words, what they know already, if only unconsciously. However, making explicit the principles of good teaching practice is precisely one important aim of applied discourse analysis. The systematic study of language in use provides for teaching, from lesson plans to whole syllabuses. Just as importantly, it provides a principled and explicit basis for work that is done by relating it to a coherent theory. This is what is meant by applied linguistics: theory which suggests and illuminates practice

The assumption underlying the whole of the present research has been the idea that in order for an individual to become a successful language learner he/she must be helped to become a little linguist, that is to say, a person who goes through each instance of everyday experience very much alert to the subtleties of verbal communication and to the role of these subtleties in order to achieve his/her aims and, ultimately, to construct the reality of social life. The language learner, therefore, must be conceived as potential 'fieldworker' who must be equipped with the necessary tools to define and analyze the reality to which he/she is constantly exposed. This process of becoming a 'fieldworker' requires a training which is necessarily based on the guided analysis of real language use in the classroom.

Perhaps the best way to start making a 'linguist' of the language learner is to begin with an awareness of the way he/she uses his/her native language in order to achieve certain goals. I am taking sides here with language educators like Zabalbeascoa (1990), who do not preclude the presence of the learner's native

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language in the classroom as a means of promoting understanding of the target language peculiarities.

I would like to finish by saying that it has been the underlying intention of this research to argue against any specific pedagogic technique or methodology which presents language (i) in a decontextualized way and (ii) as a system of inflexible rules associating on a one-to-one basis form with function/notion or *viceversa*. Furthermore, the exercise proposed is in accordance with two of the most important assumptions of language teaching methodologies: (i) exposure of the learner to real language use from the earliest possible stages; (ii) presentation of language through specific situations and with characters assuming their social role.

But efficient learning is not the only outcome of the teaching activity proposed. Whatever the success is, one conclusion will be reached by the learners: the way language is used is as much the result of knowledge of the linguistic code as the result of socio-cultural, sequential, psychological and physical constraints present in the situation where an individual enters into contact with other individuals. At a time when humanistic approaches in the school system are being reconsidered, when the role of education is split between that of 'guiding' the student to acquire knowledge by himself/herself and that of achieving a full development of the individual, at a time when cross-cultural contacts are unavoidable, the idea of

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introducing sociolinguistic and discourse-based descriptions of language in the classroom takes the teaching of languages beyond the realm of mere training and makes it truly educational.

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