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CORRECTION SEQUENCES IN CLASSROOM TALK

by

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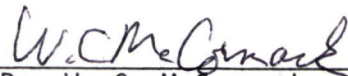
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the sequential organisation and internal structure of different correction sequences in classrooms. It demonstrates the social linguistic competence of participants in constructing these sequences, which are recognised as being typically associated with classroom talk. In addition it displays how a number of diverse interactional tasks such as, 'disambiguating', 'evaluating', 'challenging', and 'disputing' may be accomplished by the participants through such correction sequences. It is also possible through this examination of the interaction, to show how participants orient to the feature of the teacher being the authority figure in the classroom.

So as to achieve these tasks, the study begins with a consideration of a number of problems basic to any research into discourse, before deciding to embark on an 'applied' conversation analysis. This involves contrasting the corrections found in natural conversation with those found in classrooms. In order to perform this contrastive analysis, a modified version of the Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks model for corrections in natural conversation is utilised.

Systematic differences in the methods that teachers and pupils use to correct each other, enable us to warrantably assert that the teacher is in control of what counts as knowledge within the classroom, and is thus an authority figure.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A major aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the potential for mutual benefit that might accrue to both linguistics and sociology, by paying close attention to the phenomenon of naturally occurring conversation. Specifically, the study analyses in some detail a rather small but pervasive subset of classroom linguistic phenomena, namely corrections. Its major linguistic goal is to describe the structure and organisation of how corrections are managed in the classroom. In this respect it can be seen to be following the spirit, but not the actual methodology, of the linguistic pioneers in discourse analysis, Sinclair and Coulthard, whose avowed interests are "in the function of utterances and the structure of discourse" (1975: 3-4). The study also pursues a number of questions similar to theirs, such as: "what function does a given utterance have—is it a statement, question, command, or response—and how do the participants know; what type of utterance can appropriately follow what" (1975:1).

The study's appeal to sociologists rests upon two comparatively recent realisations: firstly, that it is primarily through language that people maintain and create their social world and, secondly, that their 'sociological' concepts are essentially rooted in and informed by their commonsense competence as members of the speech community. Typical sociological concerns such as 'control'

and 'authority' are now to be investigated to see where these are displayed and made visible through talk. As Edwards says of the classroom, "the teacher has authority insofar as the pupils address him and respond to him as though he is indeed in charge" (1980:239). Through detailed analyses of classroom talk this study aims to provide a warrant¹ for the specific claim that teachers can be seen to have control of what counts as knowledge, as well as its distribution in the classroom. This claim (along with others which can only be alluded to in this study) provides empirical grounds for the intuitive belief, held by sociologists and lay members alike, that normally teachers are authority figures in the classroom.

Linguistics has traditionally been concerned with the structure of language and has until recently paid scant attention to the structure of language in use. Although syntax has been involved with the analysis of speakers' linguistic competence, syntacticians have not been concerned with how speakers use such competence in a social setting to produce coherent discourse. This study is addressed to the analysis of how speakers demonstrate their language competence in actual performance in order to produce conversation. In attempting to outline a competence that goes beyond the limits of the sentence and which provides an analysis of how two or more people communicate, this study involves much more than an analysis of the production of grammatical utterances (in fact the work is premised on that ability). Participants must also understand prior utterances and then fit sequentially appropriate replies into the ongoing talk.

This last point which stresses the communicative character of language leads to a number of problems largely irrelevant to the syntacticians' description of peoples' linguistic competence. Because discourse is primarily communication between people, occurring within temporal parameters, problems of meaning, understanding and intelligibility are of continual importance to participants. As recent philosophical studies have pointed out, the meaning which one intends when speaking an utterance, cannot be guaranteed to be the meaning which another receives as an addressee. This essential indexicality² of talk leads the investigation into serious considerations of how people can produce conversation. As Wootton has remarked:

On the one hand, the meaning of words and utterances is indexical, bound up with and occasioned by the particular contexts in which words are uttered . . . Yet on the other side of the paradox we have the fact that talk is experienced by participants as an ordered phenomenon. (1975:59)

Much of this study will be concerned with the empirical ramifications of this problem.

We will begin with a discussion of some basic and rather fundamental problems of research into discourse, and outline how they have resisted linguistic attempts at their resolution. The choice of research rationale that remains is either to construct an analytic framework which might arbitrarily decide on answers to these problems, or to investigate seriously the latter half of Wootton's comments: how is it that participants hear talk as an ordered phenomenon? How do they come to understand and produce conversation? The study thus chooses to employ an ethnomethodological conversation analysis³ in order to show the intricacies of talk as a members' (and conversa-

tionalists') practical accomplishment. This rather novel approach to such traditional problems enables substantive research to be confidently undertaken.

The two major and related foci on which this research will concentrate are the following:

- (a) the sequential organisation of talk
- (b) the internal design of utterances within the talk, and how this affects the sequential organisation.

Briefly stated it aims to study how utterances combine to form orderly conversation (i.e., (a) above) and also how, via the design⁴ of these utterances, a wide range of other interactional tasks might be managed. To take a simple example: upon the production of a request in conversation, (e.g., 'Do you have a pencil I could borrow?') one might expect that sequentially the addressee would reply with either an acceptance (of sorts) or a rejection (of sorts). Moreover, the internal designs of such acceptances or rejections may in themselves be of great interest. For if that request was to be rejected by a simple utterance (e.g., 'No'), rather than a more elaborate reply, (e.g., 'I'm sorry, I only have a pen.') then from this, hearers and analysts are able to make inferences about matters of wider concern, such as the participants' moods, their relationship, etc.

Chapters three, four and five comprise the empirical research. They show teachers' and pupils' mastery of their language in terms of how corrections are managed. This is based on the work of Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) who studied corrections in natural conversation. The research shows how teachers and pupils manage a number

of subtle and complex interactional tasks via such correction sequences. Members'⁵ tasks such as 'evaluating', 'challenging' and 'disambiguating' may all be accomplished through such sequences. The second aim alluded to earlier is to demonstrate a more sociological concern, namely that of how members can claim that the talk displays an orientation to the teacher as being in control of the distribution of knowledge.

These tasks are achieved by examining and comparing the correction sequences found in natural conversation and in classrooms. By showing the differences in these environments, one can rigorously demonstrate that teachers and pupils orient to an unequal distribution of participation rights and claims to knowledge.

Chapter three outlines the Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks model for how corrections are performed in natural conversation. This will provide the basis for the comparison with classroom corrections. Unfortunately, the model is found to be inadequate for it does not account adequately for its own data. A number of modifications are introduced in order to align the categories of corrections within this model more closely with members' typifications of them. Chapters four and five concentrate on corrections in classrooms. Chapter four is concerned with similarities between the natural conversation model and that of classrooms (mainly in terms of self-initiated correction). As well, it investigates in detail differences with respect to the teacher as corrector. The final part of the chapter is devoted to a comparison of corrections in verbal teaching sequences and in oral reading sequences. Chapter five concentrates on how pupils correct

teachers and other pupils. The different ways in which pupils manage these two phenomena also help to substantiate the claim that the teacher is an authority figure. Chapter six concludes the discussion by summarizing the research and outlining a number of implications which the study may have.

1.1 Methodology

The data for this study were gathered in December 1980 and January 1981, from a junior high school in Calgary, where permission had been obtained to videotape a number of classes. The school contained pupils of mixed ethnic origin and grades eight and nine were primarily recorded. The single teacher under observation⁶ taught a number of different subjects and classes, predominantly science, although math and religion lessons were also taped. Eleven hours of classroom lessons were recorded. It was decided on practical and theoretical grounds that only six hours of taping would comprise the data sample. Limits of time, audibility and lack of interaction precluded the use of a number of lessons, while the theoretical decision to study teaching sequences, rather than 'discussion', 'group work', or 'test' sequences, eliminated another sample.

The camera was usually situated at the back of the room in one corner, behind the pupils, with one microphone hanging from the centre of the room. The camera was left unattended for most of the time, being focused on a point approximately in the middle of the room, and usually incorporating about half or more of the pupils as well as the teacher (class size ranged from 10 to 27 pupils). This

procedure was utilised so as to counter any tendency to focus primarily on the teacher.

As it was only possible to use one microphone with the type of video recorder available, a Betamax portapak, this led to a number of problems in the compilation of accurate transcriptions. The teacher's talk proved to be far less difficult to retrieve than that of the pupils. However, it is felt (and the reader will be able to agree or disagree on this because the data are made available throughout the study) that these problems have not seriously impaired the analysis. After the data were collected, they were re-recorded onto audio tapes in order to facilitate transcription.

The analysis itself consisted of the careful scrutiny and examination of the tapes in order to retrieve those sequences which could intuitively be heard as corrections. The member's competence of the author was used as a resource to be able to identify such sequences. These were then transcribed along with the surrounding contextual conversation. The method of transcription used was one common to much of discourse analysis, whereby predominantly conventional English spelling is used with a few modifications. As the analysis was primarily of verbal interaction between teacher and pupils, the audio tapes were most closely attended to in order to identify the correction sequences. The video tapes helped to retrieve pupils' names and activities unavailable from the audio tape.

This type of analysis has become increasingly used in the last ten years and its actual methodology is relatively well documented.⁷

For a recent discussion Atkinson and Drew (1979:Ch.7) provide a thorough exploration of the various methodological issues involved.

FOOTNOTES

¹This term appears frequently in this study and is carefully chosen for several reasons. Essentially it refers to the grounds upon which any claim can be made. As this thesis is concerned with examining possible rather than definite claims, the use of the term 'warrant' aims to highlight the nature of that task. Much of chapter two will be taken up with establishing that warrantable claims rather than definitive proofs are all that can be achieved in discourse analysis.

²The concept of indexicality was first introduced by the philosopher Bar-Hillel (1954). It refers to the "contextual nature of objects and events. That is to say, without a supplied context, objects and events have equivocal or multiple meanings." (Leiter 1980:107). Talk is a prime example of such indexicality and leads to a number of problems for the analysis of discourse. Indexicality will be further discussed in chapter two.

³The term 'conversation analysis' is used to refer to a type of analysis which grew out of the sociological enterprise of ethnomethodology. The term 'discourse analysis' has tended to be associated with linguists working in this field of social interaction. However these labels are not rigidly adhered to by any of the protagonists. For the purposes of this study, although we are adopting a conversation analysis technique, we will not feel restricted in calling the talk in classrooms 'conversation' rather than 'discourse.'

⁴The term 'design' is used in a technical sense here to refer to the structural components and internal form of any utterance. It is not used to imply some psychological intentionalism, but rather to highlight the fact that these different utterance designs may have different sequential structures and consequences within the conversation.

⁵The concept of member generally refers to any socially competent member of a particular society. Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) formulate it thus: "We do not use the term to refer to a person. It refers instead to mastery of natural language, which we understand in the following way. We offer the observation that persons, because of the fact that they are heard to be speaking a natural language, somehow are heard to be engaged in the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge of everyday activities as observable and reportable phenomena." (1970:342).

⁶Although conventional researchers might balk at the prospect of investigating one teacher only, there is a very definite rationale to this choice. This study is not interested in furnishing an account of how a particular teacher conducted classroom corrections. Instead it attempts to demonstrate how we as hearers (or readers) could make sense of such correction sequences as being possibly those of a teacher and his pupils.

⁷For a reasonably explicit description of the actual research methodology, see Mehan (1979) chapter one.

Chapter 2

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This study takes as its phenomenon of concern naturally occurring talk. It reflects a trend current in both linguistics and sociology towards a naturalistic study of language in its social context.¹

Fundamentally conversation can be viewed as having two concurrent, overarching problems. Firstly there is the problem of how people in their talk understand each other. Secondly exists the problem of how people through their talk produce speech which is recognisable as being coherent and appropriate conversation. These are, of course, two interrelated problems and keeping them separate is largely an artifact of the analytical procedure. For if people are to produce coherent intelligible conversation they must be understanding the talk, at least to some degree. In the bulk of this study the latter task, that of the sequential organisation and production of talk will be emphasized. As this rests on the guarantee of some level of understanding, however, it is necessary and essential that a consideration of the latter not be obscured in the analysis. One aim of this chapter is to show how this concern may be included and recognised within the overall analysis of discourse.

The main intention is to establish the basic groundwork and analytic rationale for the research which is actively reported in

the main body of the study. In order to do this the following strategy will be utilised. Firstly a number of basic problems of discourse will be demonstrated, these are bound up with the views of several recent language philosophers, namely Bar-Hillel, Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle. In addition, linguistic counterpoints to these views will be reviewed to exemplify the difficulties they face in trying to resolve such problems.

The second part of the chapter will concentrate on discussing and demonstrating how ethnomethodology/conversation analysis is able to handle such difficulties. Essentially this is achieved through shifting the analytic focus from the question: 'What is this conversation really about?' to: 'How do people make some sense of this conversation?'. This important difference in orientation allows many of these problematic aspects of discourse to be satisfactorily handled.

2.1 Basic Problems

Although Bar-Hillel (1954) first indicated that the meaning of language is intricately tied up with the context in which it occurs, Garfinkel (1967) extended the term's application so as to claim that all speech is essentially ambiguous, unless hearers can resort to extra-linguistic, pragmatic and contextual considerations to disambiguate. Such indexicality is claimed to permeate all our talk. For example, the following sentence is potentially ambiguous in at least two ways:

I've lost the key.

Here the speaker may be a person who needs to unlock a door or one who is about to start marking a pile of exam papers. Routinely hearers accomplish an understanding of this and decide, on the basis of a number of criteria, which is the 'correct' reading. Unfortunately this cannot guarantee success, for people frequently misunderstand each other. Such indexicality does not just rely on the two meanings of the word 'key'. For instance, it might also be used as a remark of frustration by someone attempting to play the piano. In other words indexicality refers not only to the ambiguity of individual words but the ambiguity of utterances within talk in general.

Heap (1975) points out that usually indexicality is only a hearer's problem.² In other words, an utterance at the time of production is nonindexical for a speaker. But, most fundamentally, it is impossible for any hearer to be certain of the utterance's intention. Of course a hearer can make good inferences about what was meant (he can even dispute it), but he cannot conventionally prove that he actually knew what the speaker meant. Although the study of nonindexical meaning is possible, Heap says that "it would be limited . . . to the study of the analyst's own immediate action" (1975:401). Because of this, its potential applicability and generalisability is limited, and so is of little direct interest to this and similar studies. What this indexical/nonindexical dichotomy does is to illuminate possible sources of confusion for analysts in the interpretation of language in context. Because speech is nonindexical for a speaker, it requires a conscious effort to align oneself with the fact that it is eminently indexical for an observer.

Wittgenstein (1953) has gone further than Bar-Hillel in talking about ordinary language and claims that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (1953:20e). In his famous example from Philosophical Investigations (1953) he attacks the essentialist view of language³ arguing that the word 'games' is not bound by some common essence (gameness?) but that "we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail" (1953:32e). Some games will be like others, while others will have no affinity. "I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than family resemblances; for the various resemblances between various members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way."⁴ (1953:32e).

Wittgenstein is claiming here that it is fundamental that we see how words are used in ordinary language to understand their meaning. For although ordinary members may have little difficulty in knowing how to use the term 'game', when we, as analysts, try to specify and define what a game is, without investigating the situated contexts in which the word appears (i.e., its use in ordinary speech) then we run into the sorts of problems that Wittgenstein is concerned with.

These rather radical views have, not surprisingly, been faulted by conventional linguists working within the transformational-generative model. Katz (1966) suggested that linguistic understanding was primarily a process of 'decoding' a person's words into corresponding ideas or thoughts. Although he accepted Wittgenstein's comments on the nature of games, he argued that there exist certain

words for which one can provide unique defining conditions. He cites the example of 'brother' which is defined as a person who is "a male sibling of another" (1966:73). But as Coulter rightly points out, "Clearly there are homonymic uses of 'brother' which defy that assertion (such as the occurrence of the term in monastic discourse, strike picket lines, in exclamations and so on)" (1973:176). In his theory of generative semantics Katz attempted to specify certain constituent features of linguistic terms via the use of semantic markers. The term 'bachelor' thus would be comprised of features such as 'physical object', 'living', as well as possible features such as 'male', 'seal' or 'knight'. Although this seems to capture a number of uses of 'bachelor' it does not exhaust them. The English newspaper 'The Sun' regularly describes its pin-up girls as 'bachelor girls'!

What Katz and others working in the transformational-generative mould seem to be attempting is to construct a lexicon which has the power to disambiguate. Unfortunately speakers regularly use words with the intention of being ambiguous (e.g., double entendres, puns, double-duty utterances⁵). Katz's model essentially appears to want to abstract from members' linguistic competence rather than to describe the intricacies of that competence.

In contrast, another linguist, J. D. Fodor, sees certain similarities between the theory of meaning as use in the Wittgensteinian tradition and that of generative linguistics. She claims: "The theory of meaning as use is usually cast in terms of rules which determine the standard or conventional use of expressions . . . So the rules for use approach to meaning promises to

integrate naturally with the linguist's approach to language description." (1977:19).

This type of approach is commonly used in many sociolinguistic studies, where certain usages are related to appropriate contexts by a system of rules. Examples of this include Ervin-Tripp's formalisation of Friedrich's (1972) study of Russian pronominal usage among the nineteenth-century Russian gentry (1972) and Fraake's componential analysis of disease terms among the Subanun (1961). This leads to a second problem found within discourse studies; the possibility of constructing a rule-governed theory of language use. This whole problem of the status of rules within social interaction is a rather confusing one and is only marginally discussed in the sociolinguistic literature. Despite this apparent lack of concern it deserves careful discussion.

Although Fodor cites Wittgenstein as being a main proponent of the 'meaning as use' perspective, it is essential here to note that Wittgenstein's views on rules of language are in sharp contrast to the ones expressed in the sociolinguistic studies cited above. Let us examine the possibilities of a Use Theory of Meaning cast in terms of rules: firstly with reference to Wittgenstein, and secondly with the sociolinguistic approach in general.

This conception of a theory of meaning as use rests apparently on an implicit assumption that one could provide rules which would delimit how to use such words. Wittgenstein (1953) makes a number of forceful arguments against the possibility of doing this. His main point is to question whether or not rules can account for all

instances of a word:

I say "There is a chair". What if I go up to it, meaning to fetch it, and it suddenly disappears from sight?—"So it wasn't a chair, but some kind of illusion".—But in a few moments we see it again and are able to touch it and so on.—"So the chair was there after all and its disappearance was some kind of illusion".—But suppose that after a time it disappears again—or seems to disappear. What are we to say now? Have you rules ready for such cases—rules saying whether one may use the word "chair" to include this kind of thing? But do we miss them when we use the word "chair"; and are we to say that we do not really attach any meaning to this word, because we are not equipped with rules for every possible application of it.
(1953:38e)

Because of this inability for rules to govern linguistic behaviour, Wittgenstein compares them to signposts. Signposts too cannot force one into going a certain way: "a person goes by a signpost only in so far as there exists a regular use of signposts, a custom" (1953:80e). Wittgenstein's point here is that rules cannot guarantee behaviour; the meaning of words rests instead on our customary usage.

Many sociolinguistic studies, although making wide use of the concept of rules, appear to pay insufficient attention to these problems outlined by Wittgenstein. His arguments thus lead to a certain amount of potential confusion within sociolinguistics. In order to exemplify this, let us take as our example, the model for alternation rules provided by Ervin-Tripp (1972) based on Friedrich (1972). This attempted to account for the use in Nineteenth Century Russian, of the personal pronouns ty (T) and vy (V) in terms of a number of contextual features. For example according to the model: a member of the Russian gentry speaking to a child under twelve years old would use T (1972:226).

Let us examine these rules more closely in the light of Wittgenstein's argument. Firstly we might want to know how well such rules account for the data. Could we, as Russian speakers in the nineteenth century, use such rules to converse appropriately? Friedrich points out that in many examples, these address terms are subject to 'switching'—T may be used for V and vice versa. Now although such occurrences weaken the Ervin-Tripp formalisation of these rules, one might still think it possible to incorporate such switching procedures into a rule framework. Friedrich seems to implicitly recognise this. For example, he discusses the switching from V to T by an old military captain to a young aristocratic lieutenant, and accounts for it in terms of their enforced comradeship developed at an isolated outpost in the Caucasus.

However, even with the possibility of switching included in the rule system, this will still not be able to predict, on actual occasions of use, which term will be used, it cannot guarantee the linguistic behaviour. For instance, if on a particular occasion, the old captain decided to try and assert his authority, he might choose to use V rather than T. The argument being presented here is that the strict application of a rule cannot account for all observable behaviour. A rule's application cannot be determined by the rule itself, by matching the instructions of the rule with some features of the setting (e.g., $\pm$ comradeship) such that a certain result, V rather than T will ensue. For such rule use depends on members' ad-hoc reasoning about the way they use language. People's knowledge of rules is not a literal, mechanistic affair, for it depends on their

practical interests concerning the events and situations they are in.

This argument leads us to see rules in a different vein. They appear instead to be methods which people use as aids in coming to decisions about language use; such that people are able to decide whether or not to use a certain rule on a certain occasion. Rules then do not appear to be determinants or causes of behaviour, but more closely resemble accounts which people (and analysts) might give so as to make sense of a certain systematicity in a particular behaviour.

Another interlinked problem which many sociolinguistic studies seem to exhibit is that they tend to obscure much of the subtlety displayed by participants in their interaction. Wootton (1975) discusses this problem with regard to the T and V alternations discussed above. He argues that "in many contexts the conventions will hold, while in other contexts the use of (T) or (V) will enable participants themselves to make inferences about the nature of the context, a person's intention or whatever" (1975:46). Perhaps a more familiar example might be, if we were normally to be addressed by our colleagues on a first name basis, to be suddenly addressed by our surname. For in such examples we might hear this as constituting perhaps a snub, or some type of hostility. It is important here to emphasize that Wootton is not proposing that people do not have some conventions about the different ways in which they address others. In fact Wootton sees this ability to describe conventional usage as being one of the benefits of sociolinguistic studies. However he finds fault with them mainly on two grounds.

- (a) Meaning is likely to be added by an unconventional use of these address forms.
- (b) The kind of meaning which (a) above introduces is not likely to be resolved by alternation rules, such as Ervin-Tripp's.

It is through such unconventional uses of these terms ('switching' in Friedrich's terms) that much of the delicacy of interaction is carried out. In this light much sociolinguistic work can be seen as providing useful taxonomies of conventional usages. Where it does attempt to incorporate aspects of switching, as in the example from Friedrich's paper above, the analysis, although very useful and informative is conducted at an informal and stylistic level of discussion, seeming to rely heavily on the analyst's common sense reasoning for why such switching should occur without making explicit the actual properties of that reasoning. These views of Wittgenstein, Wootton and Coulter cause us to take seriously the ways in which people use language, and the meanings which they give to it.

To date, our main concern has been with how people understand language. Let us now shift the emphasis slightly and talk about what people do with language. Austin (1962) made the important distinction that not only can people describe with words, but that they can also do things with them. He separates analytically the locutionary and illocutionary forces of any utterance. So that, for example, 'Shoot the dog.' has a locutionary force which is concerned with the meaning bound up with notions of 'dog', 'shoot', etc. It also has an illocutionary force, this is what the utterance does; here it is a command.

Other examples of illocutionary acts include the following: betting, bequeathing, promising, marrying. These are all done primarily through verbal means. Not only can we accept Austin's claim that people do things with words, but it is significant that they can appropriately recognise these illocutionary acts. For example, the word 'hello' may conventionally be used as a greeting, such that most hearers will recognise it as accomplishing a 'greeting'. However when a 'hello' is inserted into the middle of a telephone conversation, after some interference on the line, then people routinely treat it as a form of query implying: 'Are you still there?' It is this ability to differentiate the illocutionary forces of utterances that forms a basic plank in the discourse analysis that will be subsequently studied. Such illocutionary acts may be couched in various syntactic forms, for example, 'Can you play the piano?' may have two possible forces at least, one as a request for information the other as an invitation to play. A considerable part of our interactional skill as speakers rests on being able to overcome such indexicality and recognise these utterance types.

Searle, a student of Austin's, attempted to be more precise in the analysis of illocutionary acts. He took as his task the production of a set of rules which would guarantee that utterances are heard as having their 'correct' illocutionary force. In this respect he attempted to give constitutive rules for the illocutionary act of promising. For instance, one of the conditions that Searle gives is the following:

Given that a speaker S utters a sentence T in the presence of a hearer H, then, in the literal utterance of T, S sincerely and non-defectively promises that p to H if and only if the following conditions 1-9 obtain:

1. Normal input and output conditions obtain.

I use the terms "input" and "output" to cover the large and indefinite range of conditions under which any kind of serious and literal linguistic communication is possible . . . I contrast "serious" utterances with play acting, teaching a language, reciting poems, practicing pronunciation, etc., and I contrast "literal" with metaphorical, sarcastic, etc.

(1969:57)

Again we find problems in knowing how to apply these rules. In certain situations it may be problematic whether or not a promise was made sarcastically or in jest. Thus, more rules might be needed in order to specify how we differentiate between seriousness and jest. Although only one of Searle's conditions is illustrated here, many of his others display similar difficulties in application, thus exhibiting affinities with Wittgenstein's point, made earlier, concerning the impossibility of formulating rules which can account for all their possible applications. It is apparent even from this short discussion that Searle has produced an analysis of how to produce such utterances from a (nonindexical) speaker's point of view. Therefore, the level at which Searle's analysis might work is that of a subjective introspective analysis of what it is that I do when I promise. As demonstrated, this is very different from the position of a listener who has to interpret unambiguously an utterance as being a promise.

In conclusion, we merely want to reiterate these two basic problems raised for any approach to discourse analysis. Indexicality, in terms of the contextual meaning of language, is always present in natural conversation and it is the interactants' task to come to

some sense of the talk. We have also seen that attempts to propose a rule-based theory of language use suffer because of certain difficulties with the analytic use of the word 'rule' itself. Wittgenstein alerted us to the difference between knowing a rule and using a rule. This point led to a different conceptualisation of rules. They are seen not as mechanisms which govern linguistic behaviour, instead they are interpretive devices used by members and analysts to make sense of that behaviour.

This concern with indexicality and rules will implicitly and explicitly underpin much of the empirical research undertaken in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Ethnomethodology/Conversation Analysis

In order to understand the present status of ethnomethodology/conversation analysis it is necessary to trace in some part its intellectual development. Garfinkel (1967) first coined the term ethnomethodology to convey its preoccupation with members' (i.e., lay peoples') methods of sense-making. It emerged primarily as a critique of conventional sociology, for it claimed that in proposing theories of sociological explanation, sociologists were invariably trading on their common-sense knowledge of what they were explaining. To exemplify this, let us take a simple example. The following extract of a classroom lesson comes from Ball (1980):

The stage of testing out through playing up the teachers is evident in the following observation notes collected in an early lesson of a new school year involving a religious studies teacher and a third year band two class. The class arrives in groups of four or five over a two or three minute period. The teacher is already in the class and standing at the front of the class with

arms crossed. She is pointedly waiting for the class to arrive and to pay attention.

Teacher: 'Your're taking a long time to settle down.'

(This descriptive comment is clearly intended to reduce the volume of the noise being made by the pupils, and to indicate that the teacher wants their attention. This is the function of the teacher's talk here.)

(1980:147)

In this example from a sociological paper, we can see many of the problems inherent within the conventional sociology which ethnomethodology criticises. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, is the example of the sociologist's commonsense reasoning. Ball appears to be informing us that the illocutionary force of the given utterance is to reduce noise and to get attention. However it is unstated how such an illocutionary force is related to the utterance in question, (which by its syntactic form is a statement). He appears to be trading on his lay-person's common sense. He can hear the utterance as being intended to reduce noise, therefore that is its function. In contrast, it is not being asserted that one can't hear this utterance in this way, but merely that from our prior discussion of indexicality and speech acts, it need not necessarily have been intended as that (or heard as that by the pupils). Not only is this analyst using his commonsense knowledge of language use, but he is attempting to give us a 'privileged version' of that interaction. Such a privileged version consists of the replacing of a number of potentially competing versions of what is happening (because of the indexicality of talk) by the one authoritative version given by the researcher. Privileged versions have traditionally been the domain of anthropologists and symbolic interactionists where, because the researcher has

become an 'insider' in the group studied, he claims to know what was really meant in the conversation. Other experts (e.g., psychoanalysts, social psychologists) also claim to be able to give authoritative versions of what any talk really means, although their claims for this are informed by other theoretical motives. In our example not only does this researcher ignore the fact that this utterance may be variously interpreted, but he does not consider why his version should be accepted as definitive rather than as merely another alternative.

A third point to be derived from the example above, which informs much ethnomethodological work, is to demonstrate that what is here being used as a resource for enquiry, namely 'anyman's' ability to commonsensically recognise the utterance as achieving what Ball proposed, is also capable of being made the topic of enquiry. So that one might investigate how people can recognise that what is superficially a statement can possibly have the illocutionary force of 'reducing noise, gaining attention'.

Making commonsense facts a topic of enquiry is the essence of ethnomethodology. It studies how members describe their world so as to constitute it as a fact, for that in itself is not given but stands as a practical accomplishment routinely carried out by members. In our example Ball has treated his description as a social fact. The explication of the methods whereby such a task is possible might readily be taken by some ethnomethodologists as a topic of enquiry. Perhaps a word is in order here about the use of the term 'explicate'. As noticed in Ball's paper, analysts and members alike, use their

'social competence' to be able to hear an utterance X having an illocutionary force Y. In contrast, an ethnomethodologist's task is not to leave that tacit, but to uncover and make apparent—i.e., to explicate—the methods by which people can make a connection between X and Y. Turner summarises this as follows:

The sociologist inevitably trades on his members' knowledge in recognising the activities that participants to interaction are engaged in; for example, it is by virtue of my status as a competent member that I can recurrently locate in my transcripts instances of 'the same' activity. This is not to claim that members are infallible or that there is perfect agreement in recognising any and every instance; it is only to claim that no resolution of problematic cases can be effected by resorting to procedures that are supposedly uncontaminated by members' knowledge.

(1974b:204-5)

The last half of Turner's assertion also deserves attention. For he is saying that members may routinely disagree about what an utterance meant. Perhaps law courts, arguments and interrogations readily furnish examples of such types of behaviour. More importantly, he is claiming that even attempts at privileged versions, either given by theorists (linguists, sociologists) or members (judges, neutral friends) still need to trade on their members' competence in deciding upon the correct intention. Ethnomethodology (and conversation analysis) can thus only deal with possible hearing of utterances. It is impossible to postulate that the only interpretation of utterance X was Y.

Although the ethnomethodologist can describe the commonsense world at one level, simply because he is a member of it, he is required to treat that factual world as an accomplishment. By working under the analytic injunction to see the world as problematic rather than

obvious, he is able to describe how such obviousness is maintained.

As Turner claims:

At every step of the way, inevitably, the sociologist will continue to employ his socialised competence, while continuing to make explicit what these resources are and how he employs them. I see no alternative to these procedures, except to pay no explicit attention to one's socialised knowledge while continuing to use it as an indispensable aid.

(1974b:205)

Conversation analysis originally developed out of these guiding ethnomethodological tenets as a practical way of doing substantive research. In contrast, much of the early ethnomethodological work had been ethnographic in character, concentrating on contextualising the indexicality of talk in social situations. By introducing the study of transcripts of interaction not only did one become able to reproduce the data and make it available to the reader (which in itself was something rather novel for sociological research) but also one could achieve more detailed studies of the actual structure of conversation.

Fundamentally talk is seen as sequentially organized. Turns at talk follow one another, with one utterance tying in with the prior one. Talk is handled on the spot, by the participants, on an utterance by utterance basis. Following from this and inspired by the original work of Sacks, comes the notion of the Adjacency Pair.⁶ The latter attempts to account for the coherency manifested in the production of talk. Sacks claims that routinely, if an utterance is heard as one of a certain type, then there is an expectation that another particular utterance will follow. Some of the pairs which have been identified are Question-Answer, Greeting-Greeting and Invitation-Acceptance. Such pairs inform hearers to produce, on recognition of a certain

utterance type (e.g., a question), something which can be heard as an answer. This can then be oriented to by both participants to ensure that at least a minimal understanding is being maintained within the conversation. For instance in the following example, B shows that her utterance by its design can be heard as an acceptance rather than a mere factual answer:

A: Would you like to go to the movies?

B: I'd love to, thanks a lot..

This demonstrates that B understood A's original utterance as an invitation rather than a yes-no question. Now it seems, at least at an analytic level, that A's utterance is potentially ambiguous; it might be hearable as a question or as an invitation. However by B's reply, she demonstrates her understanding of it as an invitation, which simultaneously makes available to A, that interpretation. So if B has misunderstood A, then at least A will know this and be able, if needed, to embark on some clarifying work. Through this example, we can see members' practical methods of combatting indexicality. A member's next utterance glosses⁷ his understanding of the prior utterance. People thus exhibit their understanding of the illocutionary force of a prior utterance. The routine presence of misunderstandings in conversation should alert us to the claim that decisions on the illocutionary force of any utterance are the product of a member's reasoning about such an utterance, rather than the mechanistic application of constitutive rules, as Searle, for one, seems to suggest.⁸

Not only do adjacency pairs help interactants systematically understand talk, but because of the conditional relevancies that they

set up, they are amenable to other types of investigation. Adjacency pairs are composed of two parts: a first pair part and a second pair part. The hearing of a first pair part makes conditionally relevant the production of the appropriate second pair part, such that the absence of the appropriate second pair part in the next slot is an important and noticeable event. It is important in this sense: if a relevant next is not forthcoming, and as an example we can take the absence of a return-greeting after the production of a first one, then this may set up enquiries⁹ into such an absence. Such enquiries may lead to certain inferences, motivations or intentions being levelled at either interactant. The absence of a return greeting may be inferable as someone being unfriendly, or conversely that the original greeter was being over friendly. Such inferences do not prove unfriendliness but they are routine ways in which people can build 'character profiles' about the people that they interact with. It is here that we can see the obvious sociological implications that such talk might have for participants and analysts. It is through an orientation to such subtle uses of the conversational machinery that we are able to make delicate judgments about the nature of that talk, or the participants involved in it.

What Sacks seems to be doing via these adjacency pairs is setting up some type of relevancy framework in the sense that certain utterances deserve certain replies. If they do not appear, or are replaced by different elements, then that is an inferentially rich affair. They also have a quasi-rule-like character. This ties in with an ethnomethodological characterisation of rules. Ethnomethod-

ologists consider rules as interpretive devices, and treat members, not as being rule governed, but as users of such devices. Rules are seen not as causal agents but as members' methods for making sense of the world.¹⁰ Noticeable absences for instance, are not seen as deviations from an internalised norm, specified by some rule. Instead they function to allow others to interpret that talk so as to be capable of making inferences of people's character, intentions, etc., where ultimately such inferences are only derivable from peoples' talk.

Let us pursue this last point in more detail, for it has a number of far-reaching implications. By listening to talk, people routinely formulate that context-dependent talk as having a particular characteristic. Such a property may then become for members an objective property of another person. But that objectivity is only warranted through the descriptions of the same (or similar) contexted activities. As well, such properties may become commonsense objective warrants, in that these certain properties cause or explain certain activities. For example people may invoke the property of 'unfriendliness' to explain why somebody did not return a greeting, but where the objective warrant for such unfriendliness has come about solely from the observation of similar pieces of talk, which are describable¹¹ as 'unfriendly'.

This is the major feature of the reflexive¹² property of commonsense knowledge.

Members may occasion [i.e., 'bring to bear'] their already-constituted knowledge of typical patterns and of social structures in order to document or decide what is happening

in a particular setting. But events whose character is thus documented may then be taken as evidence that such social structures exist and that the event is a product of those structures.

(Atkinson and Drew 1979:126)

This reflexive character of commonsense knowledge is always present and informs both lay conceptions of the world and a number of conventional sociological views. For, presumably, the ability of Ball to recognise certain talk as 'playing up the teacher' (1980:147) rested on his having observed similar behaviour before which has now been transformed into the reason why the children should produce such talk.

Much of conversation analysts' recent work has been concerned with the production rather than the comprehension aspect of talk,¹³ and an example of such an analysis will be given in the next section. Nevertheless, some work is being done more explicitly on the procedures that are used to understand talk. Such work concentrates on examining the internal components of individual utterances and illustrating the shared cultural resources that members must use in order to make adequate sense of an utterance. Again the seminal work in this area came from Sacks. He introduced the notion of 'membership categorisation devices'¹⁴ in order to show how members could accomplish 'describing' (without irony or humour), by employing terms from certain cultural categories.

In the following example:

The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.

Sacks claims that routinely 'mommy' will be heard as being the mother of the baby (although the sentences do not explicitly tell us this),

because we invoke the membership categorisation device of family, whose incumbents include, among others, mommy and baby. One of the claims about such devices is that through them adequate reference can be given to any descriptor, by choosing descriptive terms which are especially relevant on those occasions. This might explain why the above description would be used rather than the one below.

The protestant cried. The mommy picked it up.

Although it still may be true that the protestant in question was also a baby!

Through our discussion we have seen how ethnomethodology tackles the two problems of understanding and production of conversation in a way which appears to take heed of the problems outlined in the prior section. Ethnomethodology has not resolved those problems, for they seem to resist such attempts. Instead it has shifted the analytic focus from the study of meaning in language use and its concurrent problems for the production of conversation, to the study of methods that people use to make sense of, and to produce conversation.

2.3 Conversation Analysis in the Classroom

Let us now direct our attention to an example of how conversation analysis is applied empirically in the classroom. Little work has been done so far in this area, and thus the choice of research papers is very limited. McHoul's (1978) paper, however, provides a useful example of this research methodology. It uses the conversation analysis machinery competently and demonstrates the applicability of this fine-grained sequential type of analysis to applied areas such

as the classroom. It is also possible from this analysis to provide a warrant for the 'social fact' of the teacher's authority in the classroom. As well, certain parts of the data to be examined in later chapters need to make reference to aspects of these rules put forward by McHoul, and this necessitates a certain familiarity with his model.

McHoul's paper is mainly concerned with showing in detail the differences between the turn-taking of natural conversation and that of classrooms. He does this by proposing a number of modifications to the rules (interpretive devices) for turn-taking in natural conversation.¹⁵

In natural conversation, turns are distributed either by a current speaker selecting a next speaker, or by a next speaker self-selecting if that current speaker has not chosen anyone. If nobody self-selects and current speaker has not selected a next speaker, then the current speaker may, but need not, continue. Briefly put, McHoul's modifications take the following form:

The teacher selects single students to speak, no student having the right to select another student to speak. After any student's turn at talk, the talk goes back to the teacher. Although the teacher can self-select to speak, no student has the right to self select.

McHoul also claims that as a consequence of such an organisation, the following differences are generated between classroom talk and natural conversation.

- (a) The potential for gap¹⁶ and pause is maximised.
- (b) The potential for overlap¹⁷ is minimised.
- (c) The permutability¹⁸ of turn-taking is minimised.

Let us briefly indicate how his rule schema accounts for these differences. Teachers can afford to take pauses because according to the rule schema, students may not self-select. For a student, once he has been selected to speak, and knowing that he has some responsibility to produce a correct answer, he may feel entitled to claim a reasonable time in which to produce an uninterrupted answer, which again maximises gap and pause.

The turn-taking organisation in classrooms does not allow pupils self selecting, and pupils cannot select other pupils to speak. This provides two reasons why 'overlap' should not be a frequent phenomenon.

Permutability is a technical term used to show the openness of natural conversation. This permits all possible permutations of speaker activity with respect to turn-taking. McHoul claims that this is not present in classrooms. A minimum of permutability is evidenced because "almost any deviation from the pattern -Teacher-student-Teacher is seen to be in need of repair" (1978:210).

Despite McHoul's familiarity with the machinery of conversation analysis, he unfortunately appears not to be as well acquainted with the ethnomethodological underpinnings. This leads to a number of confusing problems with his analysis. Heap (1979) was the first to notice these problematic features, observing that McHoul's rules could not account for all the data. These deviations from the rules were treated by McHoul as 'violations' (although neither teacher nor pupils seemed to treat them as such). This notion of violations alerts us to the fact that McHoul sees teachers and pupils as being

rule-governed rather than rule users. McHoul sees his rules as being a product of the formality of the classroom situation. This formality is defined in terms of spatial and proxemic relationships: "The configuration of the parties is such that . . . we would expect one such (the teacher) to have greater participation rights than all the others (the students)." (1978:184-5). Having thus defined his formal situation he claims that his rules for talk are a product of that. McHoul thus uses these spatial relationships to invoke the term 'participation rights' as the reason for the nature of the talk. However he seems to have used his reflexive knowledge of the nature of classrooms to claim that these participation rights exist outside of, and as a prerequisite for, the type of talk that is heard in classrooms.

These 'participation rights' seem to be analytic constructions on the part of McHoul. There is no corresponding members' warrant for such rights being the product of the spatial arrangements. Heap proposes instead that it is only through a continual orientation to those features of the talk of teacher and pupils that it is possible to provide a warrant for the conversation displaying this unequal participation.

Although McHoul has confused the nature of these rules within classes due to his notion of 'violations', his paper still preserves a number of salient analytic points. Most importantly, by studying the different types of talk in classrooms, this can give us a systematic warrant for inferences of social factors such as 'control' or 'unequal participation rights' etc. It also shows the applicability

of such fine grained analyses to different ethnographic contexts, and how the relevance of such contexts (i.e., classrooms) can be displayed through the talk produced in them.

FOOTNOTES

¹This trend is reflected in the corresponding growth in recent sociological and linguistic literature. A number of anthologies are available which represent the various perspectives involved in the study of discourse. Cole (ed.) (1978) is a collection of papers influenced mainly by the philosophers, Austin and Grice. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) reflects a more sociolinguistic origin, while Schenkein (ed.) (1978) utilizes the work of conversation analysis.

²Heap's paper deals with both indexical and non-indexical action and presents a cogent discussion of many of the points only sketched here.

³Essentialist views of language may be thought of as attempts to extract from some term its essential components. Once the abstract conceptualisation (the essence) is obtained, people would thus be able to use such an essence to identify all legitimate applications of the term. Wittgenstein criticises this view of language in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) paras. 92-116.

⁴For a recent clear discussion of the notion of family resemblances, see Heritage (1978).

⁵Double-duty utterances are referred to in Turner (1976:245-6). He suggests that utterances may be ambiguously intended by a speaker, so as to perform certain routine interactional tasks, e.g., hinting.

- A. What's happening?
- B. Man, I've got this term paper due Friday and I'm only half finished and my girl is coming tonight . . .
- A. I'm sorry, man, but I'm really overcommitted this week. If you can wait until after the weekend, I can probably help you out.
- B. Man, I didn't ask you to help me write my paper. I can write my own term paper.

(1976:253)

⁶Unfortunately much of the late Harvey Sacks' work is still unpublished, even though his lecture notes have been widely circulated for many years. For a published discussion of Adjacency Pairs, see Schegloff and Sacks (1974).

⁷The term 'glossing' is a technical one for this process by which people understand and display their understanding of talk. As Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) say "Speakers can proceed by glossing, and do the immense work they do with natural language, even though over the course of their talk it is not known and is never, not even in the end, available for saying in so many words just what they were talking about. Emphatically, that does not mean that speakers do not know what they are talking about, but instead they know what they are talking about in that way." (1970:343).

⁸This point illustrates the importance of the contextual accomplishment of recognising utterances rather than that being the product of a mechanical rule or formula. Atkinson and Drew point this out explicitly: "An utterance [does not] have to be (or could ever be) 'definitely', 'unequivocally', 'exclusively' or 'certainly' any one of those things [i.e., illocutionary acts such as 'greeting', 'complaint',

'accusation', etc.,] for members to be able to treat it and have it treated by others 'as if' it were certainly a particular one for the situated practical purposes at hand." (1979:31-2). Their remarks also enable us to recognise the importance of our concern for the term 'warrant'. We may not be able to prove a 'correct' hearing of any utterance, but we can provide warrants for possible hearings.

⁹Such enquiries may but need not take a conversational form. Thus participants may verbally enquire into or complain about the absence of a return greeting. However, such enquiries may also be conducted without anything being explicitly stated at that time.

¹⁰This has many affinities with the Wittgensteinian view of rules discussed earlier. For a recent discussion of this feature, explicitly related to its place in conversation analysis, see Heritage (1978).

¹¹The term 'describable' (and others like it, such as, hearable, complainable) is particularly chosen to draw attention to the nature of this study. Because of the concern with possible rather than definite interpretations, this term emphasises the indexical nature of talk, and the equivocal nature of any utterance. For these reasons the term is thus preferred to other apparent synonyms such as 'described'.

¹²Reflexivity is an essential feature of commonsense knowledge and is fundamental to any understanding of the construction of the social world. For a more detailed discussion of this property,

see Leiter (1980), Mehan and Wood (1975).

¹³See for example, Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson (1974), Schegloff, Jefferson, Sacks (1977) Pomerantz (1978).

¹⁴See Sacks (1974) for a discussion of such devices.

¹⁵For the formal presentation of the intricacies of the turn-taking system, see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974).

¹⁶McHoul defines 'gap' in the following manner: "By gap I intend silences between turns in which it is expected that some participant in the exchange should be talking. That is, expected on the parts of all concerned within the setting itself." (1978:187).

¹⁷Overlap is described in the following manner by McHoul. "By overlap I intend periods when more than one party to the talk is heard to speak at once." (1978:187).

¹⁸Permutability refers to the open endedness of turns at talk, where one cannot specify in advance, which participant will speak next, or when. This gives turn-taking in natural conversation its great flexibility.

Chapter 3

CORRECTION IN CLASSROOMS AND NATURAL CONVERSATION: THE APPLICABILITY OF THE SCHEGLOFF, JEFFERSON AND SACKS MODEL

Conversation may be considered to be an accomplishment which is jointly managed, with greater and lesser degrees of understanding, by all the participants. From this it might seem natural enough that participants continually correct and ask for correction in order to overcome routine problems of speaking, hearing and understanding, which occur during the course of any conversation. Thus we should not be surprised at the amount of time and energy which participants pay to this phenomenon.

Even a cursory glance at classroom interaction will show that correction is significantly present in schools. Furthermore on an intuitive level at least, we might agree with Edwards concerning the nature of such corrections:

In ordinary conversation it is rare for errors to be identified interruptively, and very rare for the correction to be supplied by a listener. But in an instructional setting, there is likely to be an 'orientation on the part of teacher and selected student to have that student produce sufficient answers where the decidability of that sufficiency is a matter for teachers and teachers only.'¹

(1980:242-3)

In essence Edwards here appears to be giving a commonsense gloss of one of the systematic features of classroom talk. He appears to presume a distinguishing feature of classroom talk: "there is likely to be a correct version which is not open to negotiation". He suggests

that in order to substantiate such a supposition we must investigate whether or not classroom members appear to be orienting to this feature. "Social facts like the relative age, prestige or expertise of the speakers will be included in the analysis 'where warrant for the relevance of such characterisations of the data [are available] from the data themselves'²—that is where the participants' recognition and confirmation of these facts is displayed in the organisation of the talk." (1980:240). This injunction follows closely the ethnomethodological route of the analysis of members' rather than analytic practices. In other words, if one can warrantably claim that members orient to talk which preserves this feature (of 'non-negotiable correct versions given by one person only') as a social fact, then this can be seen as constitutive of 'classroom talk'. One might then use this feature to help differentiate such talk from speech exchanges like 'conversation', 'argument', 'debate', etc. By choosing to investigate members' claims about what is happening, one can avoid the pitfalls of attempting to give privileged analytic versions, and can instead demonstrate that these 'social facts' are members' accomplishments, valid for their situated, practical purposes.

As we observed in 2.3, one possible means of establishing the claim that the teacher is an authority figure in the classroom is by studying the way that the talk is distributed. By demonstrating that the organisation of turn-taking displays markedly different but nevertheless systematic features in classrooms and in ordinary conversation, we can claim that there is a differentiation in participation rights, oriented to by members. As McHoul has pointed out: "only teachers

can direct speakership in any creative way." (1978:188).

Another productive area which could furnish further grounds for the claim that the teacher is an authority figure and one which the present work is exclusively devoted to comes in the form of the study of corrections. For if there is a correct version which is not open to negotiation, as Edwards claims, then whoever is able to enforce such a correct version, may be argued to be in authority. It is that person who controls the distribution of knowledge, and what is to count as knowledge in the classroom. Corrections thus seem to be a potentially fruitful means of investigating how authority is displayed in the classroom.

Further reasons for the usefulness of the study of corrections can be summarily outlined.

- (a) Teacher and pupils routinely and frequently engage in verbal interaction which can be glossed as 'correcting'. It is thus a members' practical and immediate concern.
- (b) As correction sequences primarily involve an investigation of the organisation of turns, rather than the factual content of those turns, they provide for an analysis which is able to concentrate on systematic, general features, amenable to an 'anyman analysis'. Such an analysis does not depend on citing the multitude of ethnographic details (which themselves are indexical)³ of the participants involved, in order to construct a micro-history of what happened.

- (c) As there already exists a study of the machinery of corrections within natural conversation, it is possible and profitable to use that as a model with which to compare and contrast the machinery for corrections within classrooms. One can thus provide a warrant for the hearing of this conversation as being not natural conversation, but as being 'teaching'. More specifically it is talk in which the legitimation of what is to count as knowledge, is being strictly controlled.⁴

This last point has further implications. For if we were to hear such correction talk, which constituted an orientation to the feature of correct versions not open to negotiation, then this might give us a warrant for claiming that this was 'teaching-talk' irrespective of whether it happened in a classroom, bank or factory floor.⁵

In brief, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the similarities and differences between how corrections are managed in natural conversation and in classrooms. It is therefore a type of contrastive analysis.⁶ The members' belief that classroom talk involves the teacher's control of knowledge dissemination can only be supported if it is possible to demonstrate that other types of talk do not have these features. In this respect it is only possible to contrast classrooms with natural conversation, as detailed research has been accumulated primarily on corrections in natural conversation.⁷

The study will compare classroom and conversation corrections in a formal and rigorous (rather than impressionistic) manner, aiming to show the subtle interactional work that is managed in such sequences.

Such interactional work will be examined in terms of three members' relationships: teachers correcting pupils, pupils correcting teachers and pupils correcting each other. It will also pay close attention to 'apparent violations' of the usual mode of corrections. As mentioned earlier, the analytic approach of ethnomethodology conceives interactants as being competent rule-using analysts rather than 'judgmental dopes',⁸ and thus 'violations' may be strategically placed to achieve certain conversational ends. These purposes might be ignored if the analysis merely contented itself with a summary count of 'corrections' and 'violations'.⁹

So far the concept of classroom talk has been assumed, implying by default that this is a coherent, identifiable phenomenon. This is, however, an oversimplification. There are many different types of talk which can go on in classrooms. Examples might be, 'formal talk', 'informal talk', 'discussion', 'lecturing', 'teaching', etc. The talk which perhaps is intuitively thought to be most characteristic of at least the traditional classroom, is the activity involving question and answer sequences undertaken by teachers and pupils.¹⁰ This type of classroom talk, which constitutes the data for this study, may be referred to by the members' term of 'teaching'. Furthermore, close inspection of the data will also reveal that not only is 'teaching' carried out through this process but that another typical teacher concern, 'evaluation' may be accomplished through such sequences.

Through their design, such sequences characteristically involve a concern with the evaluation of pupils' replies. Thus it is perhaps easily understandable why such sequences are overwhelmingly found in

classroom situations. For if they tackle two organisational problems which teachers routinely face; teaching and evaluating, then it is not surprising that teachers are prone to employ such sequences.

Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977 - hereafter SJS) introduced the first systematic and detailed account of the phenomena of correction in natural conversation. Therefore their analysis will be used extensively as a model to work from. In order to do this we must not only be fully familiar with its details; but we must also be aware of a number of its faults. Criticisms come from a recent paper by Heap (1979) as well as from difficulties experienced by this writer in the actual process of attempting to apply the SJS corrections model. This has led to a number of modifications. These modifications, although applicable to the subsequent chapters on classroom talk, are mainly concerned with the adequacy of the SJS paper in general, and serve as an attempt to reframe this work along more ethnomethodological lines. But before going on to these problems, its actual workings as proposed by SJS need to be demonstrated.

3.1 The Model for 'corrections' in Natural Conversation¹¹

SJS set out to provide a formal characterisation of the ways in which correction is achieved in natural conversation. They deal with a great number of correction types which are primarily based on the following two dichotomies: correction initiation versus correction outcome and Self versus Other. Correction initiations are utterance types or segments which invite correction (although not guaranteeing it). Correction outcomes are the corrections themselves.

Self is the speaker of any utterance while Other is the hearer. The main claim of SJS is that empirically there is a strong preponderance for participants to invite self-correction rather than to other-correct. In other words, there is a preference for a hearer (A) to invite a speaker (B) to correct himself, rather than for A to correct B outright when A next gets a turn at talk. They demonstrate this preference with a detailed empirical analysis of corrections in conversation. This investigation is more inclusive than just a study of corrections. They state: "the term 'correction' is commonly understood to refer to the replacement of an 'error' or 'mistake' by what is 'correct'. The phenomena we are addressing, however are neither contingent upon error, nor limited to replacement." (1977:363). The phenomena they address are collected under the rubric of 'repair' and it includes the following members:

(1) a. Word search

Clacia: B't, a-another one theh wentuh school with me
 → wa:s a girl na:med uh, (0.7) °W't th' hell wz
 → er name. °Karen. Right. Karen.
 (SJS 1977:363)

(2) b. No hearable error, mistake or fault¹²

L: Is his one dollar allright or should he send more
 → than that for the p- tuh cover the postage.
 (SJS 1977:363)

(3) c. Corrections

N: She was givin me a:ll the people that
 → were go:ne this yea:r I mean this
 → quarter y' // know
 J: Yeah

(SJS 1977:364)

In the last example one word, 'year', is corrected to 'quarter'. Corrections thus constitute a single subset of the 'repair' phenomena treated in SJS. Although we will have cause to abandon this distinction a little later, for the purposes of this summary, their terms will be preserved.

3.1.1. Repair and Repair-Initiation

SJS also distinguish 'repair' and 'repair-initiation'. They claim that "the one who performs/accomplishes a repair is not necessarily the one who initiated the repair operation" (1977:346) so for example in (3) we get self-repair as a result of self-initiation, where "self-initiations are a variety of nonlexical speech perturbations, e.g., cut-offs, sound stretches, 'uh's' etc. to signal the possibility of repair initiation immediately following" (1977:367). In (3) above, the speaker stretches the vowel in the word 'year' prior to the correction. But we can also get self-repair issuing from other-initiation.

(4) Ken: Is Al here today?
 Dan: Yeah.

(2.0)

Roger: → He is? hh eh heh
 Dan: Well he was.

(SJS 1977:364)

tion relevance space,¹³ and Self has chosen to self-correct here.

- (c) Other-initiation or repair can occur in the third space: the turn after the trouble source turn.

- (7) D: Wul did'e ever get married 'r anything?
 C: → Hu:h?
 D: Did Jee ever get married?
 C: I have // no idea.

(SJS 1977:367)

- (d) Self's next turn constitutes the fourth space. Repairs are usually found here although repair-initiations may also be found.

- (8) Hannah: And he's going to make his own paintings.
 Bea: Mm hm,
 Hannah: → And- or I mean his own frames.
 Bea: Yeah,

(SJS 1977:366)

- (e) Self-corrections or other-initiations may be found after a pause at the end of Self's turn. These constitute an "extra opportunity in an extended transition space, for speaker of trouble source to self-initiate repair" (1977: 374).

- (9) J: He's stage manager.
 (2.0)
 J: → He's actually first assistant but- he's calling the
 J: → They take turns = show.
 J: → = he and the production manager take turns calling
 the show
 (SJS 1977:366)

- (11) B: Uh if you'd care to come over and visit a little while
this morning I'll give you a cup of coffee.
- A: hehh Well that's awfully sweet of you, I don't think
I can make it this morning.hh uhm I'm running an ad
in the paper and-and uh I have to stay near the phone.
- B: Well all right
- A: [And- uh
- B: [Well sometime when you are free give me a call
because I'm not always home.

(Atkinson and Drew 1979:58)

The other side of this 'motivation' coin is that by using such turn constructions, certain intentions can be inferred or attributed to speakers about their psychological states. For example, if we heard an invitation being 'refused', where that refusal was contained in a turn similar but opposite to the design for 'acceptances' (i.e., no delay, minimal turn components), then, of course, the inference is available that A is being 'unfriendly' or 'rude'.

- (12) B: Why don't you come over and see me
- A: [No

SJS, however, are mainly concerned with the 'usual', i.e., unnoticed features of the repair system, and thus are not involved with inferences which are available from 'unusual' corrections. Their interest is in showing how their proposed preference system works. They claim that the technique for other-initiation is to locate the trouble source. This technique is overwhelmingly performed by Other in initial position after the trouble source turn.

- (13) B: Oh Sibbie's sistuh hadda ba:by bo:way.
 A: → Who?
 B: Sibbie's sister.
 A: Oh really?
 B: Myeah,
 A: (That's nice.)

(SJS 1977:317)

Via this other-initiation, Self can then self-repair in the next turn, as demonstrated above by the second utterance of B, 'Sibbie's sister'. A in this sequence can thus be heard to be 'inviting B to self correct'.

Through this schema, SJS thus set up the preference for self-correction. They briefly discuss other-correction, but treat it as dispreferred, for they say, when other-corrections are done, "they are frequently modulated in form" (1977:378). For example they may show uncertainty or may be done jokingly, as in the following:

- (14) Ben: Lissena pigeons.
 (0.7)
 Ellen: [Coo-coo:::coo:::
 Bill: [Quail, I think.
 Ben: Oh yeh?
 (1.5)
 Ben: No that's not quail, that's a pigeon.

(SJS 1977:378)

Here Bill transforms his utterance, by the modifier 'I think', into something, the certainty of which is not known.

This brief overview of the preference system for repair/correction has shown how SJS have established a formal way of describing the methods by which corrections are managed in natural conversa-

tion. Let us now examine it more critically.

3.2 Some Problems with the Repair Model for Conversation

In brief these criticisms take two forms. The first emanates from the ethnomethodological concern with members' rather than analytic typifications. For example, Heap (1979) rightly argues that SJS by using constructed analytic terms confuse themselves over the possibility of other-correction. However his critique does not go far enough, for he does not consider members' typifications of other-corrections which may be labelled 'contradictions' or 'challenges'. Secondly we can argue that because of these analytic labels, SJS's analysis is inadequate, as it does not demonstrate the subtleties involved with the formats labelled under 'other-initiations'. Instead, it is argued, that these formats through their different designs, may seek not only correction, but also confirmation or restatement. Consequently they affect the sequential organisation of the conversation in different ways. It is also claimed that they may be more adequately subsumed under the members' label of 'clarification request' rather than 'other initiation'.

3.2.1. Heap's Critique

Heap's critique is based on the distinction noted in chapter one, that ethnomethodology has a concern with members' typifications of utterances. It deals with utterances (illocutionary acts in Austin's terms) such as complaints, accusations, questions, snubs, acknowledgements, etc., as being products of members' practices. By comparison 'other-initiation' and 'repair' do not seem to be members' terms, but

constructed analytic ones. Heap pursues this line and complains that "No speech act has repair as its conventional illocutionary force. SJS's mistake is to try and tell us about a family of practices called repairs without reflectively knowing the members of that family aside from correction." (1979:9). Heap goes on to propose that it is essential that analysts use members' typifications where possible. In this regard he suggests that "request for clarification, elaboration or restatement" (1979:10) might be better terms for the phenomena that SJS are interested in, although he does not actually perform this analysis.

Because of their use of constructed analytic terms, Heap claims that not only do SJS depart significantly from some basic tenets of ethnomethodology, but that they also confuse themselves about the nature of 'other-corrections'. Heap attributes this preference for Other to initiate self-correction, rather than to correct, to the fact of "the unequal distribution of knowledge between Self and Other re the state of affairs about which Self chooses to speak" (1979:12).¹⁴ Following from this Heap claims that when other-corrections do appear, such modulated corrections are based on "equal access to the affair judged about" (1979:11).

- (15) 1 Lori: But y'know single beds'r awfully thin tuh sleep on.
 2 Sam: What?
 3 Lori: Single beds. // They're-
 4 → Ellen: Y'mean narrow?
 5 Lori: They're awfully narrow // yeah

(SJS 1977:378)

Heap claims that modulations (e.g., the uncertainty in line 4 above) are included so as to orient to the "dispreferred status of disagreement in naturally occurring conversation" (1979:12). Such a preference schema is mainly attributable to the work of Pomerantz (1975, 1978) who in a number of studies has demonstrated the preference for agreement in natural conversation.

Both Heap and SJS give their analyses for preference based solely on the data before them. Although the scope of this study precludes a more detailed investigation of the preference schema for corrections in natural conversation, it is proposed that neither the Heap or SJS analysis can be totally adequate. Neither discusses a number of further types of other-correction, types which might be of analytic interest in their own right.

3.2.2. Outright Corrections

Unmodulated corrections seem to be one such possibility of other-correction. An example like the following might occur:

- (16) A: The Islanders won 6-3 last night.
B: No, it was 6-4.

We might hear this commonsensically at least as B contradicting A, and thus we could legitimately invoke a members' term of contradiction for B's utterance. We might also hear such contradictions as being examples of 'rude' or 'aggressive' behaviour.

The following type of exchange also seems possible:

- (17) A: The Flyers won the Stanley Cup last year.
B: It was the Islanders, wasn't it?

Here the second utterance seems to be doing something like challenging A.

What is important in both of these examples is that they are empirically available. They are also regular enough to have common-sense labels attached to them, contradiction and challenge.¹⁵

Atkinson and Drew (1979) examined these types of sequences in more detail, mainly with respect to their sequential organisation. They discovered that challenges do not bring a sequence to a close, but set up sequential nexts of admissions or defences (where defences can take up a variety of forms, e.g., rebuttals, accounts, denials). Thus, for instance, in law courts (the actual physical environment that Atkinson and Drew studied) the sequence takes the following form:

- (18) A: Question
 B: Answer
 A: Challenge
 B: Defence/Admission

For example:

- (19) 1 C: Yes, we are coming to that shortly. I want to ask
 2 you about the phraseology there, 'Ask people in Percy
 3 Street to go home as they can't stand there'. Was
 4 that your message?
 5 W: Yes, that is my message.
 6 → C: That was a rather polite way of addressing a mob who
 7 → had burned and pillaged a Catholic area, was it not?
 8 W: I did not know that. The object of that message, if
 9 I may answer it this way, looking back, was that
 10 there was such heavy firing in particular areas

- 11 that it was in the interests of saving life that
 12 this message of mine was sent.
 13 C: What I am suggesting to you is that you had informa-
 14 tion or means of information that this mob had burned
 15 and petrol bombed Catholic property and Catholic
 16 people.
 17 W: No.

(Atkinson and Drew 1979:109)

Here C, the counsel, in lines 6-7, challenges the substance of the prior answer. However this does not terminate the sequence nor is it treated merely as a simple question. That it is heard as a challenge is demonstrated by the denial which occurs in line 8. Challenges seem to have this integral feature, they do not end a sequence but, instead set up an expectation for an admission or a defence. With contradictions and challenges, the sequences may easily get extended into longer ones which attempt to resolve this disagreement between the participants, as occurs above. Certain features of the seemingly dispreferred status of such challenges and contradictions can be observed here. They appear to involve more conversational work, for they set up nexts for extended sequences which aim to resolve the disagreement.¹⁶

The main point to be made from their discussion of challenges and contradictions, is the simple one that SJS, by using analytic labels for other-correction seem to have omitted frequent types of other-correction (although these may be dispreferred ones) and to have failed to take full consideration of the subtle interactional work that might be done through such corrections. For example, through the selection of an unmodulated correction (16) rather than an other-

initiation format (13) a speaker might be characterised by participants (and analysts) as 'rude'.

3.2.3. Other Invitation to Self-Correct

Heap's disdain of using constructed analytic terms rather than members' terms seems to be especially relevant to SJS's analysis of the data represented under 'other-initiations' (SJS 1977:367-9). By a close investigation, we can see that all of them may be subsumed under a members' label of clarification request. Some of these utterances through their design, as well, set up different sequential nexts for any next interactant. Because of their classification schema, SJS seem to have missed this. The importance of this point is not only relevant to the analysis of normal conversation, but will directly inform the classroom analysis.

SJS give a number of different turn constructional devices which they say are indicative of other-invitation to self-correct.

These are:

- (a) 'Huh' or 'what',
- (b) The question words, 'who', 'where', 'when',
- (c) Partial repeat of the trouble source turn plus a question word,
- (d) Partial repeat of the trouble source turn,
- (e) 'Y'mean' plus a possible understanding of prior turn.

On examining the examples which they give for these correction invitations, the first three invitation types elicit not corrections but restatements of either whole or part of the trouble source turn.

(d) and (e) both admit correction and we get an example of a correction in (24).

(24) A: Well Monday, lemme think. Monday, Wednesday an' Fridays
I'm home by one ten.

B: → One ten?

A: Two o'clock. My class ends one ten.

(SJS 1977:368)

(25) A: Why did I turn out this way.

B: → You mean homosexual?

A: Yes.

(SJS 1977:368)

However they do not set up sequential nexts for mere restatements. These types set up the problem as not being one of merely mishearing. In both (24) and (25), they either set up nexts for correction (24) or confirmation (25). They offer a candidate hearing¹⁷ to show that the speaker understood something but is uncertain about it, in some way. Thus we get 'One ten?' in (24) while in (25) we get 'Y'mean homosexual?'. These set up nexts for either confirmation/correction but not restatement.

So far all these utterance types may be heard to be minimally seeking clarification of some sort, and thus may be subsumed under a more appropriate member's label of 'clarification request'. However within such a class, we find two other types. One that seems to implicate restatement/correction, as sequential nexts, and one which implicates confirmation/correction.

Thus we can label these subsets within the clarification request, as restatement request (a, b, c) and confirmation request (d,e)

which more accurately reflects the type of clarification that they seek. By using these labels we do not in any way want to preclude the possibility that correction might be sequentially relevant here too, as well as confirmation and restatement. With these modifications to the corrections model, we can now turn our primary task, that of the investigation of corrections in classrooms.

FOOTNOTES

¹Edwards here is quoting from McHoul's (1978) paper on turn-taking.

²This quotation is taken from Schegloff and Sacks (1974).

³Ethnographic descriptions predominantly suffer from this fault. "No matter how much detail is included in a description of an object, person, etc.; there is always more information which in principle could be added, so what is included in a description does not exhaust what could be said about what is being referred to . . . To say that a description is incomplete is not to doubt descriptions as inadequate or the like, but is only to underline that a description is in principle incomplete and hence necessarily a selection from what could have been said." (Atkinson and Drew (1979:247-8). Because all description is indefinitely extendable, an ethnographer is always selecting what he believes to be the relevant details and thus giving us a privileged (distorted?) version.

⁴This is similar to the way in which McHoul was reinterpreted in the last chapter. We can hear certain stretches of talk as being 'formal classroom talk' because of a number of systematic regularities in the talk itself which orient to this description of the talk.

⁵What is being suggested here, although somewhat speculatively, is that 'teaching talk' has characteristics which may not solely be found in classrooms. In other words people can orient to features such as 'teacher' and 'pupil' without the necessity of the physical

contexts (of classrooms) to serve as an additional cueing mechanism.

⁶A more fully developed contrastive analysis is Atkinson and Drew (1979). Their analysis demonstrates that one relevant feature of courtroom talk may be the allocation of blame to selected persons, where this feature is displayed by the differences exhibited in courtroom and conversational talk.

⁷Corsaro's (1977) paper is of some interest here. It examines correction type sequences among adults and young children. However his analysis is mainly concerned with certain quantitative features of clarification requests rather than their sequential and structural organisation, and thus is not of direct relevance here.

⁸The term 'judgmental dope' was first coined by Garfinkel (1967:68) to refer to the typical positivist sociologist's view of man as being rule governed, his action being largely determined by sets of internalised norms, etc. This view emphasized man as being someone with few critical judgmental faculties, therefore a 'dope'.

⁹Zimmerman and West (1975) have attempted a conversation analysis of interruptions in order to prove male dominance over females in their talk. Unfortunately the significance of their results is seriously undermined for they proceeded to sum the instances of interruptions, in their study. They thus not only treated such 'possible' interruptions as actually being interruptions, but they also failed to explicate the resources used to identify such interruptions. For a further critique of the deficiencies of this study see Frank (1979).

¹⁰Mehan discusses this with regard to the study he conducted. "The primary activity was the exchange of academic information. The teacher and students exchanged factual information, opinions, interpretations of academic materials, and the grounds of their reasoning. Lessons have often been characterised as sequences of questions and answers, questions asked by the teacher, answers provided by the students (Brophy and Good 1974; Dunkin and Biddle 1974; Mehan 1974; Mishler, 1975a, 1975b)." (1979:41).

¹¹The synopsis that follows is based to some extent on its treatment in Heap (1979).

¹²Although SJS make nothing of this, it is questionable whether or not their example constitutes 'no hearable error mistake or fault'. It may be argued that 'p-' might constitute a hearable fault, categorisable as a 'slip of the tongue' or a 'hesitation'.

¹³A transition relevance place, or transition space as SJS now want to call it, is defined as the following: "The transition space, roughly, is the environment of a turn's possible completion at which possible transition to a next speaker becomes relevant." (1977:366).

¹⁴Despite Heap's familiarity with ethnomethodological work in general, he appears to be rather constructive here in his analysis. For he presumes that we can attribute the preference schema to some underlying mental faculty of the distribution of knowledge. Unfortunately as is well known, people's underlying competence (knowledge) is only recognisable through their performance (e.g., talk). Thus it

is primarily through their talk that we are able to make claims about whether Self of Other has more knowledge. As the access to Heap's paper was to a draft copy only, it is hoped that the publication version will have clarified this confusion.

¹⁵We do not see contradiction and challenge as being radically different in terms of the sequential nexts they set up. They both appear to disagree with (i.e., challenge) a prior remark. In this sense they may be regarded as two members of the same family.

¹⁶Although little published work has been done on the preference schema for contradictions and challenges themselves, a useful discussion of similar issues may be found in Atkinson and Drew (1979) pp. 184-7.

¹⁷By 'candidate hearing', one is pointing to the equivocal nature of this utterance. In other words the speaker is demonstrating his hearing but allowing that this may be subsequently corrected by the initial speaker.

Chapter 4

CORRECTIONS IN CLASSROOMS: THE TEACHER'S ROLE

It has been demonstrated in the last chapter that, by paying close attention to the design of utterances within natural conversation and the sequential structures in which they appear, one can appreciate the subtle types of interactional work that participants do in correction-type sequences. Such tasks range from the querying of a certain hearing to the giving of an outright contradiction. In this sense, participants' utterance design can be said to be systematic rather than random, and oriented to certain interactional concerns which participants might have within conversation.

We now want to turn away from conversation per se and investigate classroom interaction. This chapter will concern itself firstly with the similarities between classroom and conversational correction, notably in the realm of self-initiated correction. The bulk of the chapter will then be taken up with the methods that teachers use to invite correction and to actually correct, with regard to their pupils. It will be shown that not only are correction sequences used to maintain an orientation to the teacher as a controller of knowledge, but that the ways in which they are interactionally managed display quite subtle and complex concerns. Some of the teacher concerns include: evaluating pupils' replies, collaborating with pupils to manage a correction, disambiguating utterances, rejecting answers, holding others

responsible for the production of a correct 'correction' and demonstrating the difficulty or inconsequential nature of a question.

Before getting to the analysis itself two methodological points are in order. Firstly, so as to take heed of Heap's critique of the 'repair' system, the term 'correction' will be used here in preference to 'repair'.¹ By 'correction' we intend to deal with that phenomenon which is oriented to by classroom participants, as involving correction. Thus clarifications, elaborations, word replacements, rejections, may all be utilised, within the classroom, to do 'corrections'.²

By using the term 'correction' rather than 'repair' we hope to ensure that the "technical use of ordinary terms [is] within the sensible bounds of ordinary use" (Heap 1979:12). In other words we hope to explicate possible members' practices rather than construct contrived analytic ones. Secondly, throughout this analysis the analytic glosses of utterances are to be treated as cultural possibilities rather than definite interpretations. Thus with the use of any term (e.g., clarification) we never mean that this is unequivocally a clarification, or that it was intended as that by the speaker. Instead the analysis is premised only on the fact that it is possible in the sequence being examined for any member to hear it as a clarification.

Correction in classrooms is massively present and occurs in a number of sequential environments. In some respects it follows closely the patterns evident in normal conversation. This is most noticeable in terms of the self-initiated correction exhibited by teachers and pupils. Here most of the phenomena that were accounted

for by SJS are present and symmetrically distributed between pupils and teachers. In the realm of other-initiation and other-correction, although a number of similarities are preserved, there are an interesting number of differences. Summarily they can be noted as the following:

- (a) Although confirmation requests are asked by both teachers and pupils, there is a marked asymmetry in the way they are treated. Pupils routinely treat such requests from teachers as seeking correction/clarification.
- (b) Teachers routinely use pauses to request correction/clarification. (Pupils do not.)
- (c) Teachers routinely confirm the corrections that pupils give them. (Pupils do not.)
- (d) Teachers invite other pupils to correct a speaking pupil. (Pupils do not.)
- (e) Teachers withhold outright corrections. (Pupils do not routinely use overt corrections.)
- (f) Teachers routinely reject pupils' utterances without supplying a correction.

Here we can see a vast discrepancy in the ways that teachers and pupils conduct correction sequences. From this emerges a major asymmetry in the process of correction, an asymmetry which is oriented to by both teachers and pupils. It is in this asymmetry that we can claim that teachers and pupils do not demonstrate equal participation rights. From this preponderance of one person dominating the way that corrections are performed, we can substantiate the claim that

this is one method by which teachers can be seen to display their authority, namely by the way that they control the distribution of knowledge within the class.

4.1 Self-Initiated Correction³

In natural conversation, a primary dichotomy of speakers is that between Self and Other. However in the classroom, there appears a further fundamental distinction, that between teacher and pupil. Already we have seen that this distinction is made by members (as well as the analyst),⁴ that it informs much of the talk within classes and that it seems to be an important element for the organisation of turn-taking. As corrections in classrooms need also to be fitted into the turn-taking system, then any analysis should also preserve the dichotomy of teacher and pupil, rather than merely use the terms Self and Other. With this in mind, we shall use these categories for our analysis of self-initiated correction. (Cf. 3.1.1, 3.1.2.)

4.1.1 The Teacher as Self-Initiated Corrector

Self-initiated correction refers to that phenomenon where Self initiates and then gives a correction for an error that he has made. In these sequences Other plays no active verbal part in the correcting (cf. 3.1).

Self-initiated correction appears to take place in a number of environments similar to those in SJS (1977:364-7). Because the turn-taking organisation is somewhat different for classrooms and for conversation, however, a few modifications need to be introduced for classroom talk. Let us begin with its affinities to natural

conversation.

- (a) Self-correction-initiation and correction can occur within the trouble source turn, e.g.,

- (26) T: Sixty dollar question, where, where are the particles
 → gonna leave early, leave easier, on top of the mountain or at sea level?

Here the teacher corrects and replaces 'early' by 'easier'.

- (b) Self-correction-initiation or correction can occur in the transition space between turns.

- (27) T: O.K. sh sh where is there greater, greater air pressure
 on top of a mountain or on sea level
 → or down the bottom of a mountain say.

A turn transition space occurs after 'sea level', and the correction 'or down the bottom of a mountain say', appears here.

Unlike the categories in SJS, self-initiated correction in teacher's next turn was not present. Although this may be a possibility, there might be more systematic reasons for its non-occurrence in the classroom data. If we examine the SJS account of this phenomenon we find that they give the following examples.

- (28) Hannah: And he's going to make his own paintings
 Bea: Mm hm
 Hannah: → and- or I mean his own frames
 Bea: Yeah

(SJS 1977:366)

- (29) L: I read a very interesting story today
M: uhm, what's that
L: → w'll not today, maybe yesterday, and who knows when,
huh
it's called Dragon Stew.

(SJS 1977:366)

In both examples Other seems to self-select, between Self's two turns. Evidence for this comes from the absence of any appropriate first-pair part⁵ in either of Self's initial utterances. In neither case does the initial speaker select the next speaker, instead the next speaker self-selects. As pupil self-selection is not an option within the classroom, we can understand why self-initiated correction in Self's next turn, such as in the examples (28) and (29) above will tend not to occur. It will instead occur within the course of a teacher's single turn.

The fourth possibility which is present in natural conversation is that Self may initiate self-correction following a pause after the completion of the turn in which the trouble source word occurs.

- (30) J: He's stage manager.
(2.0)
J: → He's actually first assistant but- he's calling the
J: They take turns = show.
J: = he and the production manager take turns calling
the show

(SJS 1977:366)

Although such pauses after teacher's turns are frequent in the data, they do not give rise to self-correction. This may be system-

atically accounted for as the turn-taking organisation for classrooms maximises gap and pause. Thus teachers routinely utilise gaps within turns, whilst gaps after turns (i.e., where a teacher has selected a pupil to speak) are often heard not as a pupil inviting the teacher to think again, or that the pupil is withholding information. Usually such silences are treated as displays that a pupil doesn't know.

- (31) T: we have 4 states of matter right Peter (1) Kelly (1) Dave
 Ps: = $\begin{bmatrix} \text{No} \\ \text{no} \end{bmatrix}$
- T: 4 states of matter Dave $\begin{bmatrix} ? \\ 3 \end{bmatrix}$ Sean 4 states of matter
 P: $\begin{bmatrix} 3 \end{bmatrix}$
 P: 3 you said there were 3
 T: listen there are only $\begin{bmatrix} 3 \end{bmatrix}$ states
 Ps: $\begin{bmatrix} 3 \end{bmatrix}$

In the example above, the pauses of about one second after the names of the pupils are not treated by the teacher as an invitation on the pupil's part for him to self-correct. Instead, the teacher treats them as evidence that the pupil does not know the answer.

Thus it is a systematic feature of classroom talk that pauses after teacher's turns do not often result in a teacher self-correcting.

4.1.2. The Pupil as a Self-Initiated Corrector

Again certain similarities exist between this phenomenon in classrooms and the SJS model, for it occurs in many of the environments proposed by SJS.

- (a) Self-correction-initiation and correction can occur within the trouble source turn.

(32)

T: Now Dawn, what do I have to do to the particles?

P: →Add heat so the particles move farther away from farther apart

T: [O.K.] [OK]

T: In order to , excellent ()

(33)

T: How come [Sean]

P: [cause]

S: →um , because the particles move about and make more, and make the pressure more right.

Here the pupils in both examples correct themselves within the space of their turn.

(b) Self-correction-initiation or correction can occur in the transition space between turns.

(34) T: What's Pluto, Drew?

P: It's a moon

→ I mean it's part of a moon

it's a planet now

Here Drew corrects himself in the transition space after the possible completion of his turn.

The fourth space in SJS's framework is Self's next turn. However the turn-taking organisation for classrooms would lead us to expect modification in this position. In classrooms, as pupils cannot self-select, they have no claim to talk in this possible space unless requested to do so by the teacher. This constraint on pupils should alert us to the likelihood that there may thus be good organisational

reasons for pupils not self-correcting in 'Self's next turn'. For as McHoul demonstrated, pupils cannot self-select to speak simply of their own volition.

Thus far we have outlined the similarities between the self-initiated correction mechanism for natural conversation and that for classrooms. We have noted that the opportunity for correction in Self's next turn is not applicable in classrooms due to the workings of the turn-taking organisation, and that this constraint applies both to teachers and pupils, although for different reasons.

4.2 Other-Correction and Initiation

It is primarily in the field of other-initiation and correction that we get systematic differences between correction in natural conversation and classrooms. The rest of this chapter will be concerned with showing how teachers initiate correction and correct Others (pupils).

4.2.1. The Teacher as Correction Initiator in the Classroom

At the beginning of this chapter we noted large differences between correction for classrooms and for conversation. However many of these differences are based on the ways that similar machineries (e.g., clarification requests) are used. These differences may be more explicitly concerned with the way that certain standard correction formats are used and treated by pupils and teachers, rather than in any differences in formats used.

4.2.2. Other-Initiations by the Teacher

Using our modified framework of the correction system based on SJS we can investigate the classroom data to see how such 'clarification requests' are treated. (Cf. 3.2.3.)

4.2.2.1. Restatement Requests

These are commonly used by teachers and exhibit turn constructional devices similar to those in SJS. For example, the use of 'huh?' or 'what?' occurs.

(35)

- T: O.K. in order to have more air pressure what have I got to
have Gizelle (1) Gizelle
- G: more air, more air in it
- T: What? (1) oh] you guys are going to =
- Ps: [heh heh]
- G: =put more air in it
- T: You need more particles no.

Here the teacher produced the utterance 'what?' and, as in the SJS examples, we get a restatement of the prior turn. Thus G has treated this utterance not as an invitation to correct but as a request for restatement.

Such utterances are potentially ambiguous, for a 'restatement request' might implicate either a correction or a restatement as a possible next. It thus constitutes a members' problem to resolve that ambiguity. (And how this might be done will be explicated later.)

Another form of restatement request taken from the SJS model which is used by teachers takes the form of a 'partial repeat of the

trouble source turn plus a question word'.

- (36) T: How can we make that hypothesis into a theory
 P: by ()
 P: do it
 T: → by what?
 P: by doing it
 T: Oh by doing it, by just doing it once?

In this example the teacher repeats 'by' and inserts the word 'what'. The design of this utterance delimits what the trouble source is for the teacher. By repeating 'by' he shows that what is particularly problematic is the word(s) that come after 'by'. Although in this example we get a restatement by the pupil, the intention of the utterance is once again unclear. The pupil demonstrates her understanding that it is a restatement request, but there is also potential for a different interpretation:

- (37) T: What's it most go up to Sharon
 P: six
 T: → up to what?
 P: seven
 T: seven O.K.

In this the pupil interprets the request 'up to what?' not as a restatement request, as we saw before, but as an invitation to correct.

These types of turn devices seem to be interpretable in classrooms, as in natural conversation, as allowing both restatements and corrections to occur as relevant nexts. In this sense they may be

strategically used, for teachers may for various pedagogic or social reasons want to leave ambiguous the content of their utterance and let it do double duty. The type of interpretation decided upon for that utterance then becomes a problem for which the pupil has to find the solution.

4.2.2.2. Confirmation Requests

In the data from the SJS paper which was re-analysed in Chapter 2 we noticed that a subclass of clarification requests, namely confirmation requests, set up expectations for two possible sequential nexts. These were to either correct or to confirm. In the classroom data we find an interesting and significant difference. Pupils systematically choose not to confirm but to correct.

- (38) T: what's matter Cheryl?
 P: anything.
 T: → anything?
 P: anything that takes up space

Here the teacher requests clarification by repeating the trouble source word, 'anything' with rising intonation. The type of clarification which the teacher gets amounts to an elaboration of the pupil's prior turn. The teacher gives a repetition of the pupil's answer to which the pupil responds by elaborating her former reply, incorporating elements of the original (i.e., 'anything') and adding more to it.

It is significant here that the teacher does not explicitly treat 'anything' as incorrect. (That task might be accomplished by a

rejection of the prior turn, e.g., by 'No'.) Instead the utterance type used, a clarification request, might be deliberately employed for a number of reasons. Minimally it enables the pupil to retrospectively⁶ see that the problem which the teacher has is not one of simple mis-hearing, for he repeats the pupil's answer. Also the teacher's utterance asks for clarification from the pupil. He withholds confirmation about the correctness of the pupil's answer until a type of correction, an elaboration, is produced which satisfies the teacher.

The other more significant point about this sequence is that pupils never treat it as an opportunity to confirm. This is distinct from natural conversation where confirmations may, and routinely do, appear instead of corrections (cf. 3.2.3 (25)). What seems to be at issue here is the fact that, by confirming, the pupil would lay claim to knowing the correct or proper answer. It would also mean treating the teacher's confirmation request as something seeking information which the teacher did not know.

By never using confirmations in these positions pupils thus do not assert that they know the correct answer. Instead they demonstrate their understanding that the teacher already knew the correct answer to this question. This is done by pupils always leaving an opportunity space for the teacher to give a confirmation after a pupil has supplied a correction.

4.2.2.3. The Systematic Absence of 'Y'mean X' in Classroom Talk

The other class of turn construction device in SJS which seeks confirmation is of the form 'Y'mean X' where X is offered as a candi-

date correction⁷ of the prior talk. This occurs in the following example from SJS.

- (39) A: I have a: — cousin teaches there.
 D: Where.
 A: Uh:, Columbia.
 D: Columbia?
 A: Uh huh.
 D: → You mean Manhattan?
 A: No. Uh big university. Isn't that in Columbia?
 D: Oh in Columbia.
 A: Yeah.
- (SJS 1977:369)

In the data corpus from classrooms, there are no examples of this type of turn unit from the teacher. Rather than dismiss this, let us examine some of the systematic properties of such a turn-design, and see how it might or might not meet the concerns of classroom teaching sequences. These turns offer a 'candidate correction' and set up a next of either confirmation or correction. Thus by offering this 'candidate correction' a teacher might be supplying within his turn something which he wanted the pupil to produce. Although in the data we get examples like the following:

- (40) T: What is matter composed of, Laurie
 P: substances
 T: → small substances called?
 P: particles
 T: particles sure O.K.

we do not get examples like the one below:

- (41) T: What is matter composed of, Laurie
 P: substances
 T: → Y'mean particles?
 P: Yes.

In this hypothetical example the candidate correction is offered in the turn immediately after the pupil's error. Although it is conceivable that a teacher might have possibly used a turn device such as 'Y'mean particles?', it is obvious that by such a turn design, the teacher rather than the pupil is introducing the correction. When we think that the teacher's task includes that of evaluating pupil's knowledge, which entails him discovering just how much pupils actually know, then teachers might have good organisational reasons for not including this type of turn device in their inventory. From this example, we can claim that one feature of evaluational talk is that 'corrections', including 'candidate corrections' are withheld in the sequence; that is, they do not appear immediately after a pupil's incorrect/inadequate answer, but are delayed or are not given at all.

4.2.3. Members' Practical Management of Ambiguous Utterances

If utterances are ambiguous in a number of ways, with regard to correction/confirmation or correction/restatement requests, then it might frequently be a member's problem to develop a common shared understanding within the course of their talk. We might then expect that members have methods of practically resolving such ambiguity. In (42) below, we see that G in line 6 interpreted the teacher's question as a restatement request. However, if we follow the conversation through, the teacher in line 7 corrects G's prior restatement.

(42)

- 1 T: O.K. in order to have more air pressure what have I got to have
 2 Gizelle (1) Gizelle
 3 G: more air, more air in it
 4 T: →What? (1) oh you guys are going to =
 5 Ps: [heh heh]
 6 G: =put more air in it
 7 T: You need more particles no.

It is inferable from this that the teacher is correcting the pupil, that he is not letting the pupil's answer stand. He demonstrates that the answer given is wrong, and thus makes available the interpretation that the initial 'what?' was intended to seek 'correction' rather than 'restatement'. Evidence for this comes from the 'aside' which the teacher produces in the same turn as 'what?' as well as the fact that the teacher corrects overtly. A prevalent feature of the classroom data which will be explicated in more detail later is that overt corrections are usually withheld, a teacher may first invite the pupil to correct himself before overtly correcting that pupil. In other words, the sequential organisation may approximate to the following: a teacher may first invite a pupil to self-correct, if this fails then the teacher may overtly correct. (See 4.2.8 for more details of this.) In contrast, if 'what?' was merely asking for restatement, because of a simple mishearing, then once the pupil has given the restatement, the teacher might then invite the pupil to correct, by using another (probably different) clarification request.

Ambiguity is a members' as well as an analyst's problem. This being the case, members have routine methods of disambiguation, such

that as in this example, it is possible that a pupil may retrospectively come to realise that what was originally thought to be a restatement request (i.e., that the teacher had merely misheard her) was in effect an 'invitation to correct'.

4.2.4. The Confirmation as a Teacher's Tool

A systematic feature of the correction sequences demonstrated above is the role of the teacher in inviting self-correction. However another totally systematic and universal feature of these correction sequences is that they are either confirmed or disconfirmed in some way by the teacher in the slot after the 'correction'. Thus in classrooms the structural organisation for corrections seems to be the following.

- (43) T: Question
 P: Answer
 T: Clarification Request (invitation to self-correct)⁸
 P: Clarification (correction)
 T: → Confirmation/Disconfirmation

This may be compared with the sequential format for natural conversation, of such correction sequences, which can be derived from the SJS paper.

- (44) A: Utterance
 B: Clarification Request (invitation to self-correct)
 A: Correction/Confirmation

The confirmation after a clarification is a teacher's prerogative only. This contrasts markedly with natural conversation where

neither participant systematically uses such interactive devices in these sequential positions. Confirmations by virtue of their presence within any question-answer sequence seem to transform the status of the original question from that of a request for information to that of a question whose answer was already known by the questioner.

(45) A: Question
 B: Answer

(46) A: Question
 B: Answer
 A: Confirmation

If we compare the two structures above, we can label (45) as being characteristic of those sequences which seek information, whilst those like (46) are characteristic of sequences where the questioner already has the correct answer and is perhaps testing someone. This allows us to claim that it is only the teacher who can decide upon the correctness of any answer given to him by a pupil because, as noticed previously, pupils do not give confirmation in such sequential positions. As these confirmations also appear in the sequential environment after clarifications (corrections), teachers also seem to have the ability of deciding the correctness of clarifications as well. This is important because so far we have tended to use clarification and correction somewhat interchangeably in classroom talk. We can now understand the reason for this apparent liberty. Although in natural conversation, clarification requests may not necessarily involve a notion of correction, in classrooms, correctness in teach-

ing sequences is a teacher's matter only. Thus pupil utterances which offer clarification (e.g., restatements, elaborations, corrections) are also amenable to being judged correct or not in the eyes of the teacher. Thus for the participants in teaching sequences the overwhelming presence of the confirmation allows us to classify pupil clarifications as merely a subset of the family of corrections, the correctness of which is a matter for teachers only.

It has been shown here that teachers implicitly claim to have a greater amount of knowledge than pupils. For it is the teacher's exclusive right to decide what counts as knowledge in the classroom. Teachers are there to judge the adequacy of pupils' answers and for pupils anything other than a confirmation in the teacher's appropriate conversational slot may be heard as a disconfirmation. In terms of classroom conversation, correction sequences may be extended for a turn or more unless an end is brought about by the presence of a confirmation (or less frequently, an overt correction) by the teacher. The strength of this constraint is very strong and can be exhibited by the investigation of silence as a clarification request.

4.2.5. Silence as a Request for Clarification

We noticed above that confirmations seemed to be exceptionally relevant in positions immediately after answers or corrections in classroom talk. This tendency is interactionally quite productive, such that anything other than a teacher confirmation in such a position is heard as a disconfirmation. In the data corpus, there are a number of examples where silences after pupils' answers are treated by the pupils

as requests for clarification (correction).

- (47) T: What's it called Salvator (1) Is this jar full of matter right now Jack?
 P: mhm.
 T: What's it called?
 P: → oxygen (3) air
 T: Isn't it called air. Air fills this entire room

Here the pupil treats the 3 second silence at the end of his turn after 'oxygen' as a silence in which he is not being confirmed. He then goes on to use this opportunity to self-correct. Such silences are not heard as random pauses, but are silences 'owned' by a pupil which are designed to allow him to correct.

- (48) 1 T: . . . Well what do you think, Brian, where's there
 2 greater air pressure at sea level or on top of
 3 Mount Everest, Brian?
 4 P: sea level
 5 T: Why?
 6 P: → cause it's lower
 7 P1: No
 8 Ps: heh heh (for approximately 3 seconds)
 9 P: → it's closer to the centre of the earth
 10 T: O.K. here I am Joe scientist, no, I am Joe explorer
 11 today O.K. and going to go, and I'm gonna go to do
 12 more exploring

In the example above we get utterances by other pupils after the first pupil's (P) answer in line 6. Again this pupil self-corrects when it is apparent that the teacher is withholding confirmation. We might also note that here another pupil (P1) rejects the first pupil's (P)

answer (via the turn -'no'). This does not lead to self-correction on the part of pupil (P). He waits for another two to three seconds before he corrects. What is inferable from this is that other pupils do not have the ability to confirm or disconfirm answers. For, if this was a normal feature of classrooms, in the position after P1's 'No', might appear either the pupil (P) self-correcting or other pupils correcting. Thus, although on occasions pupils might try to disconfirm/confirm other pupils, such utterances do not seem to be regarded as legitimate confirmations/disconfirmations by other members of the class.

This example further illustrates the asymmetry in teacher-pupil interaction. Routinely teachers do not treat pauses after their answers to pupils' questions, as requests for correction. Teachers treat pupils' questions as requests for information. In this sense, pupil confirmations after teacher answers are not expected, so that the absence of a confirmation in this position, should not lead teachers to self-correct.

(49)

- 1 T: First of all you have a report due. Pass them to
 - 2 the front of the row. A report on heat or tempera-
 - 3 ture O.K.
 - 4 P: Can we hand them in this aft? =
 - 5 T: → =this aft O.K.(1)
 - 6 P: () this aft?
 - 7 T: You've got till 3:15 today to hand them in
 - 8 P: Oh
- ((Pupils hand in books))

In this sequence there are two conceivable places in which teachers might self-correct if they were to duplicate pupils' conversational strategies. The one second pause at the end of line 5 and the absence of a confirmation in line 8 both do not lead to teacher self-correction. Pupils as we have seen (4.2.4), regularly do self-correct in similar situations. These asymmetrical differences again demonstrate that teachers treat pupil questions as genuine requests for information.

4.2.6. Teacher-Pupil Collaboration

Pupil answers which are not followed by confirmations from the teacher are treated as in need of some type of correction. Teachers also can invite pupils to restate or to correct. Furthermore, teachers sometimes help pupils to attain a correct answer by actively collaborating with a pupil in its production. Consider the following example:

- (50) T: takes up space, how much space does it take up
 P: two hundred n' seventy-five
 T: → How much? two hundred and seventy-five cows, horses
 chickens
 P: millilitres
 T: millilitres O.K. takes up about two hundred and
 seventy-five millilitres

The teacher gives a format similar to a confirmation request, it repeated the trouble source word (i.e., 'two hundred and seventy-five'). However it does more than that. Before, we noticed that pupils routinely elaborate their first answers. In this instance, by the

design of the turn the teacher seems to be explicitly delimiting what type of elaboration is required. By repeating the number he demonstrates that he does not want a restatement, as he heard the prior utterance adequately. Instead, by repeating a list of units with rising intonation, he uses a device commonly used in conversation: having a person select one or more items from a list. The pupil appears to be informed by this that he must add some appropriate unit which could be placed in the conversational slot after 275____. Thus 'millilitres' acts as an appropriate next. Here we have a teacher inviting an elaboration from a pupil, but the form of that elaboration is effectively delimited by the teacher. Although it emerges as a joint product of teacher-pupil interaction, its correctness is still a matter decidable by the teacher only.

A similar example in which teacher and pupils collaborate to correct an utterance occurs below:

(51)

- 1 T: What's the difference Cheryl?
- 2 P: They're further apart
- 3 T: → which ones are?
- 4 Pl: from each other
- 5 P: the particles
- 6 T: → in a ?
- 7 Ps: in a liquid
- 8 T: liquid, remember that O.K.

Here again the teacher seeks clarification in line 3. When the clarification/correction is given in line 5, confirmation is still withheld. Instead the teacher replies with 'in a ?'.⁹ By its syntactic design,

the teacher latches his utterance onto the pupil's prior answer, so as to collaboratively produce an unfinished phrase. By leaving the phrase unfinished, his utterance does not supply the clarification in its entirety, but rather it again delimits the type of clarification required. It sets up an expectation that the pupil's next attempt will at least fit into the grammatical sequence of, 'the particles in a ____' and this is probably further delimited by the pupil retrospectively recalling the possible 'things' (as presumably discussed earlier in the lesson) which the particles could be 'in'.

These two processes appear to be ones by which teachers can not only invite pupils to correct, but can actively collaborate in the management and delimitation of what that correction is.

4.2.7 The Teacher as a Requester of Clarification from Other Pupils

Teachers, as seen, routinely invite pupils to correct themselves by using some type of clarification request. We also find a phenomenon which, although similar in format to these clarification requests, is transformed by the presence of a name into a request for somebody else to correct Self (i.e., the one who made the error).

This type of request can be exemplified in the following:

(52)

- 1 T: I'm gonna heat it, what's the process called?
- 2 Gizelle
- 3 P: boil
- 4 Ps: ()
- 5 T: → sh sh it's called boiling or ? () Patsy
- 6 come on, what's it called when you go
- 7 from a liquid to a vapour?

Although this form is very common in classrooms it is unheard of in natural conversation. Not only that but other pupils who have been chosen to correct the first pupil, regularly give corrections, rather than claiming lack of knowledge.

What is significant here is that in ordinary conversational correction sequences usually Other claims less knowledge than Self in terms of what Self is saying. This leads to self-correction rather than other-correction. By contrast, in classrooms the teacher expects that the other pupils will know what Self (i.e., a pupil) meant to say, and that they are in a position to be able to correct him. The other pupils seem to orient to this expectation as well, for they routinely offer corrections in such sequence rather than claims not to know. Pupils thus seem to accept that they have a responsibility for paying close attention throughout the lesson, providing answers and correction to another pupil's error when called upon to do so by the teacher. This orientation, made observable through talk, again gives a strong warrant that the teacher is in control of not only who is to answer but also who is to correct errors.

That such corrections are expected of other pupils rather than being merely requested by the teacher can be demonstrated by the different types of turn design used by the teacher. In the example above the turn contains no modulation which might 'soften' it so as to allow for the possibility of lack of knowledge. This compares with another turn in which the teacher uses a different turn design with modulation.

- (53) T: → What's a nebula, Bob, give it a try
 P: I don't know.
 T: Nebulus, it's a group of stars, bunch of stars O.K.

Here the presence of the modulating element 'give it a try' allows for the possibility that the student may not be expected to know the correct answer. This diminishes the responsibility that the pupil ought to know the correct answer. (And, in fact, in this case the pupil does take this opportunity to disclaim responsibility for the production of a correct answer.)

4.2.7.1. The Presence of Rejection Components

Another systematic feature of these teacher turns which choose another pupil to correct a first pupil's utterance is the frequent presence of rejection components within the design of the turn. Thus the turn may be designed so as to initially reject a prior answer and subsequently choose another pupil to correct. They take the form of an initial rejection component and the selection of another pupil's name. These utterances may contain explicit or implicit rejection components but all of them withhold confirmation. An implicit rejection appears in the example below:

- (54) T: O.K. particle theory of matter. What's the matter
 Dawn. what's matter, matter?
 P: force
 T: → oh bummer, Alice
 P: something that takes up space and=
 T: = O.K.

Here the teacher does not explicitly reject the answer by a turn containing an actual negation, but comments on it, withholds confirmation and selects somebody else.

Explicit rejections also occur:

- (55) T: well first of all what does boiling water mean, Joe?
() Derek?
P: heat
T: → No not at all, boiling water does not necessarily mean heat. What does boiling water mean Dawn?
P': [moving particles]
P'': [()]
T: O.K.

Derek's answer is not allowed to stand, it is explicitly treated as being incorrect (by the two rejection components), and then another pupil is selected to answer. Such a rejection in this example may be heard to be a 'strong rejection'. Wootton (n.d.) has investigated certain characteristic properties of rejections, and claims that 'strong rejections' may be typically identified if they exhibit a number of the following components.

- (a) The rejection component is not delayed in the turn but appears in initial position.
- (b) The turn itself is not delayed.
- (c) The rejection does not include an account.
- (d) It is not done as circumstantial but as something certain.

In terms of the actual sequences which Wootton investigated (request sequences¹⁰ among adults and children) he claims that these types of rejections, because they are designed as 'strong rejections', usually

inhibit a child from subsequently appealing against the rejection. For children, strong rejections have the sequential consequence that they lead quickly to the ending of the request (i.e., sequence termination). Let us extend Wootton's notion of 'strong rejection' and examine its effects on the sequential organisation of talk in classrooms.

Within the classroom these types of formats seem to inhibit a self-correction on the part of the pupil. They are systematically produced with overt requests for another pupil to correct thus effectively preventing the original pupil from self-correcting.

It is noticeable and systematic about these sequences that, although containing rejection components, they withhold giving an alternative answer; instead they seek to obtain that answer from another pupil. We thus see a difference between these formats and the challenges and contradictions of natural conversation. These formats do not give an alternative answer, whereas challenges and contradictions usually do. This can be demonstrated by comparing our previous example (55) with our examples from natural conversation.

(56) (Contradiction)

A: The Islanders won 6-3 last night
 B: → No it was 6-4.

(57) (Challenge)

A: The Flyers won the Stanley Cup last year.
 B: → It was the Islanders, wasn't it?

Once again these sequences may be closely bound up with 'evaluation'

within classes. For in (55) but not in (56) or (57), correction is withheld, where the purpose of this might be to get others to supply that correction.

4.2.8 The Teacher as Overt Corrector

By noticing that overt corrections are withheld in teaching sequences, we are claiming that within such sequences there is a preference for a teacher, in the turn after an incorrect answer by a pupil, to invite correction from the student body (either the pupil who made the mistake or from others) before giving the correction himself. Evidence for this comes from the following conversational features. Already we have noted the tendency to use types of clarification requests by teacher in the turn immediately after an incorrect response, as well as the delaying of confirmation components. We can also point to the fact that when such clarification requests fail, it is then that we may see the introduction of a correction, as in line 7 below.

(58)

- 1 T: O.K. in order to have more air presure what have I got to
- 2 have Gizelle (1) Gizelle
- 3 G: more air, more air in it
- 4 T: What? (1) oh- you guys are going to =
- 5 Ps: [heh heh]
- 6 G: =put more air in it
- 7 T: → You need more particles no.

The teacher does not overtly correct at a first available opportunity, line 4, immediately after the error. Instead he gives the pupil the

opportunity to correct, by the placement of the restatement/correction request in line 4. It is only when this also fails to elicit the required correction that the teacher overtly corrects.

Again it is significant that if teachers are supposedly concerned with 'evaluating' pupils then one of their main concerns might be to have pupils rather than themselves give correct answers. One notable way of achieving that end is to delay giving pupils overt corrections and to design turns so as to allow pupils to furnish that information.

Although this appears to be the preferred schema, in the corpus we see a number of exceptions. These seem to be capable of serving rather different interactional ends and thus deserve attention.

- (59) T: Smallest planet then Gina?
 P: Pluto.
 T: → No, Mercury's smaller than Pluto actually, Mercury's smaller than Pluto O.K.

Again there is a rejection component—'No' which is not delayed in the turn, and which denies the possibility of Gina being in any way correct. Following that, occurs the correction. This correction, however, although not withheld, is modified by the component 'actually' which is placed within the same turn, and thus seems to mitigate the correction. The term 'actually' appears to be demonstrating that G's answer was not a very serious mistake.

By providing a correction-with-modification in initial position after an incorrect reply, we can see that the teacher is reducing

the 'evaluative' nature of this sequence. For the teacher gives the correction rather than demanding it from the pupil. From the sequential placement of the teacher's overt correction, two inferences about the question are retrospectively available to the pupils: the question may have been difficult or the answer given was not quite correct rather than being badly wrong. It is through this delicate use of the conversational machinery that we see another example of how teachers can complete subtle interactional tasks relevant within the classroom.

A further interesting example of a possible correction comes in the following:

(60)

- 1 P: the particles are further apart from each other and
- 2 they move faster
- 3 T: which particles?
- 4 P: the antifreeze particles
- 5 T: → the alcohol particles are further apart and move
- 6 faster O.K. That's part of it, so how does that
- 7 help? Daryl.

In this example, the teacher invites clarification in the third line, and in the fifth appears to be giving a confirmation of the pupil's correction in line 4. However the form of the utterance is subtly changed. The word 'alcohol' is substituted for 'antifreeze', although much of the other design is maintained. This is a seemingly ambiguous remark, in that although a confirmation is proffered, it holds within it a correction. This may be a strategic design on the part of the teacher. Through its design, the utterance does not draw attention to the replacement, and as well, leaves ambiguous whether or not it

actually was a correction.

Thus teachers may be able to demonstrate subtly that an answer is almost but not quite correct. But it also leaves open the possibility that pupils may not even hear it as a correction, because no explicit attention has been brought to it by the turn-design.

Once again we have encountered a members' problem. The teacher's turn-design leaves it unclear whether or not a correction has taken place. One possible means of retrospectively deciding on this issue for members and analysts is to investigate the two words involved in the substitution. In this instance, we have 'alcohol' replacing 'antifreeze'. It may be problematic here whether alcohol is a correction for antifreeze or merely an alternative.

In natural conversation we might hear these as near synonyms and therefore alternatives, but that in itself is an accomplishment. This seems to reside in our commonsense ability to locate both alcohol and antifreeze as 'going together' in some way. For instance, they both might be invocable as incumbents of the Membership Categorisation Device of 'radiator fluids'. Via the occasioning of this device, we are then able to include some different members, e.g., ethylene glycol, and to exclude others, e.g., milk. This device then minimally helps us to see how it is possible to hear alcohol and antifreeze as being commonsense alternatives.

Although the device may be of some help in natural conversation, this can be troublesome within the class. As seen earlier some seemingly alternative words e.g., oxygen and air in example (47),

substances and particles in (40), may be for classroom purposes not alternatives, but instead one will act as a more 'correct' answer. Again the important point to be remembered here is that the decidability of such alternatives is solely a teacher's concern. Where the teacher does not decide among alternatives, as in this case above, then the utterance remains ambiguous.

Teacher's overt corrections, although generally withheld in conversation so as to allow pupils to supply a correction, may also manage much more subtle and delicate interactional tasks. As seen here, they may imply that the wrong pupil-answer was an inconsequential mistake (59). They may also function so as to leave ambiguous whether a word serves as a correction or not (60).

4.3. Postscript - Corrections within Oral Reading Sequences and Teaching Sequences

In the data so far there has been a marked tendency for teachers to withhold correcting pupils outright. This appears to be systematically related to a prevailing concern of teachers within teaching sequences to evaluate their pupils' knowledge. For teachers, one routine method of doing this is to force pupils into providing correct answers, although those answers are known before they are even asked.

In contrast to this, outright corrections by teachers in initial turn after an error do occur frequently in oral reading sequences. Hall (1980) has noted that both teachers and pupils correct outright in such sequences. In terms of teacher behaviour this is in marked contrast to the usual presence of 'invitations to

correct' in such sequential positions. Let us then compare the way that correction sequences are handled in oral reading sequences, with teaching sequences.

Drew (1979) gives us the following example of a teacher correcting a pupil in a reading sequence.

(61)

R: I AM TALL SAID THE
(2.0)

((T looks from text to R shapes lips
to indicate sound))

R: tower

T: → chimney

R: chimbley

T: It's a big factory chimney isn't it.

The example shows a systematic feature of such a correction sequence, in that the teacher's correction sequence does not terminate the sequence, as it does in (59) above. Instead a sequential next (and this is also evident from examples in Hall's 1980 paper) on the part of the pupil is to acknowledge that correction by repeating it, including the correction and carrying on reading. Thus a sequential structure for such correction sequences can be displayed in the following manner.

(62) P: Utterance (including incorrect word/phrase)
T: Correction
P: Acknowledgement

Because of this different sequential structure an underlying similarity appears between the two types of sequence. In both, the pupil is

compelled to produce a correct answer. In the teaching sequence, this is achieved by the teacher asking for clarification: in the oral reading sequence, by the pupil repeating the correction, whilst incorporating it into his turn at reading. What both of these turns do is to demonstrate that the pupil has mastery of the correction. As oral reading sequences seem to involve within their design, a concern with proper pronunciation and placement of the word in a correct reading sequence, then even with a teacher's overt correction, a pupil still faces a potential problem of repeating it and placing it correctly within the reading sequence. It is by forcing the pupil in both instances to display his understanding of a correction, that both sequences may be attempting to achieve similar ends, evaluating the pupil's comprehension. For if, in the reading sequence the pupil did not have to incorporate the correction correctly, then it would remain ambiguous, whether or not he had really comprehended.

Although the oral reading sequences do not seem to display this preference for withholding outright correction, they still display a major similarity with the correction sequences in this data. This similarity is manifested in that both require pupils' displays of comprehension. This is achieved in teaching sequences by teachers inviting correction. In the oral reading sequences, it is accomplished by pupils' acknowledgements of the teacher's corrections.

Thus members routinely use rather varied interactional strategies to accomplish similar ends, based on the concerns of the classroom activity in which they are engaged at that time.

FOOTNOTES

¹In the data analysed in this corpus, two of the three categories of 'repair' which SJS recognised were present: 'corrections' and 'no hearable error, mistake or fault'. Thus our analysis is restricted to these two. We have already pointed out (page 65) that in the latter category although a complete word is not being replaced, a segment of a word is. Because of this similarity in terms of replacement we will continue to use the term correction to cover both these categories. Jefferson (1974) discusses examples like the latter and refers to them as 'error correction formats. She gives the following example of one of these formats: ". . . k-Negro . . . ' standing as an instance of the partially verbalised Error Correction Format, starting to say 'colored' and specifically, recognisably, substituting 'Negro'." (1974:193).

²Corrections may appear to be a somewhat misleading term, in the sense that we do not in natural conversation usually treat clarifications as having right or wrong answers. In reply to this we want to stress that in the teaching sequences being analysed here, there does seem to be a members' orientation to these clarifications being also corrections. This point is more fully discussed in 4.2.4.

³For a recent discussion of the range of interactional tasks that might be accomplished through self-correction formats, see Drew and Wootton (1980).

⁴McHoul, for instance, premised his analysis on the fact that teachers' and pupils' talk showed systematically different features.

⁵By a first pair part, we are referring to the initial element of an adjacency pair, where the occasioning of this part selects another speaker, who should then answer by giving the appropriate second pair part. By contrast, in these examples the next speaker seems to self-select rather than being selected by a relevant first pair part.

⁶By the term 'retrospectively' we mean to highlight this as one means by which pupils can come to understand talk. Although an utterance may be potentially ambiguous, subsequent talk may help to disambiguate, such that one comes to understand the meaning at a later point in the conversation.

⁷By 'candidate correction' what is implied here is that a correction is being given, because it does not repeat parts of the prior utterance, but introduces a potential replacement. It is a 'candidate' because it is being offered tentatively and is thus liable to be rejected.

⁸As we have seen clarification requests preserve a systematic ambiguity about them. Sequential nexts include restatements/confirmations or corrections. However, by the utterance design alone, it is impossible to determine the speaker's intention. I have chosen here to outline both possibilities, in order to highlight this ambiguity as it is relevant to the present discussion.

⁹Although we might be able to label this utterance with the commonsense label 'clue', I have refrained from speculating on the possible features of this label, as little work has been done on such terms.

¹⁰The type of request sequences which Wootton investigated were "sequences in which the child asks the parent if it can have or do X, if the parent will do X for the child, if the parent will give X to the child, sequences largely initiated by what speech act analysts would call indirect requests" (n.d.:4).

Chapter 5

PUPILS AS CORRECTORS

We saw in the last chapter an orientation by all concerned to the teacher as the arbiter and controller of correction sequences. This does not, however, prevent the occurrence of corrections and correction-initiations from pupils. They not only correct in these sequences, but are also able to accomplish a limited range of other interactional tasks (e.g., 'paying attention', 'recognising trick questions') while still displaying an orientation to this preference for teacher correction.

Pupils also correct other pupils. Although this phenomenon is empirically infrequent, it is interesting for it demonstrates marked differences from the ways that teacher and pupils correct each other. An investigation into this phenomenon enables us to give further evidence for the social fact of the teacher being the authority figure in the classroom.

5.1. Pupils Seeking Correction from Teachers

On studying the data one discovers a number of similarities and differences between the ways that pupils correct and the ways that teachers correct. In terms of similarities, pupils use many of the same correction formats as teachers (e.g., confirmation requests, restatement requests, challenges). However the way such pupil utter-

ances are treated sequentially by teachers differs in many respects from the ways that pupils treat similar teacher utterances. Also, at a gross intuitive level, such utterance types as the above are much rarer coming from pupils than from teachers.

5.1.1. The Pupil as a Requester of Clarification

Pupils predominantly use formats which we earlier have labelled Clarification Requests (comparable to other-initiations in the SJS paper). They consist of confirmation and restatement requests.

5.1.2. The Restatement Request

An example of this type of request appears in the following:

- (63) T: And John which one is the ring planet?
 P: → The what?
 T: The ring planet.

Here the pupil selected to speak gives the restatement request rather than a self-selecting student. The teacher then proceeds to give a restatement. There are two noteworthy points in these types of sequences. Firstly, the pupils do not provide confirmations of the restatements/ corrections given by the teachers. By not providing such confirmations, pupils show that their clarification requests are to be taken as genuine requests for information. This then displays an affinity with correction sequences in natural conversation, where 'Other' accepts the greater claim to knowledge exhibited by 'Self'. Secondly, the teacher treats it as an opportunity to restate rather than to correct himself.

5.1.3. The Confirmation Request

(64)

- 1 T: how long is a day on Venus?
 2 P: one day
 3 T: one day [heh] that's a good answer [one] heh heh
 4 Ps: [heh]
 5 P: . 225
 6 T: 225 earth days but it's still only one day on Venus
 7 P: → 225 earth days? is
 8 T: [earth days]
 9 P: is=
 10 T: = revolution around the sun
 11 P': how many
 12 Ps: [earth days]
 13 → [days or [year]]
 14 [225]
 15 T: Oh, I'm sorry, yes it's a year=
 16 P: =yeah

In line 7 we get a partial repeat of the trouble source turn plus a question intonation. Two significant features are present in this sequence. Firstly, the sequence appears to constitute a violation of the turn-taking rules given by McHoul (1978:186-7) in terms of pupil self-selection. However on close inspection, the 'violation' may have been strategically placed and designed by the pupil. For instance, it is not uttered immediately after the trouble source word, where it might be heard as 'interruptive', but is delayed in the turn until a possible transition space. Secondly, the design of the utterance may have been selected to achieve certain interactional ends. By preserving the form of a confirmation request rather than a restatement

request (i.e., the use of '225 earth days?' rather than 'what?'), it indicates that the pupil's problem was not one of simply mishearing but was one of misunderstanding. This selection displays an awareness, by the pupils, that they may have a responsibility to pay attention to all classroom talk.¹ They must do more than just attend to those aspects addressed specifically to them individually. The use of this confirmation request may be intended to demonstrate that the pupil was paying attention (via the repetition of the prior utterance) but yet still failed to understand. Through the utterance design used, the pupil may be prospectively² countering any possible inferences that he was 'not listening' or 'not paying attention'. For such inferences could result in reprimands from the teacher.

A notable feature about both these types of clarification requests is that consistently the teacher does not treat them as opportunities to correct. As we have noted, these clarification requests by the pupils may be intended for teachers to use them as 'invitations to self-correct'. But what is made clear here is that by the design of his turn, the teacher demonstrates his interpretation of it. This is simultaneously made publicly available to the pupil who requested such clarification. Thus a pupil may retrospectively discover that the teacher has misinterpreted his (the pupil's) prior 'invitation to self-correct'. For the teacher treats it not as a request for correction but as a request for confirmation. Teachers display their understanding of 'clarification requests' overwhelmingly as setting up confirmations or restatements but not corrections in the next conversational slot. Such formats are in stark contrast to the pupils'

tendency to treat such requests as implying the need for correction. Here in fine detail is a warrant for the claim that the teacher has greater knowledge, he is capable of obtaining corrections immediately from the pupils, whereas the pupils are not able to reciprocate this treatment.

So far we have seen pupils inviting teachers to correct where it might be debatable whether they had as much knowledge as the teacher. Let us now consider an example where pupils may be considered to have such knowledge.

5.1.3.1. The Confirmation Request where the Pupil
has an Equal/Greater Claim to Knowledge

The following extract comes from the beginning of a science lesson with a class of grade nine pupils.

- (65) 1 T: Grade 8's
 2 P: → Grade 8's?
 3 T: Well you're acting like grade 8's

Again there is a confirmation request format in line 2. However neither an explicit confirmation or correction is given in T's next utterance. This utterance seems to concede the force of the prior request, but it does not incorporate the desired correction, 'grade 9's'. The factual status of the term 'grade 8's', in this sequence, is not an uncertain matter. In other words, pupils might conventionally be expected to know certain basic facts about themselves: name, age, address, grade. Although it is likely that the child does know his grade number in (65) above, his format preserves the design of a

confirmation request rather than an outright rejection or correction. That is, we do not find, in such sequences, pupils giving rejection components such as, 'No, we're not' or outright corrections, e.g., 'grade 9's'.

There may be good interactional reasons for this type of behaviour. Although the teacher may momentarily have forgotten which grade level he was teaching, it is also possible that he selected the term 'grade 8's' rather than 'grade 9's' so as to set up the sequence which ensued, for that may act as an effective attention-getting or control mechanism. Whichever meaning was intended, it still constitutes a pupil's problem to make some sense of it and to reply appropriately.

In choosing to engage in some form of correction, (rather than saying nothing) a pupil has the choice of inviting correction or of overtly correcting. In 5.3 we examine in detail the possible consequences of outrightly correcting a teacher. By so doing pupils may be seen to be 'cheeky' or 'rude' where this might also lead to a number of detrimental consequences (e.g., reprimands). Thus an apparent concern of pupils which might prevent them from correcting outright is this knowledge of the conversational consequences of such acts, consequences which they may wish to avoid. For this reason the pupil's utterance may have been selected to fulfil the task of leaving it open whether the teacher used the term 'grade 8's' deliberately or not.

The most interesting point is that pupils do not lay claim to equal knowledge in their speech even when they might be expected to have those equal claims. This is in contrast to similar sequences in

natural conversation, where 'outright corrections' are quite acceptable in certain contexts. Consider the following hypothetical example:

- (66) A: Bill, let me introduce you to Diane
 Diana: → Diana
 A: Diana, sorry, Bill this is Diana

Here an outright correction is given and taken up into the conversation easily. This seems to be one of the few types of examples in which 'Other' can claim more adequate knowledge than 'Self'. It is not a problem for 'Other' to know the correction. Although we may see the same situation in (65) above, the pupil still uses a different format.

5.2 The Management of Corrections by Pupils

Section 4.1 showed that pupils may find it difficult to formulate confirmation requests which are treated as 'invitations to self-correct' by teachers. If this poses difficulties for pupils we might expect that they have means of overcoming these difficulties. One such means occurs in the following:

- (67)
- | | | |
|----|-----|---|
| 1 | T: | 225 earth days but it's still only one day on Venus |
| 2 | P: | → 225 earth days? [is |
| 3 | T: | earth days] |
| 4 | P: | is= |
| 5 | T: | =revolution around the sun |
| 6 | P': | how many? |
| 7 | Ps: | [earth days |
| 8 | | → [days or [year] |
| 9 | | [225]] |
| 10 | T: | Oh I'm sorry, yes it's a year= |
| 11 | P: | =yeah |

A possible 'invitation to self-correct' can be noted in line 2, however this seems to be treated as a request for confirmation. Subsequently, a number of other queries and answers to such queries are heard mainly amongst the pupils. Line 8 can be heard as a reformulation of the 'invitation to self-correct' of line 2. This time it does not follow the same format as the one in line 2. It preserves a particular feature of the prior invitation, -'days' but introduces an element which was not part of the prior talk, -'year'. This element is also phonologically dissimilar to 'days', and thus sets itself up not as a type of 'hearing check', in a way that 'days or trays?' might have been. It seems to make itself, by virtue of its design, into a specific 'invitation to self-correct'³ rather than a simple confirmation request. This leads to a correction on the part of the teacher. However his correction employs an apology as well as a correction. As others have noted (e.g., Drew 1979:21fn.) corrections are often included with apologies in natural conversation. By comparison, in this data the teacher is the only one to include apologies in his corrections. This asymmetry should alert us to a systematic difference between these corrections. By including an apology the teacher accepts the correction as being something that was an error on his part, something for which he may be held responsible. In contrast, the fact that pupils routinely do not include apologies, may make us aware not that they are being impolite, but that 'making errors' is part and parcel of school life. It is something which is expected of them, which is part of the teaching process and something for which they are not held responsible.

Because of these different systematic features of corrections

in classes, pupils when attempting to correct teachers, must be prepared to indulge in longer sequences of talk in order to achieve such ends.

5.3 Pupils' Outright Corrections—Their Reprimandable Nature

Sections 4.2.7.1. and 4.2.8. argued that teacher's correction formats often possess turn designs which suggest that they function as 'strong rejections' of a prior answer. We also noted that in normal conversation those might be heard as contradictions, but that in classrooms they did not appear to be treated as such, in terms of the sequential nexts which they set up. When we investigate pupils' outright corrections of teachers, differences occur, not only when compared with such utterances in natural conversation but also with similar ones uttered by teachers.

(68)

- 1 T: It blocked out the sun, which is called a total
- 2 eclipse, by the way, you know that already
- 3 P: → It wasn't
- 4 T: You could see, don't get technical, [you could see the corona
- 5 Ps: [heh, heh

In (68) above the teacher does not treat line 3 as a contradiction, in the sense that he does not reply appropriately with one of the relevant sequential nexts for natural conversation, namely a defence or an admission. Neither does he treat it in the way that pupils responded to teacher's outright corrections as sequence terminators (i.e., not setting up any sequential next on the part of the pupil). Instead the

teacher treats the pupil's utterance as a noticeable, commentable affair. He appears to respond to the form of the utterance, in the sense of its challenging nature, rather than the factual content of that utterance. The teacher's utterance "Don't get technical" seems to snub or to reprimand⁵ the pupil, and because of its deviation from our expectations for normal conversation, then it is here that we can make inferences about one person trying to dominate another.⁶ Within this stretch of talk there are two identifiable deviations. Firstly, after the production of a challenge/contradiction by a pupil, the teacher produced a reprimand,⁷ a type of complaint. This did not follow the sequential expectations for natural conversation, and so constitutes a minimal systematic difference for classroom talk. Secondly, if within natural conversation a complaint is produced, then a sequential next is either an acceptance or a denial. The sequential organisation for these seems to be:

- (69) A: complaint
 B: defence/admission
 A: rejection/acceptance

(adapted from Atkinson and Drew 1979:184-6)

where a relevant third utterance on A's part is to either accept or reject the prior utterance. This can be demonstrated in the following example,

(70)

- T: Steve er::m (always) seems to make sarcastic comments
en(s) things like(.) er:m its one of my:: yuhn the
way I speak:k (.) en things like tha:,
(1.8)
- T: Sor'a goes round sorta speaking (.) very posh (complaint)
°e(h)n
(5.0)
- S: → Alrigh' I'm sorry I do tha', (.) but some(s)times (apology-
its jus my way uva jo:ke un I know no-hardly defence)
anybody likes my way (.) having jokes,=
- T: → = ↑ its not joke it ↑ a:ll its (rejection
of
defence)

(Atkinson and Drew 1979:185)

where S gives a defence to T's complaint which T then goes on to reject.

In contrast to such sequences, in the classroom data, after the complaint, the pupil does not either defend or admit the claim, he says nothing. Here too there is a deviation from natural conversation.

Pupils seem to be objects of complaints, but without any recourse or right to defend themselves. As demonstrated here, when pupils try to correct outright, teachers not only ignore normal conversational expectations, but do so without consequence. Pupils do not protest⁸ this issue.

Where pupils can be seen to protest (and thus to be heard as treating the talk as normal conversation) then teachers treat this too as a noticeable and reprimandable matter. Hammersley gives the following example:

(71)

((Pupil asks to go to the toilet))

T: You're a scrounger, you're always scrounging

P: I'm not, is wanting to go to the toilet scrounging?

T: → Don't shout at me. Stand up straight when you're being talked to. Ten minutes, if you're any longer I'll keep you in playtime or dinnertime.

(1976:107)

In (71), the teacher treats the pupil's request to go to the toilet as a complainable matter. The pupil appears to defend his request (as might be expected in natural conversation) but in the third slot, we get another complaint, a reprimand. By contrast in natural conversation, an acceptance or rejection would be expected in this slot.

For our purposes, it is important to stress that teachers treat pupils' attempts at outright corrections in ways very different from natural conversation. They treat them as reprimandable or complainable matters, and thus appear to be asserting their claim to control over these children. Concomitant with that is the overwhelming preponderance of pupils accepting that authority, at least in their talk. Only in (71) above, does this become a matter of open dispute between teacher and pupil.

The upshot of all this is that for pupils it is a dispreferred activity to correct teachers overtly. Not only do outright corrections lead to systematic reprimands from the teacher, but they may also be inferable as being the product of 'rude' or 'cheeky' pupils. We might also expect pupils to know this and to orient to it. Thus as we saw in 5.1, pupils may prospectively design their utterances so as to

accomplish simultaneously different tasks. They may want to avoid possible reprimands, but at the same time still aim to obtain a correction from the teacher.

5.4. Two Systematic Environments for Pupils' Outright Corrections of Teachers

We have established a preference for pupils to use some type of the clarification request format so as to obtain correction, as outright corrections are seen to be reprimandable utterances. However there do occur in the data some outright corrections which are not heard as challenges. These appear in a very limited, but systematic environment.

They occur in at least the following sequential positions; after 'slips of the tongue' and after 'con questions'. The point of this exercise is not merely to demonstrate violations from a general tendency, but rather to show in empirical detail, the delicate type of interactional skill that pupils can bring to bear in classroom encounters.

5.4.1. Slips of the Tongue

In the example below, we can hear the teacher producing the word 'spun' within his utterance. This seems to be a slip of the tongue.

- (72) 1 T: O.K. Marcy, Marcy, how about the dark spots? Letter D the
 2 dark spots showing regions of solar storms. What's the da-
 3 what's it called?
 4 P: ()
 5 T: → spun s-, yeah, spun? sun [s-, getting my words mixed, I'm
 6 P: [Sun spots
 7 T: getting my murds wixed up

Evidence for this comes from a number of factors in the text. Firstly, the word 'spun' in English is not a noun but a verb; here it appears in a noun-like position. Secondly, later on in the teacher's utterance he claims that he is getting his words mixed up. This implies that somewhere in his utterance, he has made an error. He also cuts himself off in mid turn ('spun s-'), a method which is normally associated (as we have seen, page 48) with demonstrating that a self-correction is coming up. Further evidence that the teacher treats it as an error comes from the utterance format used, which is similar to a 'clarification request' given usually by Other. He repeats the trouble source word 'spun?', but with rising intonation, as if to question it. This clarification request differs from others in the data, for it occurs within Self's turn. Thus it may be ambiguous whether in the example Self is asking himself or others to help correct him.

In order to correct the teacher any potential corrector has a number of ways of proceeding. One route is via the fact that the teacher's initial question made reference to a multiple choice test which the pupils had already finished. Therefore the correct answer was one of four which the pupils had in front of them, which they had answered before. Secondly, pupils could use the answer given by Marcy, which the teacher confirms in his utterance, line 5. Thirdly, they could analyse the component 'spun s-' to locate this as a mispronunciation of sun 'spots'. Thus any self-selecting pupil would be in a position to provide the correct answer.

Although we now have grounds for asserting that any pupil might know the correct answer, it may still be a problem why a pupil should self-select to correct. One possible solution to this member's problem trades on the ambiguity within the teacher's utterance. If this format of locating the trouble source (via 'spun?') is hearable as an invitation to Other, then any pupil can take this opportunity to give the correction, for such a correction will function as the second pair part of an adjacency pair, where Self (the teacher) is inviting somebody else (Other) to correct him.⁹

Again in this sequence it can be heard that pupils are displaying their awareness of the teacher's control of knowledge. For they overtly correct when it is obvious to them that the teacher will agree on that correction, and thus it is not subject to teacher evaluation. Here they give a correction, which attends not to a competing claim to knowledge, but merely to the mispronunciation of a word.

5.4.2. The 'Con' Question

A further example of pupils overtly correcting the teacher occurs in the following example.

(73)

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|--|
| 1 | T: | We have four states of matter, right Peter. () Kelly () Dave= | = $\begin{cases} \text{No} \\ \text{No} \end{cases}$ |
| 2 | P ^{''} : | | |
| 3 | P ['] : | | |
| 4 | T: | Four states of matter ? Dave | [?Sean, four states of matter
three |
| 5 | P: | | |
| 6 | P ^{''} : | →three, you said there were three | |
| 7 | T: | Listen there are only | [three states
three |
| 8 | Ps: | | |

The teacher's initial utterance, by its design, seems to set up an invitation to confirm on the part of the pupils. French and MacLure (1979)¹⁰ have outlined similar types of questions and claimed that they set up expectations that a sequential next will be a confirmation. "This type of reformulator . . . merely requests the child to confirm this value." (1979:18).

By the design of such utterances, a confirmation is expected, whatever the empirical content of the question. Thus a pupil might be able to use such a design, rather than the content of the turn, to give an appropriate answer. In other words, if children merely have to attend to the form of the utterance rather than its content, then they do not have to display their understanding of what that utterance was. This being the case, teachers may also use such devices to test comprehension. But in order to do this teachers must design their utterances such that the form sets up a confirmation while the content sets up an expectation for a disconfirmation, or vice versa. Via this procedure, teachers may then be able to evaluate the replies that pupils give.

In (73) above the teacher repeats his question a number of times and obtains after some delay, a number of rejections, an outright correction, plus the same correction with an account, -'three you said there were three'. These pupil replies seem to attend to the dispreferred status of pupils overtly correcting teachers. Firstly, like many other dispreferred activities, they are systematically delayed, such that in these and similar environments one would expect pauses before pupil replies. Secondly, the presence of an account in

one answer is not a random event but displays the orientation that the pupil realises that overt corrections have a dispreferred status.

As was mentioned in chapter two, when dispreferred utterances are given (e.g., refusals to invitations, rejections of accusations), they are often included with account-type components, rather than being done as simple refusals or rejections.

(74)

- B: Uh if you'd care to come over and visit a little while this morning I'll give you a cup of coffee
- A: → hehh Well that's awfully sweet of you, I don't think I can make it this morning .hh uhm I'm running an ad in the paper and- and uh I have to stay near the phone.

(Atkinson and Drew 1979:138)

Thus the pupil's correction-plus-account in (73) may be seen to be prospectively managed to 'soften' the force of his correction.

The account gives grounds for the disagreement and thus attempts to forestall any possibility of a reprimand, which as we saw in 4.3 is likely to occur in similar situations. Notably, the account is not just any account (e.g., 'I read it in a book') but it is one that specifically displays an orientation to the teacher as the arbiter of what counts as knowledge. The account claims that the grounds for this knowledge come from the asker of the question, the teacher. It tends to diminish any claims to be challenging the authority of the teacher's knowledge. This, thus, weakens the possibility that a sequential next in the talk might be some type of reprimand by the teacher.

This question-answer sequence appeared at first to constitute a violation of the general tendency found within the data, a preference for pupils not to overtly correct teachers. Through a close inspection, however, we discovered that it was in no way a random deviation. The analysis showed that by employing such a turn design, the teacher could use a novel method of evaluating pupils' knowledge. This type of sequence we have labelled the 'con' question, because as has been made clear, the teacher by mixing up utterance design and utterance content, attempted to 'con' his charges. 'Con' is a member's term, for in a similar sequence, the teacher explicitly refers to such verbal behaviour as a 'con'.¹¹

As this example has shown, classroom interaction is not rigidly determined by classroom rules which teacher and pupil blindly follow. For each incident that occurs, it is a member's accomplishment to decide whether or not any general rule is applicable. Although participants may accept that both tacit and explicit rules exist (e.g., that pupils don't challenge or contradict the teacher's knowledge), they are not 'judgmental dopes' in the sense that they are bound to follow them.¹² People routinely come to decisions about the applicability of rules in different contexts under different circumstances, and demonstrate their commonsense analytic competence in the process.

5.4.3. An Apparent Exception

So far we have seen that 'legitimate' outright corrections of teachers by pupils have taken place in a limited number of sequential environments. Nevertheless in the data there are a small number of

examples which might appear to be exceptions to this. Let us investigate one of these.

(75)

- 1 T: is a theory a hypothesis?
- 2 Ps: no
- 3 no
- 4 T: it is, oh yes it is. A theory is a hypothesis, but
- 5 it's a hypothesis that's been [()] ah proven?
- 6 P:
- 7 P: tried?
- 8 P: → if it's been proven then it's not a hypothesis
- 9 T: O.K. now this is, this is where I've been trying to
- 10 get at

In the example above, the teacher disconfirms a prior answer by stating that a theory is a hypothesis. But a pupil in line 8 corrects the teacher. This pupil may also be heard to challenge the content of the teacher's prior utterance. The teacher appears to neither accept the force of the challenge nor does he reprimand the offending pupil. What he does is to incorporate relevant aspects of that utterance into his next turn, but without addressing its content. It was pointed out in our discussion of adjacency pairs, that if an appropriate second pair part is absent, then that is a noticeable absence. Thus if a challenge is not met with one of its relevant nexts, then this is a 'commentable' matter. We might get other participants complaining that someone is 'evading the issue' or 'changing the subject'. But as we have also seen in section 5.3 teachers may reply to pupils' challenges with reprimands thus demonstrating their authority over their pupils. In

this example, the teacher does not appear to treat it as a challenge. Although its intention may have been that (and the teacher may have recognised it as such), he may have deliberately ignored its challenging nature and replied to it as merely an 'interesting point'.

The wider application that this may have for co-participants (and for analysts) is evident. If a teacher treats an utterance as an 'interesting point' rather than a 'challenge', this may allow pupils to form certain inferences. One such inference could be that the teacher is in a lenient mood. Such inferences are of course subject to members' confirmation or disconfirmation in the subsequent talk. Nevertheless it is through the close observation of such talk, that we are able to see exactly how such inferences are made.

In summary, although teachers and pupils use similar formats for correcting and inviting correction, such formats are differently treated. This last section has demonstrated that only teachers treat pupil challenges as reprehensible matters. Also, pupils do not display any orientation to making complaints against a teacher, when in natural conversation there might appear to be adequate grounds for this. Once again the unequal conversational rights of teachers and pupils are displayed through the way that they organise their talk.

5.5 Pupils' Correction of Other Pupils

Our contention so far has been that teachers and pupils orient to the 'fact' that teachers are able to hold authority over pupils to some extent. This is associated with the unequal distribution of knowledge conventionally associated with such positions. Because of

this, we would expect that pupils correcting pupils should exhibit marked differences from either the ways that teachers correct pupils, or pupils correct teachers. This is due to the belief that only teachers can legitimately claim the correctness of their knowledge. Pupils, in comparison, can only hope that their versions of correct answers are accepted by the teacher.

In the data corpus such expectations are borne out. Correction among pupils was very rare in the teaching sequences observed. However pupil-pupil correction did occur in two systematic environments within the data. It occurred in sequences where pupils read from textbooks and in episodes in which pupils functioned as teachers. (A similar phenomenon to the former has been observed more explicitly in 'oral reading sequences' by a number of recent researchers, namely, Drew (1979), Heap (1979) and Hall (1980).)

In the pupil-as-teacher episode, a pupil acted as a teacher and taught the class. This episode is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, if through their talk pupils do not treat the pupil/teacher in the same fashion as they did the actual teacher, (and we can investigate this once again via correction sequences) then we can claim that they are orienting to the pupil not as a teacher but as a pupil. Secondly, it highlights the members' problem of accomplishing social roles through interaction. If one can pass as a teacher, then for practical purposes, one is a teacher.¹³ As many student teachers have discovered, it is not merely the fact that one is introduced as a teacher that ensures that one will be treated as such. These social 'roles' must be continually displayed and made public through

interaction with the pupils, i.e., it is a process¹⁴ rather than a pre-defined factual matter. Although it may appear obvious that pupils regard the pupil/teacher as a pupil rather than a teacher, it is important that we as analysts ground our claims in those features which are oriented to by the participants. Although we might want to invoke such seemingly relevant features as age, size, status differences, only those features which can be warrantably claimed as members' orientations will be included in an ethnomethodological analysis. For our purposes, many of these warrantable features are displayed in the talk between pupils and the pupil/teacher. Through our study of the other pupils' behaviour, it can be claimed that they do not treat the pupil/teacher as a teacher. It is through the close examination of this interaction that one can demonstrate precisely how the pupils reject the pupil/teacher's 'passing'.

5.5.1. Pupils' Outright Correction of Other Pupils

In the data corpus there are a number of examples of pupils self-selecting to correct other pupils. Such instances of self-selection are not accounted for within McHoul's framework. But as Heap (1979) and Hall (1980) have demonstrated, pupils routinely correct other pupils without reprimands in certain environments, notably in 'oral reading sequences'. These corrections are regularly made in an overt form.

- (76) 1 Olga: AND TOOK OUT HIS TIS TAS
 2 ? : → Telescope
 3 Olga: TELESCOPE
 4 T : MmHm (indicates confirmation)

(Hall 1980:2)

Here in line 2 an unknown pupil self-selects to correct a pupil.¹⁵ Because the text of the book is something which is a resource for all the readers in such sequences, Heap has suggested that such corrections are prospectively managed by pupils. Thus they know the correction as soon as they hear the trouble, if they have been following along in their books.

This phenomenon also occurs in this data corpus

- (77) P: WHY IS IT EASIER TO COMPRESS A GAS THAN A SOLID
 P': → than a liquid
 P'': → than a liquid

The point of this comparison is to show that pupils do not randomly choose to correct outright, but do so in situations where they can be relatively certain that the correction they give will be 'correct'. By this we mean that their corrections will be heard to be challenging the prior pupil but not the teacher. For as pupils will have reflexively discovered, in the great majority of oral reading sequences, the teacher's correct version will be identical with that of the book. Thus pupils' overt correction here still display an awareness that the teacher is the controller of knowledge.

5.5.2. The Pupil as Teacher

This provided an interesting quasi-experimental study, instigated by the class teacher. It supplied systematic grounds for the uncovering of the ways that pupils attempted to correct a pupil-as-teacher compared to when pupils correct their usual teacher. It consisted of one of the pupils getting up in front of the class and

acting as a teacher by giving a presentation.

Two important differences were discovered in these correction sequences:

- (a) Pupils self-selected 'interruptively'.
- (b) Pupils did not accept the sole adequacy of the pupil/teacher's corrections.

Let us explicate these points in detail.

5.5.2.1. Pupils Self-Selecting 'Interruptively'

In this presentation the format took the shape of a talk that was read aloud from notes made by the pupil/teacher. Frequently in the data there appear clarification requests of the restatement and confirmation request kind.

(78)

- | | | | |
|----|------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | P/T: | THEN THERE IS THE BARRED SPIRAL | GA-GALAXY |
| 2 | P: | → | [what? |
| 3 | P: | → | what? |
| 4 | P/T: | barred spiral | |
| 5 | P: | barred? | |
| 6 | P/T: | barred | |
| 7 | P: | [barred? | |
| 8 | P: | [how do you | |
| 9 | P: | → | barred as in (1) |
| 10 | P: | b-a-r-d? | |
| 11 | P/T: | b-a-r-r-e-d | |

(79)

- | | |
|------|---|
| P/T: | GALAXIES ARE KNOWN AS EK-EXTRA GALACTIC NEBULAS |
| P: | → eh what? |
| P': | → what? |
| P": | is that important? |

In the data the restatement requests (e.g., lines 2, 3 of (78)) are done by self-selecting pupils. In the teacher-pupil sequences discussed earlier (5.1.2.), restatement requests were not done by self-selecting pupils. This thus constitutes a minimal systematic difference. In (78) and (79) pupil utterances are also placed so as not to withhold the request, and thus may appear to be interruptive. These requests immediately follow the trouble-source word or overlap with it. For example, one could hear 'what?' in line 2 of (78) as an interruption because it is done in overlap. In (79) not only do the restatement requests come within someone's turn at reading, they come immediately after the trouble-source word. They do not give the pupil/teacher any chance to elaborate on what an 'extra-galactic nebula' might be. We might compare this with natural conversation or normal classroom talk (normal in the sense that the usual teacher is acting as teacher). Here pupils might delay such requests in the expectation that the term might be repeated or elaborated on.¹⁷ In this way they could solve their problem without claims of 'rudeness' being inferable. By comparison, the requests in (78) and (79) may be heard to be 'interruptive' and so contrast with restatement requests in other portions of the data.

We can also observe that the designs of these clarification requests include restatement requests. We noted in 5.1.3. that pupils requesting clarification did not use such formats, for these could be heard as pupils 'not paying attention', where 'not paying attention' might be a reprimandable affair. Here restatement requests, such as 'what?', appear and are not reprimanded by the pupil/teacher. Thus

the systematic occurrence of restatement requests from the pupils and the absence of reprimands from the pupil/teacher in these sequences, both point to the hearable differences between this talk and that of the usual teacher and pupils.

5.5.2.2. The Apparent Inadequacy of the Pupil/Teacher's Corrections

We also noted that the adequacy of the corrections given by the pupil/teacher was questioned. This also differs markedly from sequences with the adult teacher. Specifically the pupils seem to dispute the adequacy of the pupil/teacher's restatements and persist in seeking corrections/restatements which cater to their own special concerns. The ways that they do this involve using formats which were previously observed as being predominantly teacher (rather than pupil) or natural conversation designs.

In our investigation of the ways that pupils invited teachers to correct themselves (5.1.1.-5.1.4., 5.2.) these formats displayed certain sequential features:

(80) P: Clarification request
 T: Confirmation

However, in lines 5, 6 and 7 of (78) above, the sequence takes the following form:

(81) P: Confirmation request
 P/T: Confirmation
 P: Repeat of Confirmation request

This sequence displays by its design that the pupil/teacher's

confirmation is held to be inadequate, and it might be heard that the answer is being disputed. We can claim this because as we have seen, pupils' clarification requests which do not succeed initially (in getting a correction) are usually changed in form, e.g., they are made more explicit (cf. 5.2.). In (78), the same format 'barred?' is used. Not only is this a repetition of the original clarification request, but it is placed immediately after the pupil/teacher's clarification. Because of this sequential position, it can be heard to be disputing (or at least questioning the adequacy of) the pupil/teacher's prior utterance.

Pupils also use subsequent formats which are more characteristic of teachers' and natural conversationalists' formats. In line 9 of (78) a format similar to a type of clarification request used by the teacher to produce a collaborative correction (cf. 4.2.6.) is used by a pupil. Here the pupil specifically delimits the type of correction that he requires. The pupil/teacher's job is then to finish the phrase which the other pupil has started.

The confirmation request in line 10 of (78) is reminiscent of a particular type that was noted in 4.2.2.3., namely the 'candidate correction'. The pupil seems to demonstrate that he is requiring confirmation rather than seeking to evaluate. This request by its design, offers a possible correction, which the pupil/teacher can either confirm or correct. Again the pupil demonstrates what his particular problem with the trouble-source word is.¹⁹

What is of significance here are the pupils successive attempts to obtain a correction which is satisfactory to them (and in this

respect it has a number of affinities with 5.2.). However, the ways in which this is done demonstrate that pupils orient to correction sequences with pupil/teachers in very different ways than they do with the usual teacher.

5.6 Conclusion

Although pupils use similar formats to teachers for correcting and inviting correction, such formats display marked differences in terms of how they are utilised. They not only affect the sequential organisation of the talk, but they are also selectively chosen by pupils to accomplish a variety of their practical concerns. Summarily the following empirical observations can be made.

- (a) Self-selecting pupils routinely choose confirmation rather than restatement requests to seek clarification from the teacher. These are systematically treated by teachers as seeking confirmation rather than correction.
- (b) Pupils also use such confirmation requests even when they may appear to have enough knowledge to correct outright.
- (c) In order to obtain corrections (rather than confirmations) from teachers, pupils must indulge in an extended amount of conversational work.
- (d) After pupils' clarification requests, teachers' self-corrections may include apologies. In chapter four we saw that pupils' self-correction routinely did not.
- (e) Outright corrections by pupils are treated as reprimandable matters. Routinely such reprimands are not disputed by the pupils.

- (f) Although outright corrections which are not reprimanded do occur, they appear in environments where they do not challenge the teacher's knowledge.

These major differences between the ways that teachers handle correction sequences and those of pupils lead us to a consideration of their wider implications. Most fundamentally it allows us to substantiate our initial claim that both teachers and pupils orient to the teacher as an authority figure in the classroom. This has been evidenced in two ways. Firstly, that pupils orient, via the types of clarification request which they select, to the avoidance of potential reprimands for 'not paying attention'. Secondly and more pervasively, teachers and pupils both orient to the dispreferred status of pupils outrightly correcting teachers.

For pupils this is manifested, for example, in the fact that they often do not 'overtly correct' even though they may have enough knowledge to do this. Also they need to engage in extended interactional sequences in order to obtain corrections (rather than confirmations) from their confirmation requests. For teachers, this is demonstrated by them routinely reprimanding pupils' outright corrections, (which are not subsequently disputed by the pupils). Also when the teacher does self-correct, these corrections may include apology components, which enable participants to infer that self-corrections (after a pupil's invitation) for the teachers have a dispreferred status. For teachers may have a responsibility to be right!

There are, as noted, a number of apparent exceptions to these general tendencies. Such violations, however, may be strategically

designed, as well as being inferentially rich. They may serve to demonstrate members' abilities to be practical analysts rather than rule-governed dopes. As we saw in chapter two, linguistic behaviour cannot be adequately described in terms of rules governing the situated use of language. For instance, we saw that pupils overtly corrected teachers in a number of environments (5.3., 5.4.). Most of these corrections did not threaten the teacher's control of knowledge in the classroom. However, there were observed a number of exceptions to this tendency. Any attempt to specify such language use in terms of causal rules would be problematic. It would need to explain exceptions to the rule in terms of why they should have occurred. (Since the exceptions may have been deliberately selected by the pupils, they could not be described as mere random deviations.) This would then necessitate allowing the possibility of actors choosing whether or not to follow rules, rather than being governed by them. This leads, as we also saw in chapter two, to a different conception of rules, one which stresses the member's analytic competence, rather than dismissing it.

Not only were there exceptions, but these were differently treated by the teacher. This allows us to assert not only that rules cannot predict behaviour, but that subtle inferential work may be accomplished by members and analysts in interpreting these different responses. For example in (68), the pupil's utterance was inferable as being 'cheeky' while in (75), the teacher's lack of reprimand was noticeable as being possible 'lenient' behaviour.

Having established the systematic methods by which teachers

and pupils correct each other, we could show empirically how it might be claimed that a pupil/teacher was being treated as a pupil rather than as a teacher. We were able to do this by comparing the ways that pupils corrected their normal teacher and the methods they used to correct the surrogate. By demonstrating that pupils in the latter case did not orient to the fact of the (pupil) teacher being in control of knowledge, nor the possibility of reprimand for 'not paying attention', we saw that pupils did not treat the pupil/teacher as an authority figure in the classroom.

FOOTNOTES

¹That pupils display an awareness that they have a responsibility to monitor and 'pay attention' to all the talk in the classroom has been nicely illustrated in 4.2.6. where pupils are expected to be able to correct other pupil's errors merely by being summoned by the teacher.

²The term 'prospectively' (cf. the term 'retrospectively') is used here in a technical sense to describe another member's method of producing appropriate talk. Because of their reflexive knowledge of the social situation they are in (e.g., law court, classroom, party) members may anticipate certain future verbal behaviour. Knowing this they can design their interaction so as to either achieve or forestall these probable interactional consequences.

³This may be seen to have affinities with the candidate corrections introduced in chapter three in which a replacement word was given for an error.

⁴Apologies after corrections seem to be one routine way of demonstrating that a speaker knew the 'correct version', but had merely 'slipped up', rather than him being 'unsure' or 'uncertain' of that version.

K: 'E likes that waiter over there,
(.)
A: Wait-er?
K: Waitress, (.) sorry

⁵For further discussion on the internal design and sequential organisation of 'reprimands' within classroom conversation, although not specifically related to correction sequences, see Doran (1980).

⁶The types of deviation that are of concern here are those structural ones, involved in the sequential organisation of the talk. Although it is possible to examine such deviations in terms of some type of frequency count, such an enterprise would involve treating them as a resource rather than a topic of analysis. As we noted earlier (2.2) this would be of questionable value, for it would obscure the member's work which goes into the identification of each of these utterances.

⁷The term reprimand is used here as a member's term to show the different sequential organisation such utterances have when compared to complaints in natural conversation. The term itself may appear to be a technical one, used primarily in a limited number of situations, most notably classrooms. However, as it is a members' (rather than an analyst's) technical term, we feel justified in using it here.

⁸It might be noted here that the commonsense term 'protest' is not explicated. It might constitute an interesting analysis, although outside the scope of this study, to investigate the turn designs and the sequential structures which might be involved in allowing people to decide how 'protests' are constituted.

⁹SJS briefly discuss a similar type of correction format in their paper. Here Self invites Other to correct him (i.e., Self).

B: → He had dis uh Mistuh W- whatever k- I can't
think of his first name, Watts on, the one
thet wrote // that piece,

A: → Dan Watts.

(1977:364)

¹⁰French and MacLure (1979) have outlined the different question designs that teachers employ in order to elicit different types of answers. One set of these questions which they label as 'reformulator type 5', seems to have as its function, inviting confirmation. This might then appear in the following sequential structure:

T: Invitation to confirm

P: Confirmation/disconfirmation

Where a preferred answer on the part of the pupil is to give a confirmation, the actual example they give of this is:

T: What colour have you used?

P: (No response)

T: Is it a blue?

P: (No response)

T: → It's a brown, isn't it?

(1979:12)

¹¹The actual piece of data from which the label 'con' derives is reproduced below:

T: . . . OK we know that there are four states of matter
right Darren?

P1: mhm (3) right

P: ()

T: uhh?

((Teacher writes on board))

P: ()

- T: Don't mumble sorries, tell us wh- what's going on here
How many states of matter are there Darren?
- P1: three
- T: Don't let me con you you guys come on wake up. If I
say there's four states of matter you say no chance,
you're crazy, no chancey don't say yes, there are no
four states of matter there are only three what are
the three states of matter Andy?

¹²This empirical investigation of apparent exceptions from a general tendency can be seen to tie in with much of the discussion in the first chapter on the nature of rule use in language, and the related problems of seeing members as judgmental dopes.

¹³Perhaps the most successful and most well documented account of 'passing' was Garfinkel's study (1967) of Agnes; an intersexed person, who had 'large well-developed breasts coexisting with the normal external genitalia of a male' (1967:119). Agnes' accomplishment was to continuously pass as a female, in the eyes of the social world including, to some extent, the doctors who treated her.

¹⁴It is intended here to emphasise that 'social roles', although perhaps reflexively known to pupils, must still be continuously managed and displayed in interaction. In other words these can be seen to have a fluid rather than a fixed character.

¹⁵This contrasts with example (48) in 4.2.5. where a pupil tried to correct (or, more accurately, to reject) another pupil's answer, but failed. Here we see a pupil's correction is treated as legitimate, for the pupil then goes on to acknowledge it by repeating the correct word.

¹⁶In these examples, although it is possible for a number of reasons elucidated in the text, to claim that they might be heard as 'interruptions' it is, of course, not being claimed that they definitely are interruptions.

¹⁷What is massively prevalent in the usual classroom talk is that when new terms are introduced by the teacher, pupils do not routinely self-select immediately to ask for clarification. It seems to be a reflexively known fact about classrooms, that teachers routinely go on to explain these terms.

¹⁸By its sequential organisation, we can hear this as being a strong 'invitation to correct'. For what it seems to do by its placement is to reject the prior confirmation, and thus suggest that a correction is needed here. We might thus tentatively speculate that in natural conversation, this might be a routine way of indicating that a confirmation request is to be interpreted as seeking correction rather than confirmation.

¹⁹What this seems to be doing, by its sequential placement, is showing that the pupil is not playing a teacher type role (i.e., by withholding correction). Instead he displays, by the turn design (a type of 'candidate correction'), specifically what his problem is. The pupil/teacher should then reply with either a confirmation or a correction which attends to the spelling of the word.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in the prior chapters examined a very limited set of conversational phenomena. Nevertheless it demonstrated a wide number of consequential linguistic and sociological findings. By elucidating the various types of interactional work accomplished in correction sequences, the study also served as an exemplification of a detailed conversation analysis. We also showed its affinities with several basic linguistic tenets.

Conversation analysis, like transformational grammar, is primarily concerned with the structure of language. Let us clarify this a little. Although conversation analysis and transformational grammar have many differences, mainly concerning the anti-theoretical stance that conversation analysis emphasizes, one can still identify similarities. Primarily we intend to stress that both are deeply concerned with structure. Transformational grammar already has a well established concern with different levels of structure. Conversation analysis is also primarily concerned with sequential and internal structures of utterances, rather than in such other related concerns as the intentionality or the hermeneutic understanding of those utterances.

Transformational grammar studies how elements combine together to form sentences, while conversation analysis deals with utterances

combining together to form conversations. Both deal in linguistic possibilities rather than in definite unequivocal facts. Transformational grammar uses sentences which are held to be recognisably grammatical (even though individual readers may openly disagree on grammaticality judgments). Conversation analysis studies utterances which have recognisable illocutionary forces and meanings, although individuals again might dispute, on any particular occasion, whether or not an utterance was intended in that certain way. The study also shared a number of more sociolinguistic interests, primarily in the relationship of linguistic utterances with certain contexts, as well as the internal organisation of discourse forming an area of analysis in its own right.

We saw, however, that conversation analysis differs from these linguistic approaches in a number of significant ways. The former takes seriously the problem of how rules (interpretive methods) are used in speech, and stresses the members' competence in sustaining discourse. This involved the examination of members' methods of understanding and producing talk, for they too are practical analysts of conversation, analysing talk in its ongoing process of production.

This recognition of the primacy of members' methods led to the reformulation of the corrections model in chapter three. Armed with this formal analytic apparatus for the structure of corrections in natural conversation, we proceeded to uncover a type of talk whose correction sequences displayed marked differences from those within natural conversation. These differences were far from being random, for they exhibited a great amount of systematicity. From such orderliness, it

was possible to label such sequences as being constitutive of one aspect of classroom talk.

Moreover the analysis came to stronger conclusions than this. In displaying these systematic features, it was also able to claim that this phenomenon might be deliberately selected by the participants so as to make visible a number of their social concerns. We demonstrated that the way such talk was organised by the participants enabled them to construct and maintain a social setting in which one of them was in charge of the dissemination of knowledge. They thus constructed classroom talk. Not only was this orientation maintained, but we also demonstrated that various other interactional tasks appropriate to the classroom were managed within these sequences. The sequential organisation of several different speech exchanges were explicated. Requests for clarification and confirmation were shown to have different structures for teachers and pupils. Outright corrections were also differently distributed among teachers and pupils. Such examples when uttered by a teacher, were usually delayed in the sequence, while outright corrections given by pupils were found to be reprimandable items. Teachers also had exclusive use of the utterance type recognisable as a 'confirmation'. And its presence in these sequences displayed both teachers and pupils' awareness that the teacher was the sole arbiter of correct answers. Another pervasive phenomenon was the teacher's use of correction sequences for evaluation procedures. When a correction was needed it was necessary that a pupil, rather than the teacher, should give it. Methods for collaborating on right answers, for inviting other pupils to correct, for getting attention,

etc., were also included within the general phenomena under analysis, again showing the wide variety of tasks that teachers could accomplish in these sequences.

Pupils too had practical concerns with such sequences and exhibited their competence in a number of ways. They routinely designed their talk to pay heed to the teacher as an authority figure. They avoided overtly correcting him, they did not make complaints against him, nor did they apologise for errors which they made in their talk. Their talk also demonstrated a tendency to be 'paying attention' to all the teacher talk, for they were prepared to correct errors made by other pupils as well as themselves. Through their talk we also were able to investigate how pupils might infer that the teacher was in a lenient mood, or that he was trying to 'con' them.

When introduced to a surrogate teacher, the pupils displayed their lack of orientation to this pupil as a teacher, through the ways that they designed their talk. Pupils treated the pupil/teacher in ways similar to speech in natural conversation, rather than with the verbal 'respect' they had showed their usual teacher. For example, we demonstrated pupils' methods of 'disputing' corrections and of being 'interruptive'; phenomena which did not appear in their interaction with the normal teacher. It was only through this close attention to the sequential organisation and internal structures of the talk that we could warrantably show this difference in orientation.

6.1. Limitations of the Study

Perhaps the most basic omission from the study has been the lack of attention to the methods people use to understand single

utterances and their constituent words. Although the study was premised on, and recognised throughout, the problems of indexicality, much of the actual analysis was related to problems of indexicality and ambiguity at an inter-utterance rather than a within-utterance level. Thus the analysis concentrated on how speech exchanges were heard as potential correction sequences. It did not emphasise the analytic methods needed to recognise a single utterance as a possible challenge rather than, say, a greeting, through the close study of its internal components. Although this failure is perhaps merely a difference in emphasis, another analysis might treat both single utterances and utterance sequences in more depth.

This study also did not tackle adequately the practical analyses of different hearings of utterances. As utterances are hearable as X, but exclusively as X, then a more detailed analysis could choose to explicate the sequential organisation of the other possible hearings of one utterance. We did demonstrate briefly such problems of ambiguous hearings in 4.2.2.1. and 4.2.3. We noted that routinely confirmation requests are hearable as asking for either confirmation or correction, where each of these hearings sets up a different sequential next. However, it is not only clarification requests that may be ambiguous; other utterances, because of their indexicality, may also display a number of possible hearings. Depending on the interests of the analyst a study might, for instance, choose to investigate the sequential organisation of the wide range of possible hearings of a small number of examples. Or as this study has done, it may choose instead, to pursue a wider number of sequences, with a corresponding

decrease in the attention paid to the multitude of possible hearings of any one utterance.

6.2 Implications

This study has several implications. It affects the standing of future research in this specific field as well as having a number of proposals for the academic fields of linguistics, sociology and education. The main empirical stimulus for further work in this field, has been to show the relevance and applicability of some pure conversation analysis to an applied, substantive area. Two suggestions might be made from this. Firstly, it may encourage the growth of further study in pure conversation analysis. For even from this application of one small feature of natural conversation, a number of significant results were obtained. Secondly the successful application of pure conversation analysis to this substantive area might encourage its development in other applied areas of discourse. Law courts have already been investigated in this manner, and it seems feasible that any social situation in which talk occurred could be analysed via these methods.

In chapter two a number of philosophical views demonstrated the difficulties involved in attempting to interpret talk unequivocally. Because of this we argued that any linguistic concern with conversation will need to pay attention to members' methods of reasoning, rather than constructed analytic ones. This was based on the argument that it is impossible in theory to obtain an exact, undisputable, correct interpretation or description of a stretch of talk, but only one which is adequate for our practical purposes. This critique also urged

analysts to be wary of using one's unexplicated commonsense competence, as a member of society, to inform analytic judgments. One must be aware of the consequences of using one's member's judgment of speech as a resource rather than a topic of enquiry. Although this critique is especially relevant to sociolinguistic and traditional sociological research into language, much recent sociology has taken into account such problems. Nevertheless ethnomethodology still has a number of implications here.

Ethnomethodology's indifference¹ to claims about any one objective reality existing outside of its social construction enables it to concentrate on members' methods of constructing their objective world. There is thus potentially a large area of fruitful research available for the description of how members construct their different worlds. Thus policemen and defendants may see a 'factual' event differently. Doctors and families may see the 'same' behaviour differently. Ethnomethodological conversation analysis might be applied in these substantive areas to display how different members see the world, where that construction is made visible through the talk.

A final, rather speculative, word is in order about the implications for education. Rather than attempting to be overly optimistic about the ways in which this study might improve the quality of education, we prefer to be cautious. As should be obvious by now ethnomethodology takes the whole concept of education as an accomplishment suited to the everyday concerns of its practitioners. Thus there is no objective 'worthwhile education'. Instead we may have various claims as to what constitutes 'good education' given by various members

with different practical interests. This being so, then we might more fully understand the plight of many academics who are asked to give 'technical' (or scientific) solutions to problems which are of a practical moral nature. For any 'scientific' solution may be examined by an ethnomethodologist to see how the 'objective facts' were decided upon, where that procedure as we have intimated involves a selection from a number of other possible interpretations.

A second more pragmatic reason for not talking of recommendations for change, is that that it seems rather premature to attempt this, in any social situation, until the actual organisation of that situation is adequately described and understood. Let us take an example to illustrate this concern. The trend towards more progressive teaching, dissimilar to the teaching sequences observed here, may have overlooked some of the practical organisational features of the traditional classroom. As we saw in chapter three, this structure of talk enabled teachers to 'evaluate' pupils, and to ensure that pupils 'paid attention'. These other forms of teaching may thus have to devise different means of accomplishing such routine but necessary tasks.

The type of analysis conducted in these pages might therefore function most effectively as a guide to the practical limitations of of any type of 'progress' within education. That is not to say that this approach advocates conservatism, but instead it stresses that any proposal for change must seriously take into account the practical, social organisation of teaching within the classroom.

FOOTNOTES

¹For a fuller discussion of ethnomethodological indifference, see Garfinkel and Sacks (1970).

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APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

The transcription symbols used in this paper follow closely the conventions used in many conversation analysis studies. It has been developed primarily by Gail Jefferson.

- [] indicates simultaneous utterances.
- // This also indicates the point at which a current speaker's turn is overlapped by another speaker talking.
- = This indicates that there is no interval between adjacent utterances, the second one being latched immediately to the first. They are also used to link different parts of a single speaker's utterance when those parts comprise a continuous flow of speech that have been separated on to different lines by the design of the transcript.
- (4) This indicates the approximate length of time, in seconds, between words. Single parentheses with no number inside indicate a noticeable time gap but less than one second in duration.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising inflection, not necessarily a question.
- () This indicates that no identifiable hearing could be made for the utterance in question.

- The arrow indicates a feature of the analyst's attention.
- TRAN A GAS Capitalisation indicates that these words are being read by the speaker.
- The hyphen indicates a cutoff in the prior sound or word.
- h This indicates audible breathing.
- (()) Double parentheses indicate features which are analytic interpretations of events occurring in the material.
- b-a-r-d This indicates a word being spelled out.
- (squint) Single parentheses indicate a questionable hearing on the part of the analyst.
- T Teacher
- P Pupil
- Ps More than one pupil speaking.
- ↑ An upwards arrow indicates sharply upward intonation in the letter following the arrow.
- ↓ This indicates sharply downward intonation.
- ° The degree symbol indicates soft tone or low volume.
- bill* Letters in italics indicate intonational features of stress.
- left Underscoring also indicates various forms of stress. This may involve pitch and/or volume.